



The Restoration of Love

Recently, I saw something remarkable.

The something remarkable happened to be on a You Tube channel operated by a professional restorer of classic art. The episode was called "About Face" and concerned a work of art that had been severely damaged. The damage consisted of one large vertical, and two horizontal, tears across a canvass on which was painted a portrait of a young Roman noblewoman from the renaissance period. It was an exquisite work of art - but the damage was so severe that most people would have written the artwork off as a lost cause.

Not so this particular restorer. By a painstaking process of preserving and repairing the canvass, he realigned the jagged edges of the tears, conserved the canvass, and filled in the gaps caused by the damage. Then, in an intricate process of overpainting, he applied new paint to the damaged portions, seamlessly covering over the scars caused by the tears and restoring the portrait to its original condition. By the time he was done, you would never know the painting had ever been damaged; only close and expert observation would be able to reveal the seams caused by the scarring.

I don't know anywhere near enough about the techniques and technologies of art restoration to give you a detailed description of the restoration process. But if you want to watch the video (and I recommend it) [please click this link](#). But what I do know is that by dint of careful, patient and skilled labour, this master

craftsmen restored to pristine condition a work that might otherwise have ended up on the trash heap.

Moreover, what I also realised was that this restorer's skill was directed by love. The love he has for art and for returning to a condition of beauty something that had been grievously damaged shone through both his narrative and his work. But more than this, his love was directed toward restoring this work of art to a position of relationship with the viewing public - for, as he notes at the beginning of the video, if nobody sees it, does the magic still happen? This work was not created to be locked away, but to be viewed and engaged with by the public in a mutual relationship. The restorer's love was directed toward returning this painting to the relationship for which it was created.

All of which stood in sad contrast to the story of the young woman who was the painting's subject. She and her mother and siblings had been subjected to years of abuse by their drunken and violent father; and when, to end the abuse, her family killed him, the authorities condemned them to death. The Roman public, appalled by the violence which she and her family had endured, campaigned for clemency; but the authorities remained adamant. The young woman, along with her family, were executed - since which time she has been venerated by ordinary Romans as a kind of martyred saint.

But because of the careful and loving work of the restorer, this remarkable portrait, and the story of the tragic young woman, have been returned to the public domain.

Jesus' whole ministry was focused on the work of restoration. That is to say, he came, not to judge and condemn, but to restore people to relationship with one another, and to God. From Zacchaeus up his tree to the Syrophenician woman and the Samaritan woman by the well; from the lepers cast out of their villages to the man born blind and the woman bent double, Jesus was

concerned with correcting the disfiguring and malformation of human life caused by judgementalism, by the categories of human prejudice, and the prerogatives of unjust power. And Jesus was motivated, not by his own ego or his desire to make a spectacle of himself, but simply by love. Love for those whom he saw being denied the dignity of their humanity and cut off from the relationships that make us fully human.

Someone once said that no-one gets out of this life without scars of one sort or another. We all of us, as it were, have our battle injuries, reminders of the sometimes bruising realities of being human. Some of our scars are superficial; some of them run deep. But like this restorer, who saw not a ruined and mutilated canvass, but a work of beautiful art, Jesus saw not the categories of condemnation by which others were judged, but only the dignified humanity that God had already declared was worthy of love. The scars may still remain under the surface; but our restoration, directed by love, means they no longer hold the power to alienate us from God and from one another.

Communion Service This Sunday at HUC

Please note that this Sunday will be the Communion Service for February.

Remember In Your Prayers

A reminder that the funeral service for Nancye Ross will be held **at HUC at 1pm on Monday 26th February 2024**. Please remember Nancye's family in your prayers at this time of sadness and memory.

Sadly, news has been received that Joyce King, who had been in care for many years, died earlier this week. Joyce was a faithful member of the Heathmont congregation who will be remembered by many. Please hold her family in your prayers at this time of sadness.

Please also continue to remember Ross and Judy Scholes-Robertson at this time of ill-health for Judy.

AGM

Please note that the congregational AGM will take place after worship on **Sunday 17th March 2024.**

Pikelet Day

Thank you to all who participated in the Pikelet Day on Sunday and the Coffee Cup Challenge over the last 16 weeks. We raised a total of \$395.10 which was higher than I hoped so well done all participants. The funds raised will go towards those people less fortunate than ourselves who struggle to cope with rising prices and rental increases.

Working Bee

A Working Bee will take place on Saturday 24th February, many hands make light work so please give some thought to helping keep our property safe and in good condition.

Pew Polishing

As mentioned at church last week, I will be making a start on polishing the pews on March 6th at 9.30 am and continue on through the month of March when hopefully we will have done all the wooden furniture we have in the worship space. Chair cleaning is also on the agenda and will be done during the School Holidays perhaps in early April when there are no CLC classes.

The World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer will be taking place on **Friday 1st March** at 10am at Ringwood Uniting Church, 30-32 Station Street Ringwood, on the corner of Greenwood Avenue. The service has been organized by the people of Palestine.

Salvation Army Staff Band

The Salvation Army Staff Band will be holding a Symphonic Sounds 2024 concert on **Saturday 2nd March at 4pm**. For full details, please [click this link](#).

Blessings,

Brendan



Copyright © 2024 Heathmont Uniting Church, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.

Our mailing address is:
Heathmont Uniting Church
89 Canterbury Road
Heathmont, Victoria 3135
Australia

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

