

On Turning Thirty-Two

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By Sr Audrey, fcJ, first published on her blog [Surprising Grace](#).

Thirty-two doesn't seem like much of a milestone. I passed through it earlier this month in a haze of anxiety and exhaustion, frantically working to some deadlines, which have thankfully passed, though the tiredness remains. If not for people around me who were kind enough to celebrate the day for me, it would probably have gone unnoticed. I suppose there is something to be learnt from this... But in any case I am deeply thankful that there have always been people around me who cared enough to celebrate my life!

Thirty-two seems an in-between stage. I am over the point of really being a 'youth' with the struggles and joys of youth – discovering my identity; the boundless sense of possibility; the restless, persistent questioning about the meaning of life and what I am to do with it; the righteous certainties and idealism about the way things should be.

The questions are still there, of course... But having grown a little in experience and having made some commitments I am less disturbed by them now, and a little more open to what is. The contours of myself – my gifts and weaknesses, my desires and fears – are a little more mapped out now (though of course the struggle with them remains). I have journeyed a little further with God, chipped away a bit at the illusion that I am in control of my life, and have enjoyed more of life's continual surprises – though sometimes through tears – so that I am a little more trusting of the One who holds my hand. I have seen more of the suffering and contradictions of the world and agonized more deeply over them, but also come to realize that there is no definitive solution, and that I am called to live in the tension between the « already and not yet ».



At the same time, I have not yet come to the point of truly accepting what is (if that happens!). At thirty-two, the words of Rilke to the young poet still speak to me:

“ I want to beg you as much as I can... to be patient toward what is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves... Do not now seek answers that cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. ... Take whatever comes with great trust, and if only it comes out of your will, out of some need of your innermost being, take it upon yourself and hate nothing.

Rainer Maria Rilke

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What about you? What are the questions still unresolved in your heart?

May the One who loves and leads us gift us with openness and trust to walk gracefully along the paths of life.



“ Pour avoir ce nom, Fidèles Compagnes de Jésus, je donnerais tout, tout ce que je suis... ”

Marie Madeleine d'Houët

Fidèles Compagnes de Jésus

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