

REDISCOVERED CHANCE TO BE LOVED

"This morning, I made a wood store from planks of wood recycled from a dismantled shed a parishioner gave me a few years ago. It had been stacked up in a corner of the garden, and past its prime. Much was rotten. It did not matter though, since the holes let air circulate among the logs, and all they need to do is to hold the logs in place.

I looked at the ramshackle work, and reflected that there was a deep beauty in it. I could have bought new timber and made it impressive and stylish, but I got the feeling that the old planks, long given up on, had rediscovered a chance to be loved and to be useful once again, and that they were very, very, grateful, rewarding me with a glow of comfort I cannot express or identify, but probably a form of faith.

One of my favourite TV shows is 'The Repair Shop' where family heirlooms at the point of being too far gone are restored back to their full beauty with the prospect of them being loved for generations to follow. Without exception, there is this glow from these objects that money cannot buy, nor science express, but are overwhelming in its potency.

I thought of the man who was Pope when I was baptised, born and died in the same years as my own blood father.

I remember him once saying that the most important stage of his mission on Earth was not when he was an Archbishop in Kraków, dealing with the Soviet-led political system. Nor was it when he was globetrotting in his white cassock, kissing the ground and blessing millions. It was actually at the very end of his papacy. He was by then totally consumed by Parkinson's and barely able to mumble a few prayers. He was helpless and useless to polite society - and yet, here he was the spiritual leader and able to hold his head with pride in his humility and speak for those in a similar state, who would surely have most need for his grace and his love.

Like the rotten planks that are now keeping my firewood, he found a purpose and rewarded us all with a deep love, and enhanced our own capacity to love, which is really what I believe the Church is all about."

(Reflection shared to Fr Naz)