



There are so many reasons for hope. And yet lately our human community has been struck by tragedies: earthquakes in Mexico, the Vegas shooting, hurricanes... A perfect storm of sorts. The question is always there: will I stand there looking at the tragedy or swing into action?

It was beautiful to see the many and varied responses. When Irma hit Houston, for example, J.J. Watt of the Houston Texans started a fundraising campaign and raised some 30 million dollars. After the earthquake that hit Mexico City it was amazing to see how people mobilized immediately and spontaneously to distribute food and medicine. One friend of mine brought her highly-trained German Shepherd to fallen buildings to help find those buried in rubble. They are a testament to beautiful human spirit that is naturally inclined to good.

It is easy to see reasons for concern: possibilities of war around the world, corruption in governments, lack of faith in politicians, increasingly secularized society growing further from God and the eternal truths every day. We cannot close our eyes and pretend these and other serious problems don't exist. Two interesting books recently came out that have to do with this. The Benedict Option discusses the formation of small communities formed based on common values, much like St. Benedict who retired to the desert. Whether it was his intention or not, the first monastic communities sprang up from his reclusion and these communities, centuries later, would be responsible for the first universities and the education of Europe. Something similar could happen today.

Now I think that in many ways this has already been happening, though not to so dramatic a degree as could be inferred. This is happening all over the place in the various charismatic movements, in parish groups, in evangelization efforts... I see it all the time in holy young families, in young people who love the Lord, the continued diffusion of John Paul II's Theology of the Body, to name just a few.

There are reasons for hope all around us! Let's not lose sight of that amidst the tragic, deplorable, and unfortunate circumstances facing us. We are Christians after all! And the Christian believes in the resurrection. The Christian believes that God can always bring

forth a greater good, just as He rose Christ from the dead on the third day.

For further recommended reading, see Matthew Kelly's "The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic." The Benedict Option discusses the formation of small communities formed based on common values, much like St. Benedict who retired to the desert. Whether it was his intention or not, the first monastic communities sprang up from his reclusion and these communities, centuries later, would be responsible for the first universities and the education of Europe. Something similar could happen today.

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