

## Principal's Comments for the Month of December

### Christmas Wishes

On behalf of your staff at Assumption, please accept our best wishes for the Christmas holiday. I hope you know how we appreciate all you do and give to our school. So it is our hope that the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ settles into your hearts and homes. We thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift. Please know we will continue our efforts to be worthy of your trust. God Bless and Merry Christmas to all!

### Soften the Parent Veto

I am reading an interesting book right now titled *Affluenza*. The authors, DeGraff, Wann and Naylor, define *Affluenza* as a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more. The author further explains, "Maybe affluenza is an addiction, or at least a pernicious habit. Advertising has trained us to solve problems with products: the deep structures of our personalities have been wired to medicate any uneasiness with our favorite drugs, consumption. Graduate with honors, splurge. Feel like a failure, splurge."

If shopping is a response to joy and sorrow, good fortune and bad, isn't that substance abuse? It is no secret that people who market products to us are smart people. They study our buying patterns and trends. However, what I find disturbing is how our children are targeted; how they are groomed to be good consumers or become infected with affluenza.

At a 1966 marketing conference called **Kid Power** (held at Disney World) the keynote speaker's topic was "Softening the Parent Veto". The keynote speaker was the marketing director of McDonalds. The strategy was to portray parents as fools who aren't smart enough to realize their children's need for their product. In fact throughout the conference, parents were referred to as gatekeepers. "Those individuals who try and protect their children from commercial pressures must be circumvented."

I have discussed this issue with the students a few times this year. The main point being, especially this time of year, that marketers want us permanently dissatisfied with what we have so we want whatever is next.

I thought the topic was timely as we all start our holiday shopping. I hope no one thinks of me as a "Scrooge" or "Grinch," but I think part of our job is to protect and filter our kids from these pressures.

Mike Micele  
Principal, Assumption School