

# A Time for Contrasts

written by son Mark - 9/24/15 in morning hours following passing.

Having just returned from Germany, the trip up North to Michigan happened during the latter part of September 2015. Our planned time there was to be 5 to 6 days, just long enough to nourish and exercise dad back to independent mobility. The Lord and dad had a different agenda.

Every day we would wake and travel the 45 minute drive to West Branch from Prescott and marvel at the beauty of the weather and landscape. It was so spectacular we have rarely enjoyed any weather better. It was simply glorious and pointed to the One who created it all. Against this backdrop, over-hung a pall that was growing. Dad (grandpa) tried, I think because of my coaxing, to exercise on our first day. But his body gave out, and simply being back with mom at the Brook, was enough for him. That became evident. They were together again, spouses and lovers for 72 years and dad would say his farewell with her laying by his side.

This is not the outcome I had hoped for nor expected. After all, he is my dad and has bounced back so many times before. A little food and some rehab and he would regain a life of normalcy. But contrasted against these extraordinarily beautiful days, something else was going on. It would be enough for him to cling to his faith, hear the love from his family and to die with mom by his side.

For me, we went from..... expecting a good result..... to signing up for hospice..... to being by his side as he starting his journey of slip sliding away. No, it wasn't completely unexpected nor as fast as it happens in many situations, but it was hard none-the-less. I personally felt blessed and empowered by the Lord to handle this turn of events during this week up until my favorite Brook staffer, pulled me aside and told me that dad was waiting for me. For me? And what was he waiting for me to do? She said he wanted my permission and my okay for him to go. Wow! When I heard that I paused. But I knew she was right as I simply broke down and wept like a baby. I simply never thought about being at this place. After a little contemplation and thought, I knew what we had to do. I, my wife, and siblings and many grandkids, one by one expressed our love and admiration to our patriarch and in loving words told him.... it was ok. Jesus was waiting! All things will be okay and when he was ready..... it is ok to go. After these words were shared, I can assure you that Emil heard and understood them. I paused for a few moments and then whispered in his ear; "pop, it is a beautiful day.....a very beautiful day!"

There was a look of solace on his face as he literally was handing off the torch. It was evident in his eyes and in every facial expression. He had run the race, and finished the fight. His wife was in good hands and his family full. He heard the train beginning to move and he hurried to punch his ticket and climbed onboard. The Heaven Express! Antonium Emil Sztanyo passed from this old earthbound body to life anew and forevermore on September 24, 2015 at 1 am in the morning.

To be honest, when I left he and mom on that Wednesday, the 23rd , I didn't think it would be that soon. The day had been hard and we were very tired and went to bed early. I am a heavy sleeper and if I awake it is usually late in the sleep at 4 to 5 am. However on the 24th, just a few short hours later after our "release," at 1am in the morning dad and the Lord nudged me awake and I called to check on him. I would soon find out that that was the time he had passed. God granted me a wonderful blessing by knowing this man and being his son. Now he granted us all the terrific blessing of knowing without question that after a long and good life, dad passed peacefully, without pain, next to his lifelong love. Thank you Lord for your goodness to Emil Sztanyo. And thank you Lord for working through him to bring goodness and blessing to so many lives he touched.

Emil is survived by his loving wife Iris, 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 14 wonderful great-grandchildren with one more on the way October 11th.

Online memorial page at: <http://sztanyofamily.homestead.com/Emil.html>