

## In Loving Memory: *Charlie Mattox*

December 17, 1996 – October 20, 2021



On behalf of the parish community of St. Perpetua and all of us who have gathered with you this morning, I want to extend our deepest sympathy to you, Chuck and Lisa, Connor and Addison, on the loss of your son and brother. The sudden and unexpected news of his death has impacted all who knew and loved Charlie and your family. It's difficult to imagine the depth of the grief that you and Charlie's grandmother and his aunts and uncles and cousins must be experiencing. All we can do right now is to be with you here in prayer and love, in support and compassion. I hope and pray that our presence this morning, the many notes and calls of condolence and the prayer of this Eucharist will help to ease your burden and strengthen your belief in the resurrection of Our Lord.

The promise of resurrection was given to us all at our baptism. On that day, you brought Charlie as an infant to the waters of baptism and he was born into new life with Christ. On that day he was clothed in a white garment, anointed with oil and presented with a candle lit from the Paschal candle with the

admonition that he would bring light, the light of Christ, into this world. Today, that Paschal Candle stands guard at his coffin, and he is once again sprinkled with the waters of baptism, his earthly remains clothed again in a white garment. These sacramental symbols of the Church remind us that Charlie is now born into Eternal Life.



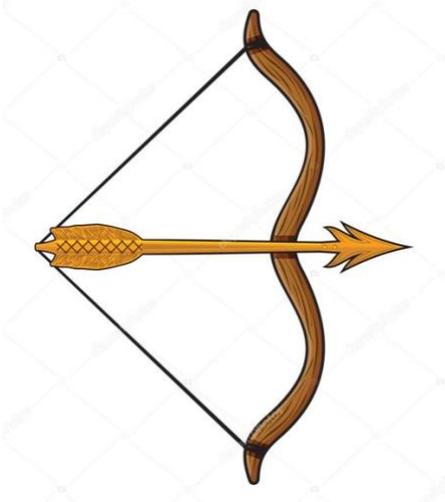
Let us then remember with gratitude the life he shared too briefly in this world, but also acknowledge with faith the newness of life Charlie now shares in the joy of God's eternal kingdom. We take comfort in the words of Jesus in the gospel we heard: *In my Father's house there are many dwelling places and I go to prepare a place for you... I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.*

In speaking to one of Charlie's life-long friends, the first quality he described was "selflessness." He told me: *Charlie was the first person to be happy for someone else's success. We both tried out for the flag football team. Charlie didn't make the cut, but I did, and Charlie couldn't have been happier for me. He was a most generous*

*person and always had a smile to share. God recruited an angel who brought love and positivity into the world. After Communion we'll hear about the impact he had on other lives who knew and loved Charlie.*

I want to offer a word of hope and assurance to Chuck and Lisa and to all parents who are here. Your love as parents must be rooted in profound reverence for the mystery of "the other," especially the freedom of another person -- your own children. The twentieth century poet, Kahlil Gibran, expressed it so poignantly in his poetic reflection entitled simply "On Children:"

*Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters  
of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you,  
yet they belong not to you.  
You are the bows from which  
your children as living arrows are sent forth.  
The archer sees the mark  
upon the path of the infinite,  
and He bends you with His might  
that His arrows may go swift and far.  
Let your bending in the archer's hand  
be for gladness;  
For even as God loves the arrow that flies,  
so God loves also the bow that is stable.*



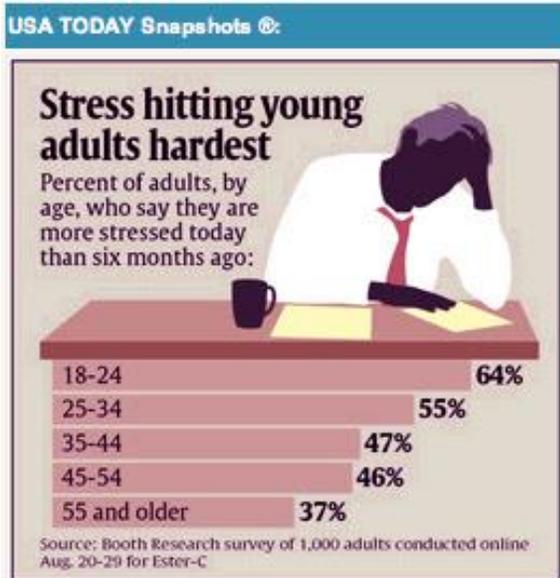
To the best of your ability you give your children, as Charlie was given, unconditional love. The vocation of parenting is the greatest risk someone can take in life. Parents aren't perfect; none have ever been or ever will be. But you pour out your love and support, your energies and your resources, trusting that your efforts and desire will be blessed by God. In the end, it is God who is Father and Mother to us all. In the end, it is God who holds our destiny in a divine embrace and welcomes us to our true and eternal home. May you always give thanks to God who granted you the grace to be a part of your child's life on his earthly sojourn, as brief yet wonderful as Charlie's journey has been. As you told me: *Charlie loved what he was doing and the people he was sharing it with.*

