

WORD IN ACTION

Trolley rage

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The situation seemed absurd. I was taking the items I needed off the shelf at the supermarket when I felt a shopping trolley bumping into me, hitting me in the leg. I felt a stabbing pain, but I managed not to cry out. I turned to see what was happening.

A man crosses paths with an angry mother in his local supermarket in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

A woman with a little boy in her arms was angrily staring at me, without a trace of

regret or apology. There was certainly enough room for her to go by me without bumping into me, but between her mobile and the screaming baby, the trolley and the shopping she was dropping, it was understandable that such an accident could have happened.

I responded with words that weren't exactly polite and let her go by. Things don't always go as you would imagine: I turned into another aisle, and we crossed paths again.

'You again?' she said to me in a tone that was anything but friendly.

'Oh, yeah, me again! I'm shopping just like you; maybe we'll see each other again,' I said. 'Wouldn't it be better to get off your mobile and do one thing at a time?'

At that point she lost it big time. She suddenly felt the right to throw comments and insults toward complete strangers like me. No one was spared.

To make things worse, the toddler began to scream, the mobile fell to the ground and the shopping fell and spilled all over the floor. It was too much for the woman, who fell to the floor in tears.

I began to gather her things and calm the little boy, trying to distract him with a set of keys I had in my pocket. He began to laugh, and the lady calmed down.

Naturally, shoppers, staff and others came to see what all the chaos was about, but finding that things had calmed down, they walked away and left us alone.

I helped the woman up, and asked her if she still had much to buy. She answered by showing me her shop-



Illustration: Pixabay

ping list. I asked her to wait there while I went to get the things she was still missing. I did have to exchange some items two or three times before finding the right brand, but in the end I made it.

Once all the shopping on the list was in the trolley, the woman looked at me and said timidly: 'Thank you,

and forgive me for acting the way I did before. I don't know where to turn. My husband lost his job, and we don't know how we're going to make it to the end of the month. It feels like the world is falling apart around us. So I've become angry and aggressive.'

I obviously didn't have an immediate solution, but it came to me spontaneously to tell her: 'Look, I don't have an answer, but what I can do is pray for you and your husband, asking that he finds a job.'

She looked at me a bit surprised and answered: 'I don't believe in God, but, anyway ... thank you!'

In the days that followed I prayed frequently and intensely for that family. One morning, I met the woman again at the supermarket. She saw me from afar and came running up to me.

'Imagine, against all the odds, my husband got an interview with a company – and, yes, they hired him! It's not the ideal position, but it's permanent with a reasonable salary. Could it be because of your promise to pray for us? When my husband told me, I immediately thought of you, of your prayers. Thank you so much! Maybe God does exist?'

'I firmly believe so and hope that one day you'll get to meet him!' I told her.

We said goodbye, and each of us went our own way. My heart suddenly filled with gratitude, and I prayed to God that one day she would get to meet him too. 