The Power of Faith

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

“This past year has been full of great times and experiences, but as we all know, for every high there is a low. As great a year it was, there were times of sadness and difficulties that challenged my community. Every day over 100 people die from drug overdose in the United States. In my hometown, Auburn, NY, heroin has taken the lives of many members of the community and continues to threaten lives every day. While this issue has brought great tragedy, it has also revealed something significant about my community.”

Cover Page Footnote
Selected for The World Seen Through the Lens of Faith prize
The Power of Faith

This past year has been full of great times and experiences, but as we all know, for every high there is a low. As great a year it was, there were times of sadness and difficulties that challenged my community. Every day over 100 people die from drug overdose in the United States. In my hometown, Auburn, NY, heroin has taken the lives of many members of the community and continues to threaten lives every day. While this issue has brought great tragedy, it has also revealed something significant about my community.

Illness and death are problems that everyone deals with at some point in their lives. They are obstacles that can tear a family apart, or bring it closer together. But the members of this community that lost daughters or sons, mothers or fathers, sisters or brothers, reacted in such an amazing way that was truly eye opening. With all of these tragedies and challenges came a response different from expectation. In place of despair, anguish and blame, I have seen acceptance, generosity, warmth, and welcoming, open arms. My community found comfort in their religious beliefs and used them as a source of solace as well as support for one another.

The tragedy that surrounds my community has opened my eyes to the power of faith and religion. Never before have I seen such an intense connection between the members of my community. I’ve never seen the people of Auburn so united and joined together, ready to fight
for a cause we all believe in. This made me realize that the tough times are when faith really
guides and strengthens us. The only way to make it through the hard times is to pray for one
another and to have faith in God. And that’s just what we did. Everyone within the community
supported each other, said prayers together in church, and prayed every day for the families that
lost loved ones.

It has become very evident that religion plays a powerful role during these hard times.
I’ve realized that the challenges in life are what make one’s beliefs stronger. It is amazing how
faith allows so much support to be shared between people who don’t even know each other.
Everywhere I go I observe the interactions between people, exchanging hugs, and saying “I’ll
pray for you.” These indications of faith have given the people of Auburn strength and the power
to combat drug abuse, and they give us hope for a better future. The challenges my community
faced have reinforced our relationships with God and with one another. Everyone has come
together for a united response to stand up against drug abuse and fight to save the lives of our
loved ones. None of this would be possible without our faith.

_Mosaic on the façade of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome (Italy)_
_Photo by MC_