I also want to say a direct word to Charlie's friends and all the young adults who are here in mourning and sadness over Charlie's death. And I'll take a cue from the style of dance music that Charlie excelled at as a DJ - "dubstep." Dubstep is a genre of electronic dance music that originated in South London in the early 2000s.



It's generally characterized by sparse, syncopated rhythmic patterns with prominent sub-bass frequencies.

“Syncopated rhythmic patterns” could well describe the lives of many young people today. Syncopation accents a note where it wouldn’t ordinarily be accented. In your search for meaning and fulfillment, for relationship and acceptance, your journeys take you down many paths. There can be syncopated fits-and-starts in your education, your careers and your jobs, as well as in your relationships. The pressures you experience daily are many – from peers, from parental expectations, concerns about body image and self-esteem, about finances; from demands, real or imaginary, placed on you by your culture and especially by social networking as we’ve observed the turmoil just in the past few weeks over Facebook and its influence on all of us, especially the young. It can be tough for older generations to relate to and understand the things that make you worry and cause you stress.

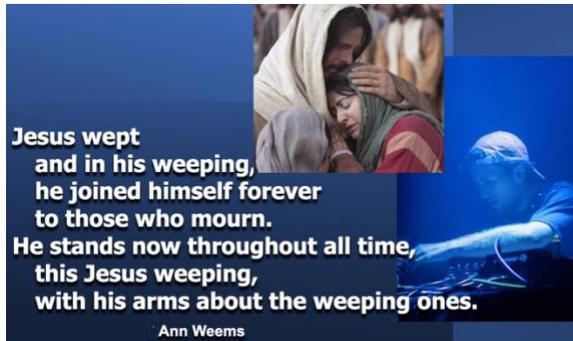


By Anne R. Carey and Alejandro Gonzalez, USA TODAY

Besides the “off-beat” rhythms of “dubstep,” there is that sub-bass frequency that never lets up. It’s a constant pattern that gives the music its grounding. In your young lives, you need grounding in a spiritual way. Call it what you will – God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, your Higher Self, the

Transcendent Being. The realization that there is more to life than the physical world is part of the tradition of faith that your parents have handed on to you. There are times in our lives, like today, as we face the death of a loved one, that our faith is front and center. How else can we cope with such tragedy and make sense out of life’s mysteries if not through trusting in a loving Presence that carries us beyond the defeat of death to the promise and victory of a new life – free from pain and sorrow, alive forever in light and peace?

Even when we’re not aware of it, we live in that sacred Presence every day. God’s Spirit is always with us. It’s up to us to be more aware of God’s Spirit, to open our minds and hearts to it. There are so many God-given gifts that your generation offers to our world and to our Church. We need you and the gifts you bring – gifts like FREEDOM since you’re not tied down yet as much as older generations. St. Paul says: *Christ came to set us free.* That’s a spirit you have by virtue of being young. You’re far more willing to TAKE RISKS that we older, more cautious people avoid. Older adults are lulled into complacency, but you’re gifted with CREATIVE EXPRESSION. That was obvious in Charlie’s passion for being a DJ at clubs like Revel-Revel in San Diego. Your generation is much more OPEN and NON-JUDGEMENTAL, accepting people as they are, which is more Christ-like as we witness in the gospels. But you need the Holy Spirit to help you discern the best way to use those gifts for your own well-being and for the good of others. You need God’s gift of a discerning heart and a critical mind to be able to look at the culture which surrounds you and make choices and decisions that will enrich your lives and contribute to making the world a better place.



As we pray for Charlie, giving thanks to God for his life here on earth and entrusting him to God's eternal life, let's pray that his selflessness and generosity, and most of all his beautiful smile, will not be forgotten, but will be an inspiration for all of us, young and old, to live each day to the full and to "love like Charlie," until we are called to that dwelling place God has prepared for us all.

*John Kasper, OSFS*