



A 2017 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

School News for Parents

December 5, 2017

There is none who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us up to our guilt.
Yet, O LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you the potter:
we are all the work of your hands. Is 64:6-7

Prepare the Way

As we begin Advent, the season of anticipation, let's all work toward an understanding and appreciation for the importance of patience. Patience is not a comfortable state of being. We are not very good at waiting, yet so much in life requires us to "wait and see". Learning to wait is a skill that we can build through practice. There are plenty of opportunities to practice: the grocery store, traffic, Christmas shopping. Advent is the perfect practice time to bear the discomfort of living in anticipation.

A Kolbe Christmas

Thanks to all who helped to make *A Kolbe Christmas* a success. I marvel at the amount of coordination, communication and hard work that is done willingly and cheerfully by so many. It speaks so plainly to the strength and faith of St. Max's community. Special kudos to Eileen Tenny, Marianne Higbee, Susan Krause, the Home & School Board, the Book Basket Committee and countless others. Thank you so very much!

Music for the Season

Join us for 2 Christmas Musical Events! The Piano Students Recital is Thursday, December 7 at 7:00 and the Band & Choir Concert is Thursday, December 14 at 7:00. Both events are in the Multi-purpose Room.

We will be celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception with a parish mass on Friday, December 8, 2017 at 10:00am. Please join us.

Report Cards will be distributed on Monday, December 11. The Celebration of Students takes place on Monday, December 11 at 1:15 in the Church.

Santa Secret Shop will be open for business from Tuesday, December 12 until Thursday, December 14th. Homeroom teachers have signed up for a time to take their class shopping. Shopping will be in the old Pre-k Trailer across from the rectory.

TROUBLE AT THE INN by Dina Donahue

For years now, whenever Christmas pageants are talked about in a certain little town in the Midwest, someone is sure to mention the name of Wallace Purling.

Wally's performance in one annual production of the Nativity play has slipped into the realm of legend. But the old-timers who were in the audience that night never tire of recalling exactly what happened.

Wally was nine that year and in the second grade, though he should have been in the fourth. Most [people](#) in town knew that he had difficulty keeping up. He was big and awkward, slow in movement and mind.

Still, Wally was well liked by the other [children](#) in his class, all of whom were smaller than he, though the boys had trouble hiding their irritation when Wally would ask to play ball with them or any game, for that matter, in which winning was important.

They'd find a way to keep him out, but Wally would hang around anyway—not sulking, just hoping. He was a helpful boy, always willing and smiling, and the protector, paradoxically, of the underdog. If the older boys chased the younger ones away, it would be Wally who'd say, "Can't they stay? They're no bother."

Wally fancied the idea of being a shepherd in the Christmas pageant, but the play's director, Miss Lumbard, assigned him a more important role. After all, she reasoned,

the innkeeper did not have too many lines, and Wally's size would make his refusal of lodging to Joseph more forceful.

And so it happened that the usual large, partisan audience gathered for the town's yearly extravaganza of crooks and creches, of beards, crowns, halos and a whole stageful of squeaky voices.

No one on stage or off was more caught up in the magic of the night than Wallace Purling. They said later that he stood in the wings and watched the performance with such fascination that Miss Lumbard had to make sure he didn't wander onstage before his cue.

Then the time came when Joseph appeared, slowly, tenderly guiding Mary to the door of the inn. Joseph knocked hard on the wooden door set into the painted backdrop. Wally the innkeeper was there, waiting.

"What do you want?" Wally said, swinging the door open with a brusque gesture.

"We seek lodging."

"Seek it elsewhere." Wally spoke vigorously. "The inn is filled."

"Sir, we have asked everywhere in vain. We have traveled far and are very weary."

"There is no room in this inn for you." Wally looked properly stern.

"Please, good innkeeper, this is my wife, Mary. She is heavy with child and needs a place to rest. Surely you must have some small corner for her. She is so tired."

Now, for the first time, the innkeeper relaxed his stiff stance and looked down at Mary. With that, there was a long pause, long enough to make the audience a bit tense with embarrassment.

"No! Begone!" the prompter whispered.

"No!" Wally repeated automatically. "Begone!"

Joseph sadly placed his arm around Mary and Mary laid her head upon her husband's shoulder and the two of them started to move away. The innkeeper did not return inside his inn, however. Wally stood there in the doorway, watching the forlorn couple. His mouth was open, his brow creased with concern, his eyes filling unmistakably with tears.

And suddenly this Christmas pageant became different from all others.

"Don't go, Joseph," Wally called out. "Bring Mary back." And Wallace Purling's face grew into a bright smile. "You can have my room."

Some people in town thought that the pageant had been ruined. Yet there were others—many, many others—who considered it the most Christmas of all Christmas pageants they had ever seen.

Guideposts, 1966