

Cheryl's List Blog #20—Saint Wanda

Having been raised in the Wesleyan branch of the holy Catholic Church, I must admit to having a fairly liberal interpretation of the word “saint.” Saints are believers; they model Christ-likeness; they experience miracles. For example, Cheryl and her friends at Catholic Charities would be considered saints in my estimation.

Recently, the Cheryl's List crew had a run-in with a saint named Wanda, or so I thought. Wanda was forced to leave her Hendersonville condo when an unfortunate series of medical problems demanded that her legs being amputated. After a lifetime of service to her parish and years working as a maid, this beloved woman decided to donate most of the worldly possessions she had earned. We were called to pick up much of her furniture.

As you may have guessed, there is more to my saint story than just that.

Often families donate items when they are getting new pieces or downsizing in a move or when loved ones are lost. Gently used furniture heads our way for lots of reasons. In Wanda's case, my wife received a Facebook message of inquiry from a woman I used to work with whose mom had volunteered to take care of Wanda and her assets.

When we showed up a couple of Saturdays ago to load Wanda's tables and sofa and other household items, we were greeted by my former coworker, her mom, a host of Wanda's church family, and a few volunteers from the Knights of Columbus. Their many hands made our work pretty light. We all worked quickly to load and unload the building's elevator. Boxes were moved deftly with dollies. Other items were carried in carts. Some items were hauled by hand. Stacks were staged by doors before being passed, piece by piece, along to the parking lot where, lastly, they were loaded into the back of the box truck. Residents, returning from their grocery shopping, acknowledged our procession by waiting patiently as we tied up the nearest elevator.

As we worked, I was talking and trying to catch up with my long ago friend. Unknowingly, I picked up some of Wanda's treasured Christian-themed artwork and started to put it in the wrong vehicle. When I realized my mistake, we all laughed. The Jesus picture I was carrying was one of the few things Wanda wanted to keep. Getting it into the right car meant passing the Jesus baton from one person in our group to the next. Eddie noticed the symbolism of that sacrament.

Together those folks honored Wanda and blessed us. Their unity evidenced a holy spirit. David, Eddie, and I came to know them by their love. Sainthood? You bet.

Initially, it seemed Wanda was the saint—a life of devoted service and a group of witnesses testifying to her steady faith. Ashley, my former coworker and the one who reached out to us in the first place deflected my gratefulness saying, “any and

all credit goes to [my] mom.” So, if you are keeping score, Ashley spoke of her mom, Therese, as the saint—so christened because of her selfless, daily devotion to Wanda and others like her. It should also be noted that none of this would have happened if my wife Lisa hadn’t given the time to message Ashley. What about those I didn’t name, the parishioners who gave of their Saturday morning to help Wanda? By the time her donation was delivered, there had been at least six degrees of saintly separation.

Volunteerism doesn’t make one a saint; but, saints always volunteer. Cheryl’s List, I remind, is staffed by volunteers and exists to pass the baton of gently used furniture from one caring family to the next. Just because these miracles of giving and receiving happen everyday doesn’t diminish their status. It just makes them hard to count.

Saints? God bless them everyone.