

There's a subtle movement underfoot in many of our cities. Young adults are putting their faith into action by living in faith communities that exist to serve those in the neighborhood in which they live. While pop culture may have us believe that young adults are about making money (of course, they do have huge student debt), trying to get ahead, and living in the moment, there are other stories to tell.

When we hear the word "monastic" we may think of a celibate male, cloistered off from the world, spending his days in prayer, meditation, and study. Our imagination may harken back to the early Church and the Qumran caves of those who chose to live 'outside' the norms of contemporary society. These communities continue to exist today, but in new and engaging ways.

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Marks of a New Monasticism

- Relocating to the abandoned places of empire.
- Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us.
- Hospitality to the stranger.
- Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities, combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation.
- Humble submission to Christ's body, the church.
- Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community, along the lines of the old novitiate.
- Nurturing common life among members of an intentional community.
- Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children.
- Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life.
- Care for the plot of God's earth given to us, along with support of our local economies.
- Peacemaking in the midst of violence, and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18:15-20.
- Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life.

Much of this sounds like the community Jesus imagined. The community of Jesus' disciples as they followed him along the road to Jerusalem. Many of these points sound very much like a faith community living out the gospel.