**LEAVING THE “NORMAL” BEHIND, IN THE POST PANDEMÍA WE BUILD A "NEW NORMALITY" FOUNDED ON "THE SUMAK KAWSAY"**

**26-07-20**

**GREETING 1:** Javier

**GREETING 2:** Gilberto

**JUAN** Brothers and sisters, many of us now after so many months of quarantine due to the Covid-19 epidemic are waiting for a return to "normality". But we must ask: “Really, what is “normal” and do we really want to go back to living as before?" In our program today, we want to propose an alternative and for that reason, we have put as a theme the following*: LEAVING THE NORMAL BEHIND, IN THE POST PANDEMÍA WE BUILD A "NEW NORMALITY" FOUNDED ON "THE SUMAK KAWSAY"*

***[CORTINA MUSICAL]***

**VER:**

**JUAN** Brothers and sisters, many of us now after so many months of quarantine due to the Covid-19 epidemic are waiting for a return to "normality". But we must ask: Really, what is normal and do we really want to go back to living as before?" In our program today, we want to propose an alternative and for that reason, we have put as a theme the following: *LEAVING THE “NORMAL” BEHIND, IN THE POST PANDEMÍA WE BUILD A "NEW NORMALITY" FOUNDED ON "THE SUMA KAWSAY".*

**GILBERTO** In this pandemic, many of us yearn for the old normal. We want to return, for example, to our religious devotions, such as going to church or chapel to attend a Sunday Mass or for a deceased person. And of course, there’s nothing wrong with so many of those wishes for old normality. But I’d like to make a proposal. If we are wise at this time, we will not return without thinking of the old normal. There were problems with that old normality that many of us didn’t know about.

**JAVIER**  The old normality, when you look at it from today’s perspective, was not so great; it was not something we should feel nostalgic about, without also being very critical. As we experience discomfort at this time, let us begin to dream of a new normality, a new normality that addresses the weaknesses and problems that were not addressed in the old normality. If we are wise, we will not return. The pandemic has lifted the veil from our eyes.

**JUAN** One of the great lessons that COVID-19 has brought us has been to remind us again to what extent human creatures are fragile, exposed to unknown forces that can cause us great damage and that we always intend to have already dominated. We continue to yearn to "return to normality" when that expression means nothing more than a return to our fragility and our oblivion of it. But the worst thing is that, in addition to being fragile, we are cruel; and our normality is to hide the pain of the world.

**GILBERTO** In this world that proclaims the equal rights of every human being, there are people who own four or five luxury mansions in various cities on the planet, and people who sleep in the streets because they lack those "four walls" and a cot that we throw away. In this world, where everyone has freedom of expression, but only a few have the possibility of exercising that freedom, those few proclaim that "*humanity has never been as good as today*" or that "*we are better than ever".*

There is the temptation during this global crisis to say, "*It’s just another pandemic. Thousands will die, but life is still normal*". It is «*normal*» that is killing us, and not just COVID-19. It is normal that the number of suicides in the world is increasing, which is causing drug use, whether legal or illegal, to grow alarmingly, including drugs sold in pharmacies freely? Anyway, it is normal that planetary inequality is increasing and you think that someday you will be a normal person?

**JAVIER** This world that admires its "progress" has created societies where footballers are more important than nurses; it relocates its companies and transfers them to Asia to employ children who should be in school. And it defies itself by claiming that this way some income enters their homes and it is better than nothing (because the companies do not want to employ their parents because they would have to pay them more). This world has inoculated mother earth with a deadly disease, we do not know if it is already incurable, while it refuses to change the direction of its progress, limiting itself to applying hot cloths to that gravely ill land.

**JUAN** This inhuman world has a diagnosis that we try to ignore or refuse to accept: *"the root of all its ills is the passion for private wealth"* (cf. 1 Tim 6:10). This passion (also justified as virtue) has led us to build a "*society-market*" instead of a "*society of coexistence*" and to establish as a fundamental principle competitiveness instead of the basic principle of solidarity.

**GILBERTO** We should reconsider the contours of our national social contract. Our social and economic systems work in a zero-sum game where there are winners and losers. It didn’t have to be that way. We have the opportunity to restructure society, so it works so well for those who don’t have it and those who almost have it for the rich. Do we really want an organised society to support the rich with the work of a sub-class of marginalised workers? Do we believe that it is every man, every woman for themselves, or do we want a safety net of society for those who have fewer options and fewer resources?

**JUAN** With this introduction to our theme today, we will now pause and as we listen to this song: "LORD OF HOPE" (1st part)

[MUSICAL THEME: "LORD OF HOPE"]

**PENSAR:**

**JUAN** Let us return to our reflection on LEAVING BEHIND THE “NORMAL”, IN THE POST PANDEMÍA WE BUILD A "NEW NORMALITY" FOUNDED ON "*THE SUMAK KAWSAY*"

Humanists, naturists, theologians warn us that human, animals, vegetables and our planet with the cosmos all, we are one unit of life and that its harmony cannot be destroyed without leading us to our own destruction. The book of Genesis told us: "God made an image of clay" to create human beings. The word *'man'-humus*- in Hebrew means “*earth*”. Symbol that tells us we are one life: 'earth we are', nature we are.

**JAVIER** And the biblical book itself, Juan, tells us what our mission on earth is: "God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden so that they would take care and cultivate it". That is our vocation: to care for and cultivate life. “Taking care of it” gives to suppose that the land is not ours: it is a loan to take care so that all the creatures can live, eat and heal, both the generations of today and those of tomorrow. And 'to cultivate the land' means that there is enoughcapacity to feed ourselves to live well if we are 'cults', that is, caretakers and cultivators of life.

