

Showing Our Scars by Ruth E. Hetland

(From *The Lutheran*, April 2006)

“O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me” (Psalm 30:2).

My mother had heart surgery nine years ago. At first she tried to find blouses with high necklines to conceal the top of the long scar that began at the bottom of her throat. But over time she stopped doing that. Now she proudly wears blouses with the top button undone—her scar peeking out for the world to see. She says she doesn’t mind who sees it because it tells a story of something she has been through, a tale she lived to tell.

Could it be that we are wisest when we learn to see our scars that way? Not just the scars of surgeries but those life has given us: the ones that remain inside us from love lost, from tragedy experienced, from abuse—and even those left by our failures or bad choices?

Could it be that a part of our healing is to be able to show the scars we have acquired and say, “See these scars? These say something about me, about who I really am.”

Jesus knew it was only by showing his ruined hands and feet to his disciples when he appeared to them after his resurrection that he could prove it was really him. “See my hands and my feet—see that it is really me,” he said (Luke 24:39).

We are the walking wounded, all of us. Will we choose to hide those scars and live in some secret pain, or can we find a way to speak about our wounds in a way that can bring healing to others? Might there be a way that the wisdom and resilience we’ve acquired from our scars can spill over to be a balm to those hurting souls we meet?

With God’s help, there might. Healing God, teach us the many ways that you make brokenness a strength.