

Fr. Curtis Miller December 5-6, 2020 Homily for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

I'd like to tell you about something important that happened 79 years ago this week, on December 7, 1941. No, I'm not going to talk to you about the attack on Pearl Harbor, but something that happened closer to home. On that same day, here in Vermont, Kathleen Naramore, a 27-year-old schoolteacher from Lowell, was busily doing of her Christmas shopping when she was overcome with an attack of appendicitis and she was rushed to a hospital in Burlington. Her surgery was successful, but she was required to spend two weeks recovering in the hospital. This was the last thing she needed at such a busy time of year, but she didn't have a choice, and (as it turned out) God had a special plan for her.

During her recovery, she was visited by a hospital chaplain, an Edmundite priest from St. Michael's College, and a Sister of Mercy. Naramore was a Protestant, but she was intrigued by her conversations with this Catholic priest and nun, and she eagerly read the materials they left for her.

At the end of her convalescence, she came to an unexpected decision: she wanted to become Catholic. Not only that, she wanted to become a nun. The Sisters of Mercy encouraged her to take a few years to consider this momentous step, as did her stunned parents. But she was certain. In 1942, she became Catholic, and in 1944 she entered the convent as Sister Mary Clare. And so began a 73 year adventure. She taught in Catholic schools throughout Vermont, served as a missionary in China for a decade, and worked in hospital and prison ministry. She also counseled inmates on death row across the country by phone. Sister Clare often said that she never regretted her decision to convert and become a nun, all because she had been forced to step back from the busyness of life, and take time to listen to God. She passed away at the age of 102 in 2017, after a joy-filled life.

There are probably a lot of things that are keeping us busy or stressed at this time of year, but let's remember what this season is all about. This is Advent, a special time that God has given to us to prepare a place in our hearts for the coming of Jesus. If we do that, then we will be spiritually prepared to celebrate Christ's birth at Christmas. And there's not telling where God might lead us, and what joys and adventures he might have in store for us, if only we just listen to His voice and follow where He calls.