



*A
testament
of life*

AN
ENCOUNTER
WITH GOD

As I pulled hard on the buckthorn that was in my yard, a pain suddenly went through my jaw, as if it were being squeezed in a vice. Surprised by the pain, I released the tree and started toward the house when lightheadedness came over me. I made it into the house and flopped into my chair while calling to Judy, "Something is wrong! I'm dizzy, and my arms are tingling."

Then the pain came. The most intense pain I had ever experienced spread from my chest through my body, a searing pain that felt like I was being torn apart. I curled up in pain and prayed aloud, "Jesus help me!" over and over. I didn't care what the help would be; I just knew that I needed help. If this was my time to go to the Father, I needed Jesus with me to help and support me. If I was to stay here on earth, I needed help to bear the pain and to work through whatever was going to happen.

Meanwhile, Judy heard me and responded by calling 911 and our children. While she was on the phone, the ambulance and one of our sons arrived at the house. During this frantic time, Jesus helped me by letting me fade in and out of consciousness. The first thing I was aware of after praying was the face of a stranger looking at me. The pain was gone, and I was confused, but I knew something bad had happened. The stranger was one of the EMT's who asked which hospital I wanted and suggested Fairview Southdale, if I was having a heart attack.

I have no recollection of the emergency room or any of the activities there. The next thing I remember is lying in a bed in a hospital room with several of my family around the bed. Everyone assumed that I had a heart attack, and they were waiting for test results to confirm. Then a doctor came in and said though my symptoms indicated heart attack, the test was negative, and they would keep me overnight for observation. It seemed that everything had settled down, and the entire incident would soon be in the past.

Judy had called All Saints to get one of the priests, and Father Wilson came and gave me the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Her call alerted the prayer warriors to my situation. In just moments I had dozens of people praying for me, and the army grew as the news spread. In just a day I had hundreds of people asking God to watch over me care for me. Now those prayers were being answered. My room was dark, and there seemed to be people there, but they were more like shadows. As I lay there wondering what was happening, a man clad in bright yellow walked through the dark forms and came to my bedside. "Hello, I am Adam," he said to me. "I would like to listen to your heart, if that's all right." He began moving his stethoscope around on my chest, stopping to listen intently. After a moment or two he said, "I think you will be fine, but I would like to get a CAT scan, just in case."



I was wheeled to the room where the scans are done and transferred to the platform of the scanning machine. The platform moved into the tube, and the machine began humming. I was slowly moved in and out of the tube twice. When I came out the second time, the room was filled with people. I was immediately moved onto a gurney and, almost running, they took me to an operating room. The room was already buzzing with activity, as they prepared for an emergency surgery.

A face appeared next to me, covered with operating room protective mask. "I am Doctor Kelly. You need an operation that has high risk but must be done immediately. I think it will go well for you, but I must not minimize the risk. It is a serious and high-risk procedure." I drifted off into unconsciousness as the anesthetic took effect. The surgery lasted hours, ending early Sunday morning. During this time, my family gathered in the hospital chapel and prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, with one of my grandsons leading.

I awoke briefly on Monday and recall seeing Judy and my family being there, which gave me a wonderful feeling of peace and joy. My vague memory, almost more of a feeling, was of being in a beautiful, peaceful and joyful place. On Tuesday I awoke enough to begin responding to the world. I had survived an aortic dissection, something that kills four out of five people before they reach medical help. Since it only lasted a few seconds, I could have ignored the pain in my jaw, and Judy would have later found me dead in the yard. Judy could have been away shopping or visiting, and it would have been too late. I could have been taken to Fairview Ridges, the nearest hospital.

They would have done the blood test for heart attack, come to the same conclusion, and sent me home the next day. But Doctor Adam would not be there to diagnose my problem. Dr Adam May should not have been at Southdale, but he was

