



I want to tell you about another saint the world lost this past year: one who did not receive quite the notoriety until much, much later in her life. But the saints we further cherish this weekend usually don't care about such things anyway. Nevertheless, this saint drew the attention of our country and beyond in one of the least expected places for an elderly woman sitting in a wheelchair.

But long before that, she felt this call to serve from her 3rd grade teacher of all people, as this young girl still trying to figure out the world, was moved by her teacher's "joy and kindness and Christ-like devotion." After all, most of the saints we further cherish this weekend will be the first to tell you of all the other saints in their life who made an impact on them. So, soon enough this bright-eyed girl would go into teaching herself, eventually bringing her to Los Angeles in 1941. The problem is she started at that school the day before one of the most tragic attacks in our country's history with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And so, because of being on the West Coast, she and "her fellow teachers needed to be prepared for anything that could happen. Food and

blankets had to be kept on hand in case the students couldn't leave the building. children had to wear dog tags...in the event of a [unthinkable] tragedy, and blackouts sometimes forced everyone to move from the school to [a nearby] church." She grew to cherish her students during some of the most fear-filled times imaginable.

As the years went by, she was called to serve a college in Chicago, where she would further become like her cherished 3rd grade teacher as a model of joy and kindness and Christ-like devotion for older students learning to become teachers themselves. And then she moved up the ranks, advising students and faculty alike, as she earned the reputation of her room and surrounding hallway being the busiest spot on the entire campus, because she opened her door for conversations with the 20 something's navigating big-kid decisions to plot their futures and even the professors dealing with their fair share of stress with their work life. Because that's what the saints we further cherish this weekend often do for us: they open their doors, and even their very hearts to help us feel first-hand the very love of God.

And then, came the time in her life that fame took over from the most unexpected places. Word got out that she was a fan of basketball, so she instantly became the chaplain of the collegiate men's squad, even while sitting in her wheelchair. The team would circle around her before the games as she prayed for them. And then, a few years later, the team started doing so well that they made the national tournament. A smaller school on the north side of Chicago wasn't expected to go far, though. And then they won and again and again, and the cameras started to focus on this 98-year-old woman in a wheelchair, sporting the team's colors with the biggest smile on her face to light up all Chicago, and enough contagious laughter and joyous enthusiasm to lift up not just those on the court but millions of people watching on television. The team ended up being one of the final four remaining of the 68 who started. But the most famous one perhaps of the entire tournament was not a player, but Sister Jean Dolores, who like many of the saints we further cherish this weekend, had this joyous enthusiasm about children of God to the point of doing everything they can to convince us that we, too, are saints in the eyes of God.

Granted like most of the saints we further cherish this weekend, we're not a fan of such a title, but God bestows it on us anyway through the waters of baptism. Whether we want the responsibility or not, all the time, God calls us to be the living disciples to keep on bringing hope and joy and a Christ-like devotion, just like a 3rd grade teacher over a century ago, because with that modeling of the faith, she unleashed a holy domino effect that reached students and faculty for decades in Chicago, and even

reached sports television audiences in March of 2018 in the tens of millions thoroughly mesmerized by a 98-year-old woman in a wheelchair, who still had a smile to light up the world.

Many of the saints we further cherish this weekend have a tendency to do that that we can't always understand: that even when they go through their fair share of physical and personal difficulty, they still manage to proclaim a faith that cannot be stopped, a hope that cannot be shut down, a passion for life that not even death stands a chance against. And although the world lost Sister Jean Delores this past year at the age of 106, one can rest assured that the Lord of the Resurrection and the Life has her more than taken care of, as we know for all the saints, but not just for the earthly departed, but for all of us still living, because there's more joy and kindness and Christ-like devotion to share with this world that God still so loves, and the holy domino effect unleashed from a cross and out of a tomb is still going on today, even in us. So, for that Greatest News that the Sister Jeans and all those we cherish this weekend will never let us forget, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!

Source: [Remembering Sister Jean, a Loyola Legend on Campus and on the Sidelines](#) (Adam Doster)