And we have realized just how much we depend on one another to survive...

Some mornings, many of us wake up literally feeling that everything was a nightmare. Life as we knew it has changed overnight and we are now facing something totally unknown. The invisible enemy, some call it, but it seems more that for years we have neglected to see the reality that we live.

If there is one thing this pandemic has exposed, it is the tremendous inequality of our societies. Many of us have been struck with the double tragedy of facing a health crisis without water in our homes, or without access to a healthcare system, or a secure home where we can shelter and protect ourselves from the disease. Some live day to day while there are others that, despite and thanks to the influence of the crisis, continue benefiting and accumulating profits. This reality makes us reflect over the importance of public services for everyone that are organized for the common good, the good of everyone, and are not privatized for the benefit of only a few.

The streets have been militarized. Silent isolation and obedience is what is expected of us to confront this crisis. The attempts by the State to mitigate the economic impact are insufficient, late, and unequal. Factory workers aren’t safe at work and continue their work without gloves, antiseptics, or masks. Farmers can’t bring in their products to the cities. Applause and thanks are not enough for those on the frontlines who are risking their lives and the lives of their families to push the supply chain: grocery store workers, hospital workers, trash collectors, that have for many years received poor salaries and only recently have we begun to call them “essential.” We haven’t realized that many of us depend on one another to survive. Only recently have we realized that there are thousands of things we have taken for granted. Fear has paralyzed us.

But everyone has also learned that the disease, defeat, pain and ailments are also a message. This message is relentlessly clear and direct, it tells us that we should stop, rest, and change our habits, change our direction. However, some still resist listening and are instead looking for a “cure” to eliminate what our vulnerability has revealed, to return quickly to “normality” when normality was just as much the origin of the problem as the problems.
How do we continue?

And still, networks of solidarity in neighborhoods have emerged, food banks, bottom-up strategies for survival, to mutually help one another. **Solidarity hasn’t been replaced by fear and isolation.**

We can look at how nature and our surroundings continue flourishing when we humans withdraw and stay in our homes. The air and waters clear, reclaiming their rights, recuperating their capacity to regenerate and decontaminate. The animals reinhabit their vital spaces and advance towards the silent and deserted cities. A powerful message that speaks to us of the interconnection and **harmony of the elements and cycles of nature**, of how we are a part of them, and how we have distorted and violated this relationship. We can’t cease to listen to this message.

To eat and nourish ourselves well, we are learning to live without the unnecessary, and we understand, today more than ever, the importance of eating well, of water and the food that guarantees the survival of what should **connect us once again with the earth**.

To heal ourselves and heal one another is our work in the immediate future. May social distance be what brings individuals into community. **Only organization of community can overcome fear.**

This time recovering, our familial relationships and relationships as humans, the formation and personal growth, spirituality, and the connection with nature are the resources that can help us imagine and build a different future when we leave our homes.

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...20 years after the Cochabamba Water Wars

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