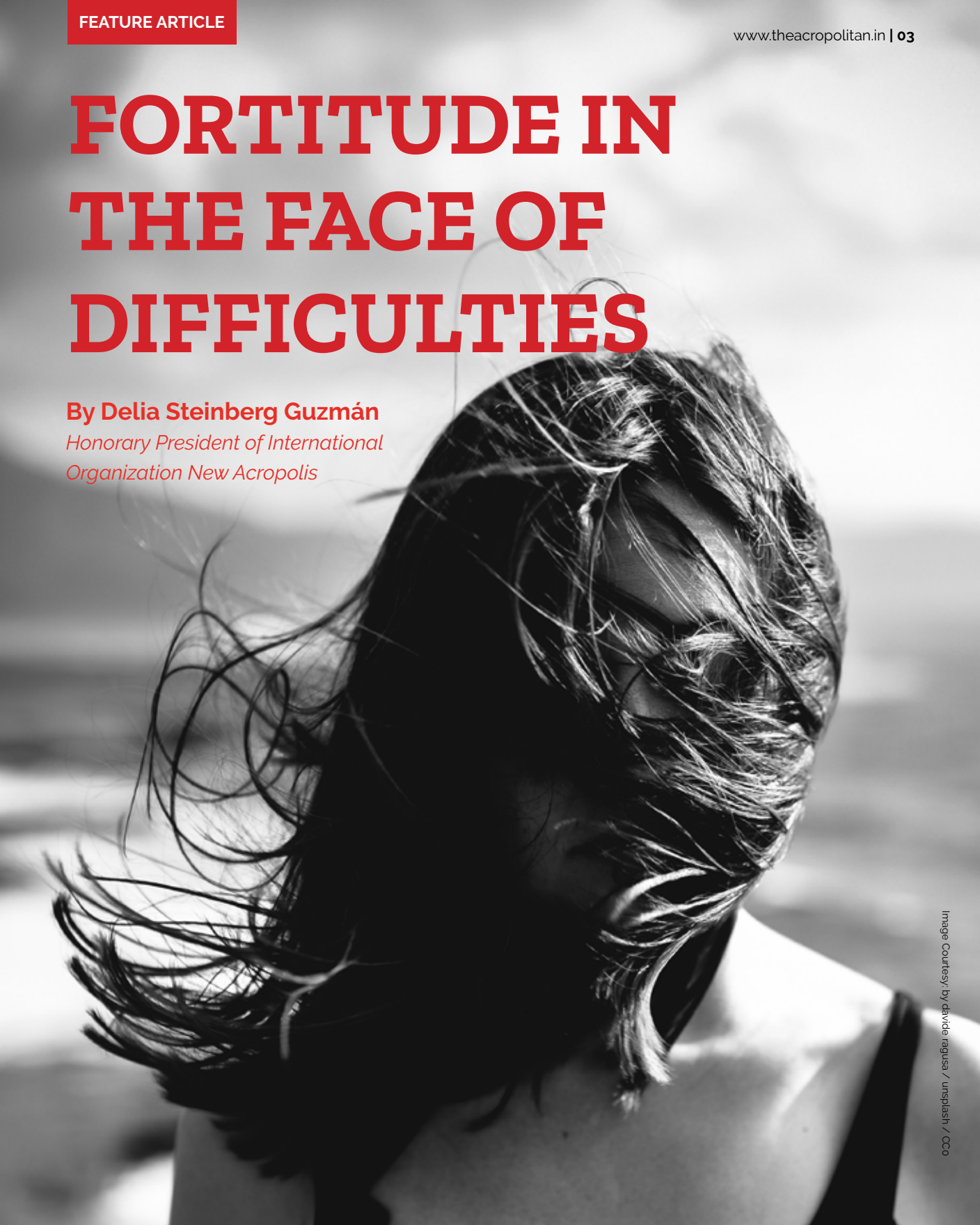


# FORTITUDE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTIES

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When 2020 began, we did not yet know the extent of the difficult times we would have to face. A short time later came the spread of a pandemic, which affected most – if not all – countries in the world, showing that in such cases what we regard as differences do not exist. We are all human beings, we are all vulnerable to sickness and we are all affected by pain.

Every day we see with surprise and panic the number of people affected by the coronavirus, the growing number of deaths, and even if fortunately many recover, the number of those who have lost their lives is breath-taking. It is so great that sometimes we see no more than figures and we forget the pain of those who leave this world in the loneliness of a hospital or in worse places, or in the sadness of those who cannot approach or say goodbye to their loved ones.

We do not see, however much it is repeated, the tireless dedication of those who are sparing no efforts to save lives, to raise the spirits of those who feel unprotected. They are true models of Fortitude.

Evidently, these are difficult times, and above all, special times which put our inner values to the test.

To know how to suffer is not easy, but if there is fortitude, suffering becomes an enormous power which we were not aware of and we did not know we could develop. There are forms of suffering which ennoble, and we have only to think of the great number of wonderful works of art that have been born under the influence of pain. However, they are expressions of pain that transport us to elevated spheres of consciousness, producing, more than consolation, a sense of infinity which allows us to merge with the whole universe.



We should have contact every day with the beauty that restores our dignity and makes us feel greater and better.

Behind pain there is a meaning, and although when we are trapped by pain we do not understand the meaning of life, we should make an effort to reach those causes that are deeper than those which are simply evident. This deeper understanding would help us to discover other causes, other answers which are not so evident, but no less true for that.

I know it is easy to use words to explain, words to console, words... However, in the absence of another more intimate and subtle means of communication, we have no other option than to use words. If we were to remember some ancient teachings, those which time has swallowed up in favour of more superficial and insignificant forms, we would recover the hidden meaning that lies concealed behind words. Each of them contains a concept, an idea. And the sound of that word should be enough for its inner meaning to return to us.

*To know how to suffer is not easy, but if there is fortitude, suffering becomes an enormous power which we were not aware of and we did not know we could develop.*

We recommend "fortitude" and we don't know exactly what we mean by it. Is it to put up with pain without anyone noticing? Is it to hide our tears? Is it to show coldness when we are burning inside? Is it to fall into apathy and lack of feelings? Is it to resort to aggression to give vent to what we cannot show?

Unfortunately, those forms of apparent fortitude have a short duration and sooner or later are lost, giving rise to much coarser or more inappropriate expressions of the human being. Then, we mistrust fortitude and any other moral value which may be similar to it.

While we are waiting for words to acquire a special meaning, we believe that fortitude is a kind of strength, naturally, but needs other elements to complete it and turn it into a living value.

True fortitude needs will, which means a permanent value founded on our principles and in what we want to do in life. It is a type of courage that is not destroyed in the face of adversities, but, on the contrary, grows and becomes more powerful and refined. It is the capacity for decision and for taking responsibility for one's mistakes in order to return to life again and again with a renewed desire to improve oneself.

*The strongest person is the one who understands most and loves most, who understands others and loves himself by giving himself opportunities.*

True fortitude needs intelligence, not reasoning. Intelligence searches for the reasons behind things, it is capable of seeing behind the appearances and of grasping immediately, in a flash, what is hidden behind each situation, behind each person, behind oneself.

True fortitude needs love. Far from this virtue is hardness of character, coldness and ill-treatment. On the contrary, the strongest person is the one who understands most and loves most, who understands others and loves himself by giving himself opportunities, far from pride and vanity.

True fortitude needs union. Alone we can do many things, but united in heart with those with whom we share our lives, we can almost make miracles. Union gives strength which multiplies our own by millions, it multiplies will, intelligence and love.

Fortitude and Union are unique medicines in difficult and special times. 