



Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
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Pastor's Column

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Geographic Solutions

**The secret of the world lies wherever we
can discern the transparency of the universe.**

—*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Letters from a Traveller*

Do you ever seek a geographic solution to your problems or difficulties? I know that I do!

If there are some really intense frustrations or tensions in my ministry, in my personal life, or with family members, I find myself, almost unconsciously, dreaming that I am somewhere else. I have begun a new life, in another part of the world. And there, in that “magical place,” all my problems, whatever they are, are now gone.

And all I had to do was move! Just take myself to another part of the world, away from where I presently am, and “voila,” the difficulties are dissolved.

As I continue to mature, I have come to terms with this defense mechanism. I realize it is pure fantasy. As I indulge in that fantasy, it helps me to “weather the storm” temporarily, but I have learned that it is not the solution or the answer.

As I think about it realistically, I know that wherever I go, I take me with me. I can't run away from myself. There are no real geographic solutions. The answer lies inward, not outward.

So often we find ourselves running away, from place to place, from career to career, from relationship to relationship, as we attempt to find the perfect setting. But there is no perfect setting, because we are not perfect, and we take ourselves wherever we go.

Ultimately, the secret is not to run away, but to embrace the present moment and place with faith and to enter more deeply into the mystery that is God, life, love, and relationship.

The “secret of the world,” making peace with life, lies in our ability to realize that all we possess is the present moment and place. It is in the present moment and place that, with the eyes of faith, we encounter God and embrace existence. As Jesus said, “The Reign of God is in your midst!”

Faith gives us the ability to “discern the transparency of the universe” in the mundane, routine joys and sorrows of our daily lives.

Embrace the present with its joys and sorrows...it is here where the universe becomes transparent...it is here that you will unlock the secret of the world...it is here that you will find God.

F. Mike