

Diary from quarantine – 14 – *Everyone's Loneliness*

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Today many of us woke up irrationally happy, just because the awful month of March is over, as if viruses followed humans' calendars and conceptions of times.

Once again, however, the numbers are plainly shocking: 188,592 cases in the United States, 105,792 in Italy, 95,923 in Spain (March 31), and I could continue.

With 12,428 victims, my country has so far paid the highest price to COVID-19 and it was to commemorate the victims and show solidarity with the families that yesterday Italians had a minute of silence.

With flags at half-mast and [*Il Silenzio*](#) (The Silence) played in every city, the brief commemorations showed us once again the ugliest face of this pandemic: Loneliness.

Many of you might be familiar with the power of this image, showing Pope Francis alone under the rain in San Pietro square a few days ago.



Even mayors and representatives of institutions during the commemoration were alone, separate, distant.

After any other kind of disaster, humans are able to gather in groups and grieve together. This pandemic is stripping us from this possibility and this is what makes it unprecedented.

Being close to each other would actually harm us, in a paradoxical inversion of what we used to know and of what just "feels right".

Worse than this collective loneliness there is only the loneliness of the people who died in the hospital without being able to say goodbye to their families and, later, the loneliness of those families who cannot even celebrate a proper funeral to part from the beloved ones.

In the history of mankind, having a ritual to accompany the dead and mark the tragic event has always been crucial for survivors to process the trauma and continue living.

The current pandemic is stopping us from having these rituals – be them private or public - and the psychological and anthropological impact of this deprivation is likely to be extremely deep.

#StayHome.

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