

## Mending Prayer – “Kintsugi”

“God heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.” – Psalm 147:3

### Some Background:

When we pray, our lips and mouths recite prayers, our intellect practices reflection and meditation, our hearts and minds are lifted up to God, making prayer a “whole body” experience. But what do we actually pray *with*?

**Henri Nouwen**, a 20<sup>th</sup> C Dutch theologian, suggests that for many of us, prayer means “speaking with God” or “thinking about God”. He writes, “The crisis of our prayer life is that our minds may be filled with ideas of God while our hearts remain far from him. **Real prayer,” says Nouwen, “comes from the heart.”**

**Theophan, the Recluse**, a 19<sup>th</sup> C Russian mystic, reminded his disciples that the Kingdom of God is within them and wrote to them saying, “**To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart**, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all-seeing, within you.”

It is within the heart then that God’s spirit dwells and it is there that the “*great encounter*” happens.

→ **We know hearts get broken: we watch the nightly news, we worry about family, the climate, injustice, health, death**

**Kintsugi** (*pronounced kin-su-ki*) meaning, “to repair with gold”

- a Japanese art of repairing a broken piece of pottery using gold or silver mixed with lacquer
- Understanding that the piece is even more beautiful for having been broken
- “*Heal your life, repair the cracks, embrace the imperfections*”



The result is that the “repair” creates a marbled-like pattern with lines of gold or silver running through the design, making it not only functional again as an object, but also valuable.

### Prayer Exercise:

Materials: “**Mend My Heart**” sheet (*see next page*) pencil, yellow highlighter or a yellow-coloured pencil

Take a moment to quiet yourself, take a few deep breaths, relax your shoulders

Think about what is in need of “mending” in your own life, in your family, community or in the world

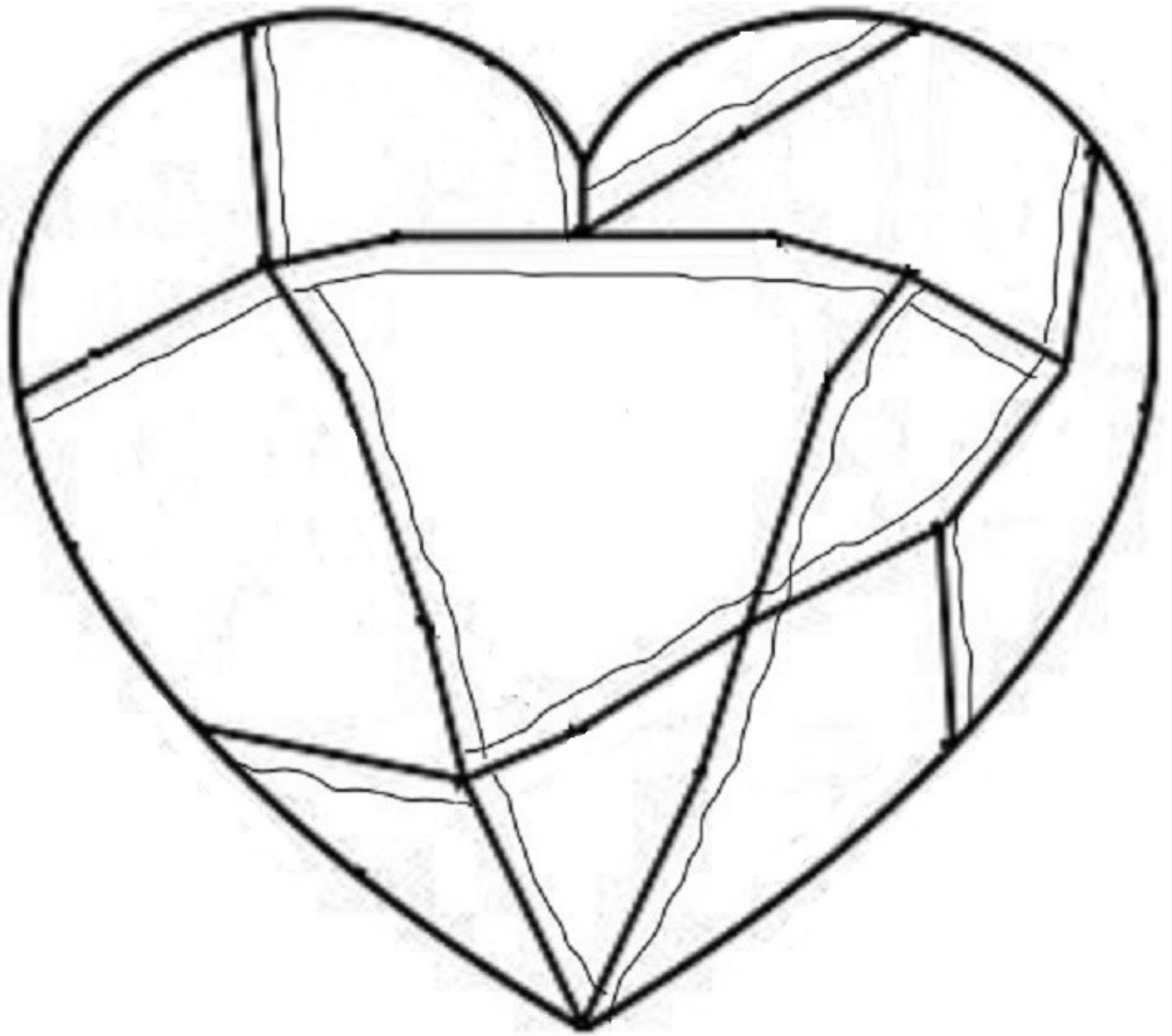
Offer them to God in prayer by taking a few moments to write these concerns into the various pieces of the “heart”.

When ready, use your highlighter to colour in the “repair” lines on the heart. Say a brief prayer for each concern as you colour or simply repeat the phrase “Mend my heart, O God,”. Soft, meditative music may (*or may not!*) be helpful in slowing your racing mind and heart so you can fully offer God the things in need of mending.

The audio file of a beautiful prayer, written by Gregory Norbet, a former Monk of Weston Priory, Vermont, entitled “*Mend my heart*”, can be listened to here:

<https://www.ocp.org/en-us/songs/52440/mend-my-heart>

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“Mend my heart, O God . . .”