



# Mattie J.T. Stepanek 19th Anniversary Memorial Mass



Hosted by Mattie J.T. Stepanek Guild

Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, Kensington

Thursday, June 22, 2023

6:30 PM

 [MattieMatters.org](https://www.MattieMatters.org)

**Matthew Joseph Thaddeus Stepanek**

**July 17, 1990-June 22, 2004**

CELEBRANT  
ENTRANCE HYMN  
WELCOME

Rev. Msgr. John Enzler  
*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light, #632*  
Cheryl Kerwin, Guild Director

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**

FIRST READING  
*Wisdom 3:1-9*

Chuck Short

RESPONSORIAL PSALM  
*"Here I am, Lord; I come to do Your will."*

Psalm 40

SECOND READING  
*1 Corinthians 12:3B-7,12-13*

Lorene Moutanabbih

GOSPEL  
*Matthew 11:25-30*

Rev. Msgr. John Enzler

HOMILY

Rev. Msgr. John Enzler

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

PREPARATION HYMN

*Here I Am, Lord, #818*

COMMUNION HYMN

*At the Table of the Lord, #286*

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you.  
Amen.

REFLECTION

Jeni Stepanek, PhD., Mother of Mattie

RECESSIONAL HYMN

*Amazing Grace, #680*

### **In Gratitude**

Rev. Mark Hughes, Pastor  
Holy Redeemer Catholic Church  
Rev. Msgr. John Enzler, Celebrant  
Joe Ryan, Director of Music & Liturgy

### **Officers and Guild Directors**

Kathy Dempsey, President  
Margaret Kolm, Vice President  
Jenn Lynn, Historian  
Anthony Bosnick  
Mary Donovan  
Caitlin Keeton  
Cheryl Kerwin  
Kevin Reilly  
Kathleen Songer  
Vincent Spadoni

### **Founding Directors**

Eileen Donovan  
Mary & Ed Donovan  
Maura Donovan  
Margaret and Richard B. Kolm  
Ron Kuley  
Chris Lewis  
Terrence Sheehan, MD

### **Spiritual Advisor**

Fr. Chris Seith

### **Advisors & Honorary Supporters**

Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter  
Chris Cuomo, JD  
Fr. Dominic Eshikena  
Fr. Agustin Mateo Ayala  
Fr. Maurice Nutt, CSSR  
Timothy Shriver, PhD  
Jane Frances Crisman Stack

### **Rest in Peace**

Fr. James Isidore Dixon  
Mary Lou Smith

### **Guild Founder**

Raymond Arroyo

### **Mattie's Mom**

Jeni Stepanek, PhD.

# Mattie J.T. Stepanek Guild

*Honoring*  
**Mattie. J.T. Stepanek**  
**1990-2004**

All of us - children, teens, and adults - are called to holiness. The late teen poet and peacemaker, Mattie J.T. Stepanek, responded to this call generously. Even though he lived with a rare neuromuscular disease and chronic illness, Mattie shared his gifts by writing hundreds of poems and passages he called his *Heartsongs*. With bestselling books of poetry came opportunities to magnify his beliefs in a life of God-given purpose, speaking gently but directly about matters of the heart, and soul. What nourished and inspired Mattie was his devotion to God, and the daily practice of his Catholic faith.

Mattie's call to holiness came at an early age, when, living in rural Maryland, Mattie began receiving what he called "messages" from God - messages he shaped into poetry and written works. These became the song of his heart and his purpose in life, and he encouraged others to find their *Heartsong* - the unique purpose given to each of us by God.

Mattie was a faithful Catholic and served as a lector and religious education teacher for 2nd and 6th graders. Throughout his life, even while critically ill, Mattie showed unselfish concern for his family, friends, and especially the infants and children alongside him in the ICU. When given money to buy himself Christmas gifts, he used it instead to purchase movies and games for them, to lift their loneliness while in the hospital. He also wrote prayers and poetry for patients, families and medical staff, especially in times of crisis.

Mattie endured lifelong disability, constant health challenges and ongoing financial difficulties. He chose not to be defeated by them, but instead, turned his face to God, responding to the purpose God gave him and living out his life as a faithful Catholic. Mattie died of complications from his disability just before his 14th birthday.

The Mattie J.T. Stepanek Guild invites you to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your own God-given purpose. Because Mattie's *Heartsongs* were given to him in his childhood and early teens, the Guild especially encourages children and teens to pray their way into a deeper relationship with God.

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