**GILBERTO** We have to say something else, Javier. To act by attacking and destroying life, we go against nature, against ourselves, against the will of God: we cannot but go to certain death. We also go against the plan of Jesus which is the Kingdom, that is, the full and happy life*: "I have come that you may have life and life in abundance". W*e were born to collaborate in the strengthening and multiplication of life and Good Living; if not, we are destroyed.

**JUAN** In these difficult and challenging times, we are discovering a wisdom we needed all the time, and that wisdom is that we are all connected. We are not separated. We used to think that we catch diseases as individuals: "I am sick; you are not". But now we realize, no, we spread diseases as individuals who are part of families, and families who are part of cities, and cities that are part of states and nations. Now we realize that our entire species can become infected and that our entire globe can change because of our interconnection. . .

**JAVIER**  Maybe this is also an opportunity for us to enlighten ourselves about other viruses that have been spreading and causing even greater harm, without being recognized: social and spiritual viruses that spread among us from individual to individual, from generation to generation, and are not named. We do not organize against them, so they continue to spread and cause all kinds of diseases [and deaths]. Social and spiritual viruses like racism, exclusion, any kind of hostility that spreads, based on prejudice and fear.

**GILBERTO** What would happen if we were to say, as passionate as we are about the coronavirus test, that we would all want to test these social and spiritual viruses that could be lurking within us? And then, when I come into your presence, somehow, I inflict this virus on you. I make you suffer. What a great opportunity for us to say and begin to pray that we are healed and cleansed, not just from a physical virus, but from these other invisible viruses that are such a huge and devastating part of human history. . . .

**JUAN** Now let’s take another pause, as we continue with this Musical Theme:

[MUSICAL THEME: "SOLIDARITY"]

**ACTUAR:**

**JUAN** In this crisis caused by the pandemic, the fact that we do not have a ready and finished response does not mean that we should surrender to what is before us. We will have to think in a procedural way and in stages. Visionaries often suffer a lot. They perceive the need for a profound change, but they still cannot propose exactly a path that can infect the majority, since the majority still thinks within a mental structure that can be called «normal».

**JAVIER** Our traditional peoples found a way to survive that allowed a resistance force capable of going through colonial domination without disappearing. One of the expressions that the Andean peoples use to describe this way of life is “***sumak kawsay***”, which can have as a possible translation “***TO LIVE WELL”*** - the Good Life. It is a question of seeking human relations based not on accumulation, on waste, on the extraction of nature from everything possible for an opulent way of life, but on reciprocity, solidarity, empathy and harmony with all nature.

**GILBERTO** Many can say: «*Sweet utopia, very beautiful, but unrealizable in our times»*. Perhaps. However, we have been living capitalist relations for a long time. Wouldn’t it be time to redirect what is meant by «progress» towards a greater balance in the relationships that make up life on the planet? Should we «pay to see» where the «market god» will take us?

**JUAN**  Yes, we will have to think and act procedurally. We will have to establish steps. We will have to find the intercession that unites all who believe in **another possible world**. We will need at the present stage, for example, to defend democracy as a political instrument that allows debate and the shaping of the new horizon. But we cannot surrender to the representative political model that is exhausted. We can no longer rely fully on the totally extractive economic model.

**JAVIER** We ourselves will need to be the change we want in the world. Old people, adults and young people, men and women, we must constitute a new model of life, **not** a new normality. How long will it take? There is no prognosis possible. Predictable is that as it is, there will be no future. Let us now work on the stony ground so that other generations can plant and others can harvest.

**GILBERTO** Jesus prays to the Father saying, «*I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and have revealed them to the little ones - to the simple people*». It seems that most Christians don’t trust that very much. Pope Francis has been a great exception. He has stated that nothing can be done for people, but only for people. This is the Good Living. This is the UBUNTU of the African tradition: I can only be one if you accompany me. This is our hope, without messianism, without saviours of the country.

**JUAN** This outbreak of the pandemic coincides with the fifth anniversary of the Pope Francis’ encyclical "*Laudato Si'* on the Care of the Common House, that is to say of our planet that is sick today. It is a house with many dwellings, some more comfortable than others, and with diversity of creatures -including the land itself- each with its value that must be taken care of and protected. This implies a change of life, in the way of producing and consuming. It is the **J**

JAVIER Finally we believe that the "*New Normal*" will come from the peripheries, with the wisdom of the “Sumak Kawsay” - Wellbeing-Good Living. But until we arrive, we will face many struggles, losses and deaths. But our hope can overcome all discouragement, because the poet Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga has already proclaimed: "We are defeated combatants for an invincible cause". In an interconnected world, no one is safe until everyone is safe.

**SIGNING-OFF:**

**JAVIER:**

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**Note:** To understand the term “SUMAK KAWSAY” used in the Andean Region of the world we offer a brief explication –

= “***Vivir Bien or Buen Vivir***” is... living in harmony with other human beings and nature, on the basis of unity, solidarity and empathy, returning to the ancestral principles of the peoples of the region. This view is not anthropocentric and not even egocentric: we are part of the same unit and just as "we are mountains that walk, the trees are our brothers and sisters In the same way, Good Living is to seek life in community, where all members care about everyone. The most important thing is life in a broad sense, not the individual or property. Such a cosmovision in search of harmony demands, as is obvious, the renunciation of any kind of accumulation.

The elements that constitute it are: the satisfaction of needs. quality of life. dignified death. love and be loved. healthy flowering of all in harmony with nature. indefinite prolongation of cultures. free time for contemplation. the emancipation and extension of freedoms, capacities and potentialities.