

The Power of Love

Reflection by LGBTQ+ Team Member Bro. David Betz, SM

After I graduated from college, I had the opportunity to be a part of a summer theatre program called Upper Darby Summer Stage. Its purpose is to inspire young people to develop their talents in creating theatrical experiences for audiences of all ages. It began in 1976 and I was involved in its fourth (1979) and fifth (1980) seasons. Recently I was able to attend the program's gala celebration for its 50th Season. It was a wonderful time to reconnect with people that I worked with those many years ago. In fact, I still have several dear friends from my participation.

Most importantly Upper Darby Summer Stage from its beginning used a song from the movie, Goodbye Mr. Chips, as its theme song, **Fill the World With Love**. This song has played an important role in creating community and to invite Summer Stage participants to recognize the gifts and talents of all people no matter who they are and how they present themselves. It has called for a loving response when in relationship with others. Let me share the lyrics and a [YouTube music video](#):

In the morning of my life I shall look to the sunrise.
At a moment in my life when the world is new.
And the blessing I shall ask is that God will grant me.
To be brave and strong and true.
And to fill the world with love my whole life through.

Refrain:

And to fill the world with love
And to fill the world with love
And to fill the world with love
My whole life through

In the noontime of my life I shall look to the sunshine.
At a moment of my life when the sky is blue.
And the blessing I shall ask will remain unchanging.
To be brave and strong and true.
And to fill the world with love my whole life through

Refrain

In the evening of my life, I shall look to the
sunset. At a moment in my life when the night
is due. And the question I shall ask only I can
answer Was I brave and strong and true?
Did I fill the world with love my whole life though?

Final refrain:

Did I fill the world with love
Did I fill the world with love
Did I fill the world with love
My whole life through?

I have found myself thinking often about this song with my involvement with different LGBTQ+ groups, especially as a facilitator of the support group for parents of transgender individuals. This group started in June of 2025 and it meets on the 4th Sunday of each month. It is sponsored by our Marianist Social Justice Collaborative LGBTQ+ Initiative Team and Fortunate Families. It is a place where parents have been able to bring the concerns, feelings, and emotions in their journeys with their transgender children. It has been an opportunity for the parents to share their joys, struggles, frustrations, and questions connected to their relationships with their families, friends, and other relatives as well as the institutions in our society, especially their faith institutions.

As people of faith we are called to strive to be loving people as Jesus was, especially in his ministry to people no matter who they were in society. It is this loving stance that requires us to be accepting, to be respectful, and to recognize the dignity of others. The demonstration of love, hopefully, enables people to feel welcome in their communities. Love has the power to change lives as long as we are intentional and authentic in our expressing love to others. It involves humility when we place others' concerns before our own. Love also allows us to challenge the status quo when there is a need to advocate for rights and needs of men and women. I am not saying love is easy but the power of love is a call to create inclusive communities where men and women feel honored and blessed as being made in the image of God, especially our LGBTQ+ sisters and brothers and their families.

So do you fill the world with love as you encounter the people in your lives? Are you willing to acknowledge that love is a way to break down barriers and to find the common good among people? Can you say that the power of love changes things for the better?