



Golden Mending: The Art of Repair



CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY CENTRE
Encountering God • Healing Hearts • Empowering Lives

2 May 2021



Golden Repair: God, the Master Repairer

Kintsukuroi (kee-isoo-koo-roy) which literally means *golden mending*. Also known as **Kintsugi** which means “*golden joinery*.” This is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery. After mixing lacquer resin with powdered gold, they put the broken pieces of pottery together, but the cracks are filled with gold. This method transforms the artefact into something new, making it more rare, beautiful, and stores than the original. Life breaks us, but then God makes us stronger and more beautiful in the broken places. Sometimes life hits us suddenly and hard, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, bankruptcy, abuse, rejection, life threatening sickness, failed marriage, childhood trauma, etc. These can shatter our lives into broken pieces. Yet this ‘brokenness’ can be repair!

We need golden repair constantly in our lives. Too often, we hide our brokenness as it is very painful. Sadly, we often deny it. We would rather disguise our cracks than undergo golden repair. We might put on a tough façade with a beautiful smile. The truth is many of us are shattered on the inside out and have never faced the pain of those broken pieces inside because we are too scared of being cut again. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are others who have glamorised their brokenness on many social media platforms. We have idolised our festering wounds, “*Look how terrible my life is, come and share my woes.*” There is a tendency to exaggerate the past miseries as a badge of honour. Misery loves company. We have to stop trying to carry around the broken pieces of our lives. Brokenness begets brokenness! We need to seek the Master Repairer (God) for restoration and healing. And not go to other healers, like Reiki, new age etc.

God has every right to reshape us, mould us and even break us if He feels that that the vessel is not turning out according to His desired design. Beautifully expressed in Jeremiah 18:1-7.

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “*Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.*” So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “*Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?*” declares the Lord. “*Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.*”

Many of us give up in the midst of brokenness and crisis? We are not willing to undergo the pain. We need to stay in the process. God cannot honour His promise, if we do not honour His processes. Do not be demoralised when we go through a crisis. God knows what He’s doing and He has not left us. In fact, God is reshaping and transforming us.



IN JAPAN, BROKEN OBJECTS
are OFTEN REPAIRED WITH
GOLD. THE FLAW is SEEN
as A UNIQUE PIECE OF the
OBJECT'S HISTORY, WHICH
ADDS TO its BEAUTY.

CONSIDER THIS
WHEN YOU FEEL BROKEN.

God is the Master Potter: We are the Clay

Kintsugi is a perfect presentation of the power of the gospel, and the masterful metaphor for Jesus. The gospel is not just *"The Good News."* The original intent of the word gospel was "the reward of the Good News." **Kintsugi** shows us the power of creation, death and resurrection in Christ. We are created as God's workmanship, and we were all broken because of sin; committed against us and sin of our own. We are all broken because of pain, addiction, rejection, abuse, death or any plethora of afflictions. For some the shard of the crushed vessels are bigger than others. As we have all been *dropped* and *shattered* in some way in life. The brokenness is all the same. But thanks be to God that Jesus Christ is "The Gold" that binds us back together. He makes us whole. He restores us. Because of His life, death and resurrection, our life, death (brokenness), and resurrection gives us the ability to tell *His Story* one again.

A bruised reed he will not break, and dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice (Isaiah 42:3)

The Lord is near to the broken hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18)

He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3)

... to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory (Isaiah 61:3)

Yes, brokenness happens. But instead of being thrown away and tossed aside as in the throw-away society strongly influenced by consumerism, whereby society tends to use excessive single-use items, disposable packaging, and general consumer products not designed for re-use or life-time use. We have to allow Jesus to be the artist and the gold; to heal us and make us whole. We have to allow Jesus to bind up the brokenness of our life, to heal the wounds, to make scars of gold.

Scars

A scar represents a healed wound, a trauma that has been treated. Every scar has a story. Yet, we don't have to walk around with the broken pieces of our life. Nor do we have to sweep them under the rug of shame or stoicism. In Christ, we can have scars, instead of infested open wounds. And Jesus doesn't just bind us up. He binds us together with the gold that is His life. Look at His Resurrection when He appeared to the disciples and showed them His glorified scars. His crucifixion wounds are no longer visible, only the scars. Same for us too, but we prefer to wallow in our crosses and crucifixions and not allow them to be glorified scars because Jesus is Risen and takes upon Himself all our pains and sorrows.

Jesus My Redeemer: Risen in Glory

In John's gospel chapter 20, Jesus appeared to His disciples resurrected in all His glory and showed them His wounds and they received the Holy Spirit. Their fear is promptly wiped away. But Thomas was not present and he had to experience the wounds of Christ for himself. So what does Jesus do? He re-appears and invites Thomas not just to look at His wounds; but enter into His wounds! Thomas is immediately moved to a profession of faith by saying, **"My Lord and my God!"** If we look at this gospel from the viewpoint of doubt, we would ask, **"Where am I doubting God in my life?"** What we see is that Jesus is leading by example here. Healing is not the removal of our wounds. Healing is becoming glorified in those wounds in a way that they no longer have power over us. Christ overcame death, but His wounds remain and they continue to call others to conversion. In order to be more Christ-like we need to be more honest with ourselves realize that these wounds are there (and likely always will be), and not allow them to have power over us. We can take the example of Kintsugi (golden repair) and see our brokenness and wounded-ness as pieces mended by God's 'golden dust' of forgiveness and mercy. We become the 'wounded healer' for others to greater conversion.



Song: Arise, my soul arise

Arise, my soul, arise!
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice
In my behalf appears.
Before the throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above
For me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead.
His blood was shed for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary;
They pour effectual prayers;
They strongly speak for me.
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die!

The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son.
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

To God I'm reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry.



Fr. Andrew Wong, Spiritual Director & Veronica Nathan, Programme Manager/Counsellor)