

## Memories of a canonization

October 4th 2016



David and Cheryl Calire, executive directors of the Mother Teresa Home, took a pilgrimage to Italy for the Sept. 4 canonization ceremony of St. Teresa of Calcutta.

It seems fitting that the first residents of Mother Teresa Home attended the canonization of the home's saintly namesake. Cheryl and David Calire, executive directors for the transitional home for single mothers, took a pilgrimage to Italy for the Sept. 4 ceremony with Pope Francis.

"It was awesome," Cheryl Calire said. "My husband and I have never been out of the country, except for Canada, so I was very naïve to what a pilgrimage meant."

Pilgrimage meant waking up at 5:45 a.m. each day to catch a tour bus that didn't bring them home until 7:30 in the evening. During the nine-day trip, the Calires, along with 38 pilgrims from St. Catharines, Ontario, walked the hills and valleys of Assisi and climbed the ruins of Pompeii.

"The biggest takeaway for me was the richness of our faith was just everywhere; everywhere you looked, everywhere you breathed, everywhere you were. We got to see so many beautiful basilicas and churches and artwork and all minds of rich history of our Church," Cheryl said.

On the day of the canonization, Cheryl and David woke up at 4 a.m. to go through three security checkpoints. They made their way to their front row seats by 8:30 and then sat in 98-degree heat through the two-hour Mass.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Cheryl said. "For me, personally, obviously five years ago when it came to me in adoration to name the house the Mother Teresa Home, I had no idea she was going to be canonized a saint. Patience is not one of my virtues. When I was getting impatient waiting year after year for something to happen with my idea, who knew that the (Aug. 25) dedication was going to happen on the eve of her birthday, then on the eve of her death that we would be celebrating her canonization in Rome? It really solidified for me that, with God, all things are possible."

Calire brought a bag filled with religious medals, finger rosaries and prayer cards she carried with her through three checkpoints, then sort of lost.

"During Mass, the pope blesses any articles that you have with you so you can have them to bring back. We had a little bag that had a juice box, a cookie and crackers because you're out there for eight hours. In the excitement of everyone wanting to get to the spot where we were, we got pushed literally up to the front. If I were a rock star fan, I could have literally reached up and touched the pope. Out of reverence, of course, I did not do that. So, in the excitement of all of this, this bag got misplaced. We walked out with our little sustenance bag, but we didn't have the bag. I almost resigned myself to the fact that, if they were lost or somebody did take them, that they must have needed them more than we needed them. I did put out a little plea of prayer on Facebook to say that I was really crushed to come home and realize these beautiful blessings were not in our bags.

"I got a phone call from Rome, literally the next morning, saying, when the maid was cleaning our room next to the bag of garbage were our blessings and they would be mailing them to us. I'm just thrilled and can't wait until they get here."