

OPENING SPEECH OF THE 32ND CONGRESS OF THE BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF CARDIOVASCULAR SURGERY IN VITÓRIA, BRAZIL

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Dear colleagues, good friends!

Vitória! Victoria!

Dear Shariff, who I learned to admire; Domingo Braile, friend and guide, Dear your Excellency Governor Paulo Hartung. You managed! Victoria! Vitória, beautiful capital of Espírito Santo state, Brazil, that welcomed us with open arms.

With affection, admiration and respect, in name of these three winners, I welcome all who are going to participate in the directorate of the Brazilian Society of Cardiovascular Surgery for moments of harmony, learning and above all, of renovation.

In my speech of investiture I cited the poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade, who wrote: “in the middle of the path there was a stone, there was a stone in the middle of the path...”

There are still many stones to be removed or overcome in the middle of our paths. They will always exist!

What do we doctors do every day if not to remove obstacles, if not to look for alternatives to obstacles that apparently can not be overcome, if not to find clear paths enabling the continuity of life?

For the continuity of life, how it is good to be grateful for everything and for all, learning from the people who surround us, encouraging us and criticizing, helping us to confront the challenges of life.

While thinking about what to write, I remembered an ancient myth from a Mediterranean culture about the rejuvenation of the eagle:

“From time to time – the myth says – the eagle, similar to the Egyptian phoenix, renews itself totally”.

It flies higher and higher until it arrives near to the sun. Then, the feathers catch fire and the whole eagle starts to burn. At this point, the eagle throws itself from the sky directly into the cold waters of the lake. Through the extreme experiences of fire and water, the old eagle rejuvenates itself totally. It grows new feathers

again, sharp talons, penetrating eyes and the vigor of youth. Surely, this myth is the basis of Psalm 103; “Your youth is renewed like the eagle’s”.

Fire and water are opposites. But, when together, they are powerful symbols of transformation. Nobody, after passing through fire or water, remains unaffected. Either succumb or be transfigured because water washes and fire purifies. The water makes us think about a great flood, which, with its great force, carries everything away, especially that which does not have consistency and solidity. This is the unhappiness of life. And fire makes us imagine the furnaces that burn and purifies all things that are not essential. These are the notorious existential crises.

As we walk along the path in the dark and scary night – as the spiritual masters say – we let our inner self emerge. They who receive baptisms of fire and water, rejuvenate as the eagle of the ancient myth.

To rejuvenate similar to the eagle also means to release things that, at one time, were good and ideas which were enlightening but gradually became old and incapable to inspire on the path of life.

To rejuvenate similar to the eagle means to have courage to start again and always to be ready to listen, to learn and to reconsider. Is it not this that we propose at each congress?

Victoria!

That at the end of this, the 32nd Brazilian Congress of Cardiovascular Surgery, which is about to start, there is an opportunity to ask how much of the chicken exists in us, a bird does not do anything but to scratch in the dirt; or how much of the eagle is there still in us, ready to bravely renew ourselves when confronted with the problems and the crises of life.

To constantly rejuvenate is the true spirit of the cardiovascular surgeon.

Welcome to Vitória!

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