Along the track

You Have Arrived

There is a sense of satisfaction when the navigation device tells us: "You have arrived. You have reached your destination." But I wonder if we can ever say, "I have arrived"? Am I where I want to be? Have I completed what I was meant to do, to be? Can we ever say that all our dreams, visions, hopes and desires have been fulfilled? Can we say that we have achieved our best selves, that we have loved to the best of our ability, that we have given of ourselves as we should?

I suppose it is a cliché to write that life is a journey of discovery about ourselves, about life, about our purpose, about God and God's creation, but sometimes we leave the discovery bit out. As we get busier and more serious about the business of living and making a living, we can leave behind the spontaneity, the curiosity and the joy of our early years.

Yet we are still the same person. We are still loved by the same God who created us as unique and talented. We still live in a world with God's fingerprints all over it and God's presence everywhere; we are still invited into friendship by the same God. But as we address the serious issues of adult life, we can leave behind the very things that connect us with God and God's invitation: the innocence, the childhood curiosity and openness, the joy and the fun.

We are always in the process of becoming. No matter what age we may be, we have not yet arrived at where we are meant to be – that is the journey of a lifetime. Every human being is called to journey. Everyone is on a pilgrimage, since everyone is in the process of becoming what God wants each of us to become, to have life to the full. But not everyone is at the same point in the journey.

Our attitude to the journey is the key to its success. Are we open to possibilities, to new ways of thinking or have we shut that down? Sometimes we need to ask ourselves: what will it take for me to opt for growth and transformation, what is holding me back? Is it fear of the unknown, complacency, the need to be certain, an inability to trust?

There is an old adage that says: In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities. In the expert's mind, there are few. In Pope Francis' words, "*The journey of faith can only begin when—by God's grace—we grow restless of our daily routine and begin to examine seriously our relationships with others, as well as our dreams and fears.*"

Sometimes our journey may be difficult. We can feel frustrated, angry, discouraged, and powerless. We can grow too accustomed to life's busyness. We hurt and we get disillusioned. We can feel that God has abandoned us. But, in the words of the mystic Meister Eckhart, "*God is at home. It is we who have gone out for a walk.*"

We grow and learn when we appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world around us, the joys of every day. We grow through our encounters with others, when we appreciate their goodness, and their giftedness. We grow when we are open to the healing moments in our lives, when we appreciate love and friendship, laughter and fun. We grow when we reach out to others who may cross our path, when we seek out those who need our help. We grow when we learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths and come to understand that we have been made this way for a purpose, for a mission that has been entrusted to me.

We can come to realise that we can be a blessing to the lives of others, that we can be a vehicle of God's grace and goodness in our encounters with others and in how we value God's creation.

Pope Francis often used the expression "*a big heart open to God*". That is not a bad way of describing what we are asked to bring to the wonder-filled journey of discovery that we call life. In a world which is so often full of negativity, we can always choose to look on the positive side. In Jesus' words, "*Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Mt 18:3). That doesn't mean a second childhood but rather the attitude children bring to life – awe and wonder, curiosity, openness to others, a willingness to listen, to rejoice, to explore and imagine.

Regards

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