Without Community can we survive?

community - "(ecology) a group of interdependent organisms inhabiting the same region and interacting with each other".

Community is basically the environment of people coming together and working together. This is what I believe we are loosing as quickly as the growing speed of the Internet in today's world. The Internet, however, is not necessarily the cause as it is simply a tool for communications. As our world grows smaller with modern technologies we must not loose the necessity of interdependence and interactions among people everywhere. The use of the word ecology in the definition above is a reference to the environment of living persons as well as the environment as it relates to living organisms.

Without community, interdependence, and interactions our world will literally fall apart! Politics - (the activities and affairs involved in managing a state or a government) must become integrated internationally and world wide as our world community becomes smaller and more mutually involved as a global community. Individualism and the tribal mentality are too often the real enemies separating people of good will. People today hardly know the names of their neighbors even when they live close together in large apartment buildings or in separate homes in crowded neighborhoods. At almost every level it appears that community is being diminished and destroyed.

Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest writes, "There is the difference between merely having correct information and the true gift of wisdom. Both knowledge and wisdom are good, but wisdom is much better. It demands the maturity of discernment, which is what it takes to develop a truly consistent ethic of life." He continues in several of his meditations to say, "When the first level of the spiral of violence, "the world" (group selfishness), is not exposed for what it is, and the second level, "the flesh," generates out of control (murder, stealing, rape, lying, adultery, greed, etc.), then a third level of fully justified and even idealized evil usually emerges. These are systems like oppressive governments, penal systems, legal systems, military systems, economic systems, and all the other systems we create to control disorder and violence."

Obviously individuals are necessary to the makeup of community and when individuals come together in community we clearly need some kind of polity to organize their well being. I believe that Fr. Rohr, as quoted in the previous paragraph, summarizes the breakdown of our communities, especially in this twenty-first century. Group selfishness, individuals out of control, and oppressive systems of control are causing our growing dilemma. Curbing these excesses in human behavior in every facet of our social order is absolutely essential for our global well being.

(The Rev'd) Gerard A. Pisani, Jr.
Episcopal Priest Retired