

Kintsukuroi

Christianity

Life breaks us, but then God makes us stronger and more beautiful in the broken places.



Photo courtesy *Lakeside Pottery Restoration Studio*
543 Newfield Avenue
Stamford, CT 06905
www.lakesidepottery.com
<http://lakesidepottery.com/Pages/kintsugi-repairing-ceramic-with-gold-and-lacquer-better-than-new.htm>

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Golden repair. Japanese artists often do this when a precious piece of pottery has been broken. After mixing lacquer resin with powdered gold, they use the resin to put the broken pieces together. What they end up with is a pot with cracks in it, but the cracks are filled with gold.

They call it kintsukuroi (keen-tsoo-koo-roy). Golden repair.

Such restoration creates a gorgeous piece of art and makes a philosophical statement as well. Kintsukuroi asserts that breakage and repair is part of the unique history of an object, rather than something to deny or disguise.

We need more golden repair in our lives, because we so often hide our brokenness.

A friend hurts us deeply, and we retreat inside ourselves. We lose a job or suffer a pay

cut, and pretend like everything is really okay. A spouse abuses us, but we never speak up. We sense that we have a drinking problem, but feel too embarrassed to ask for help. A marriage begins with intimacy and anticipation, and ends with alienation and anger.

Life breaks us, in a variety of painful ways. And unfortunately we often deny it. We would rather disguise our cracks than undergo golden repair.

In Acts, the apostle Paul travels to Ephesus in Asia Minor, which is modern-day Turkey. He finds 12 disciples there, and asks them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They reply, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (19:1-2).

While it might be a stretch to call these disciples broken, they clearly have some cracks. Not only have they not received the Holy Spirit, they don’t even know that it exists!

Paul is perplexed. He asks, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answer, “Into John’s baptism” (v. 3). And suddenly Paul understands

that they need some golden repair, some kintsukuroi Christianity.

“John baptized with the baptism of repentance,” explains Paul, “telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus” (v. 4). Paul knows that John baptized with water, while Jesus baptized “with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16).

On hearing this, the disciples are baptized in

EDITOR’S PICK

For material based on today’s gospel text, see “The Mark of Mud”, January 8, 2006, at: HomileticsOnline.com.

At a Glance

They call it kintsukuroi. It’s an art form that not only repairs shattered pottery, but enhances and illuminates the cracks with a lacquer laced with gold.