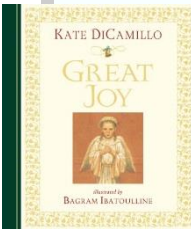




**Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons
Teacher's Book Review**



***Great Joy* written by Kate DiCamillo; illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline
Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, December 14th, 2011.**

The world was quiet. Everyone waited. This is how I pictured that stable so long ago in Bethlehem – that dark night when Mary gave birth to Jesus. They were outsiders really – a young Jewish couple who could not be accommodated by the innkeeper and who found themselves sleeping on straw, sharing their space with barn animals.

The world was quiet. Everyone waited. These two sentences are from the middle of this week's featured picture book and describe two outsiders – an old man who is an organ grinder, and his monkey who spend their snowy December nights huddled on a street corner, watched from a window by a little girl, named Frances, who is dressed as an angel. The book is about opening doors to outsiders and it is incredibly moving. The ending of the book is absolutely perfect and I found myself wondering how a 7 or 8 year old would make sense of it. What a great conversation it would start between an older brother and sister and a younger sibling. I just loved the book. It combined a important story with illustrations depicting scenes of light and darkness. Finally its message is one of hope, that what we really need to understand about love may be learned best from little children.