

So, as we take time this day to remember and give thanks to God for our departed brother in Christ, Gary Weiss, saint made by God through Jesus Christ; I figured it would be best to share some of the words that were brought to life during his funeral service here only a few months ago.

Now, unfortunately, for myself, I never got to see Gary in the prime of his life, so to speak; but nevertheless, he still managed with every instance to crack a smile, laugh, and give me a hard time, all within a usual day's work for him. And when I met Gary and Carole for the first time in their home shortly after I got here: that's when I first found out about Gary's rise to prominence in the United States Postal Service. I suppose it would have been more proper for me from there on out to bow in his presence, but he didn't seem to be concerned about that, thankfully enough.

But the closest I can get to understanding his royal power amongst the post office, is with my own mother, who served several years just as a part-time postal-carrier. Now she didn't have to walk the streets of Parma, like Gary did to start. She just had to drive up-and-down the country roads of northwest Ohio, because her youngest son thought it was a good idea, after high school, to attend one of the most expensive colleges in the entire state.

It's a thankless job these postal employees have amongst us, but somebody's gotta do it; and Gary did, incredibly well at that, to say the least.

Of course, what ends up truly defining us in this life, what reaches into the utter depths of our very soul, is not the occupational title we achieve after however many decades of work. It ends up being the memories we latch onto the most, memories so incredibly life-shaping that we end up writing them down, oftentimes sending them out in the form of family Christmas cards, and simple, but precious, forms of other letters and post-cards just to stay in touch, just the simple, but precious, reminder that the recipient on the other end is cared for and loved too.

So, yes, we can spill plenty of ink over the mighty rise to postal prominence as Akron Postmaster and District Director of Field Operations, among other numerous titles, that Gary was proud of; however, the ink will most certainly overflow over the times spent traveling the world with his beloved wife Carole, including to Gary's favorite, Aruba; not to mention raising two wonderful sons in Russell and Rodney, as well as the memories made with his grandson Ryan and great-granddaughter Lexie amongst many

other family. All of which end up shaping a life more than worth writing about, and, also, should be shouted down from the mountaintop.

Now I must that I was informed by some of those aforementioned family that Gary was a “my way or the highway” kind of guy. Except, with all due respect to Gary, on that day and on this All Saints Sunday, in this very place that he came to worship this God of us all, we can all recognize that it isn’t Gary’s way to be done, in the end. It is *God’s* way that gets done, and that is the way it needs to be for all of us saints.

Because, again, with all due respect to Gary’s royal rise to prominence in the United States Postal Service; it isn’t about how many blocks he walked in Parma delivering both good and bad news to the public on a daily-basis. Instead, it is about a man who not only walked the streets of Nazareth and all of Galilee, even into the nightmarish Jerusalem, not to mention up a dreadful Calvary hill; He also managed to walk into our very hearts, including into the darkest alleys within us that we desperately wish no one ever traverse. But this God loves us far too much to not do exactly that, to even walk into the darkest valley of the shadow of death, and lead us

into the streets of a Kingdom with no more pain to endure, no more tears to cry, no more fears to face anymore.

In the end, it is an often thankless job that our Savior takes on for all of us that ends up making us all saints, including Gary. So much holy work that we take for granted on a daily basis, even more so than the men and women who stroll up to our mailboxes. It is a thankless job, yes, but some Holy One had to do it; and He more than did it for Gary and for all of us saints of God: signed, sealed, delivered, for the sake of us all; and the best part is that it can never be taken away from us for all eternity. And for that Greatest News of all delivered to us saints from the Heavens in Jesus Christ Himself, we give thanks to God indeed! Amen.