

The new Pope's choice, politics and physical therapy

Those who watched the last conclave could see some differences in relation to previous ones. After all, when Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation on a specific date, something new happened in the history of the Vatican. For the first time in centuries, the smallest country in the world had the chance to prepare for such an event. There was a ceremonial, official band and honors of the famous Swiss Guard at the moment of the announcement.

Such process for choosing the new Bishop of Rome is surrounded with interests. Countries wanted to elect the Supreme Pontiff, press and betting agencies were speculating about favorite cardinals, that is, more and more articulations all over the globe.

This makes us think of our own social organization, and how we establish mechanisms and parameters that enable the collective construction of common good: politics.

And here we talk about politics considering the “*lato*” sense of the word, of how we can be organized as a class, and not the “*stricto*” sense, of how we could use power for self-favoring.

To illustrate this situation, we will mention some real numbers. Among the Brazilian politicians who compound the National Congress, out of the 513 deputies, only one is a physical therapist (Maria Gorete Pereira) and, among the 81 senators, none of them is a physical therapist. That is, maybe we cannot say our representativeness is null, but it is certainly very limited — one professional amongst 594, which is the same as 0.17% of the Congress. This is a fact. Against facts, there are no convincing arguments.

The president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, is an economist. The most influential woman in the

world in 2012 (according to the Time magazine) was Viola Davis, an actress. The most influential man, according to the same source, is Jeremy Lin, a basketball player. The Pope is a pharmacist. Our profession is still away from the higher echelons of personalities who are in charge, and this should not even be among our goals at the moment.

It is clearly important to consider that Physical Therapy is an extremely new science, aged only 44 years old. Therefore, the lack of consistent political action is understandable. However, if we let this reality persist, decades will pass by and we will continue to feel sorry for the absence of public policies that value and dignify this profession which, for us, is the most beautiful of professions.

So, let's take the example of the Vatican. We have time to prepare. To think. To articulate. To choose, among ourselves, the most prepared ones.

It is possible that here, as it happened there, the favorite ones are excluded from the list of elected people, and that we, physical therapists, possibly the lucky ones, will conquer valuable positions in order to create projects addressed to our class. Without forgetting that today, according to data from COFFITO (August, 2012), we are 166,265 people. It is a lot! All we need to do is fight for it!

So, with well-established planning, strategy, goals and actions, in the near future there is no doubt that we will be filled with pride and saying: “*Habemus*” professional valorization.

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