

Eulogy given August 5, 2011, after the funeral at the start of the funeral dinner

Good Afternoon everyone! Before we start eating, let me take a few minutes of your time to talk about my Dad. It's only four o'clock, so I assume you can wait a little longer to eat.

It is appropriate that we have this dinner at The Lantern, just down from the cemetery. When I was a child, I came to the cemetery many times with my dad as he cut the grass and trimmed around the tombstones on our lot. My job was to water the flowers, and we were fortunate to be right down from the pump. I liked jumping on the handle in order to pull the water up to the watering can. We used to come here at dusk and often it was nearly dark when we finished. I was never afraid of the dead, though. They were so many grandmas and grandpas, and if one of them would have come alive, I would probably have thought maybe they might give me a cookie! It was what was behind that wall that scared me, what *dikyj zvir'*—what wild animal or horrible monster?

We came to work at the cemetery at the end of the day because Dad was busy with his two jobs—for the town and for the church—as you saw reflected in the two hats buried with him in the casket. Dad worked for the Borough of Nesquehoning for 41 years, starting back when it was Mauch Chunk Township. He helped build the recreation center, which he always called the *Mule Stable* because that's what it was back then, as Marge here knows. He had to check on the recreation center every evening to make sure the furnace had enough coal to last until morning. I also remember going with him on summer evenings to light the kerosene lamps when they were fixing roads so that locals coming back from the barroom late at night would not fall in. But the best memory is going to primary school on the snow plow or grader. Donna Smith and I felt like little princesses getting out of our pumpkin coaches.

Dad's other job was at the church; he was cantor at St. Mary's for 37 years. As you know, Dad and both his brothers, Steve and Mike, were cantors. They were taught by their father, who brought the skill from Europe. The services were still primarily in Church Slavonic then. Every Saturday night Dad sat in the same chair under the big lamp and prepared for Sunday. I sat on the arm of the chair and that's how I started to learn to read the Cyrillic script—from those old books with the old alphabet and fonts, and the abbreviations like you see on icons. Even the page numbers were in letters!

Dad was also cantor when English was first being introduced, and he had a choir that sang the Liturgy in English. In 1961 he bought a big reel-to-reel tape recorder to record them, find their mistakes, and correct them, just like good teachers and coaches do. And since he was busy waving his arms to lead the choir, I became his engineer running the machine. That was my

start with technology. Now I teach a course Audio-visual Methods for our MA students, and I use more modern technology with my little choir by putting our best up on YouTube.

Dad became cantor first, and then when Uncle Mike got the job in Allentown, he sometimes called my father for advice—*I have a funeral tomorrow and it's also a holyday, so how do I . . .?* He always called after 11 o'clock when the rates went down, so I was falling asleep hearing Dad singing something over the phone. I continued that tradition when a few years ago I had a wedding and wanted to know how to sing the Isaiah Dance, so I called Dad and immediately he began to sing *Isaieja likuj* . . . Later I found internet resources, but it helped that time.

But perhaps my best memory is reflected in a story I tell every Holy Saturday. As many of you know, Holy Saturday morning has a combination of Vespers and Liturgy and it's quite unusual, pre-resurrectional, anticipating the glorious resurrection. It is one of two times in the year when the *Iže Heruvimy*—*Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim*—is not sung. Instead we sing *Let all mortal flesh keep silent . . . the angels cover their faces and await in awe. . .* In our tradition, this has a somewhat unusual tune. All of you here know Dad played the tuba, so in order to make sure he learned the tune correctly, he brought out his tuba. He put the Bokshay on the table, that big old book with music notes in Cyrillic old script, and played the tune with his tuba—pu pu pu pu pu pu. Each year when I sing it, I still hear that tuba!

Holy Saturday and Pascha. Usually when I come to the USA, I pack a black suit, but this time I packed this blue one instead. That last time I wore it was at Pascha this year and I like to think there is still essence of incense and candle wax and resurrection on it. Dad had a long life of 92 years and this is not a time to be sad but to think of the resurrection that awaits all of us.

Back in January Dad asked about St. Mary's 75th Jubilee. He was still cantor and choir director then and I had a copy of the videotape. So before I came this time I digitized it, and when we visited him last Sunday afternoon we watched it. There is one part, toward the end of the Epistle which Uncle Mike was reading, where the cameraman got a shot of Uncle Mike and Uncle Steve standing side by side under the bells in the balcony. I paused the image on the screen for a while so Dad could see his two brothers. I think now that all three brothers along with their father are together now, singing and harmonizing and praising God in paradise.

Today is Friday and some of us are also keeping the Dormition fast. Nevertheless, let us break our fast, as we do for the glorious resurrection, and enjoy the food prepared today! Thank you all for coming.