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## What is invisible begins to disappear

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Moments of adversity bring with them important consequences. Reality is brought home and truth stands out, rendering irrelevant any ideological debate as in the face of facts there is simply no argument. We should not squander the opportunity of a crisis to not have a closer look at our values.

Crises provoke extreme reactions, for good or for bad, and when they become more acute bring out the best and worst in individuals, families, communities and countries. Everyone, individually and collectively, should choose the path to follow in circumstances that undermine our basic concept of reality.

The examples are astonishing and the volatility and uniqueness of the situation render any posturing potentially dangerous, with pathetic or dramatic consequences.

There are those that attempt to capitalize on the tragedy, among which are populist and irresponsible politicians that minimize the impact of the pandemic and retreat dumbfounded when faced with the facts.

There is no other explanation for the apparent incompetence of the public authorities at all levels in the global economic center New York becoming the World's epicenter for new cases of COVID-19 months after information on the disease and its means of transmission had become known.

Institutions arduously constructed over the course of decades were reduced to dust in an instant.

How does one comprehend the fact that the European Union had abandoned Italy to its own devices, Austria and Slovenia unilaterally closing their frontiers, at the worst moment of the crisis? The communitarian ideology was paralyzed by fear, placing in check the greatest movement of integration in history and the real existence of fraternity between European citizens (China, of course, did not lose any time in rendering the necessary assistance, with undisguisable geopolitical interest).

How can one ignore the fact that the World is now governed by mere bureaucrats or madmen? How does this not leave one yearning for statesmen?

But the best within us is reflected in the heroic efforts of the health professionals that risk (and, often, lose) their lives attempting to save the most fragile and desperately search for solutions via the international scientific community, united in an unprecedented spirit of cooperation, enabled by the new technologies that are available.

From an economic standpoint, many of the pillars that support the globalized economy, guided primordially by the invisible hand of the market, according to Adam Smith, have disappeared before our eyes, incapable of

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resolving a crisis that, by its nature, was not conceived for resolution by them.

The global production chains run the risk of collapsing, depending on the duration of the effects of the pandemic, and the opportunities of economic efficiency available via the internationalizing of business have been suddenly transmuted into risk for national and even individual interests.

Instead of the invisible hand of the market, individuals and companies seeking to survive return to the visible hand of the State, normally so criticized in times of abundance but now is viewed as a type of universal guarantor.

Although the solutions are not simple ones, it is essential that we rethink our premises respecting the relationship between the public and private and between the individual and collective interests.

If on one hand free competition and economic efficiency are incapable of resolving this crisis per se it is also certain that they trigger the undeniable economic benefits that bring about the existence of tools that will best allow us to confront it, among which is enormous technical-scientific development.

On the other hand, the disease, which in the large part has levelled us, had made it apparent that economic brawn does not alter the fundamental truth that the strongest society, collectively, is only as strong as its weakest link.

The paradox is complex and apparently unsolvable.

How can it be accepted as natural that the country with the most developed economy in the World does not have a health system in place guaranteeing minimum basic rights

to its citizens? And how can one overlook the fact that a country like Brazil, which guarantees these rights constitutionally, does not have the economic and political capacity to render these rights effective?

How can one recognize without awe that the same liberties that the democracies guarantee render them particularly vulnerable while the authoritarian regimes, exactly for reason of the sophistication of their control over the population, appear to offer evident advantage in command with respect to this type of calamity?

It is a fact that China appears to have contained its number of infected, exactly at the same moment that the situation is unmanageable for the more developed countries of the West.

But the adversity also provides us the opportunity to learn from our experiences and we firmly believe that the present difficulties will be overcome and a new cycle of opportunities will arise for those that prove to be sufficiently agile to persist through it.

It is essential that we do not lose this unique opportunity to reevaluate the World in which we live in, where we have walked and where we actually wish to arrive. When much of what is familiar and comforting to us rapidly disappears before our eyes to face the truth is always the best solution.

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