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Navigare necesse est

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Academic authorities, representatives of the administration, colleagues, students, ladies and gentlemen.

The phrase ‘*navigare necesse est*’ (to sail is necessary) is attributed to the Republican General Pompey, who, according to Plutarch, in this way tried to motivate his crew to keep moving onwards in the middle of a storm, without paying attention to fear, suspicion, or adversity. It is a phrase that has been popular for centuries, and has come to be a motto for energy, growth and improvement. It was the Hanseatic League motto, and has also been used by, among others, Luís de Camões, Petrarch and the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, who I greatly admire, and who used it in one of his poems (“Navegare é Preciso”) paraphrasing the end of the complete sentence:[1] what’s necessary is to sail, it’s not necessary to live; “living isn’t necessary; what’s necessary is to create”. [2]

This is what I would now like to convey to all of you that have come to the closing ceremony of the onsite part of the 2nd edition of the Animal Law and Society Master; teachers, students, the University and Postgraduate School personnel, collaborating bodies, as well as to the friends that join us.

Studying this Master in 2013 is an honourable decision for those of you that embarked upon it, and, given the difficulty of creating a pathway for animals within the law, you have gambled for serious and professional training - a decision to sail against the wind. Thanks to all of you that have made this project possible, and that make it a reality without haste but without breaks.

What most astounds me is the hope, determination and interest I see from one day to the next in students in class and professors that have come to share their lectures, often at great personal effort from other countries and without even taking time off to look around. I have seen many of you studying in the library, preparing papers, getting better, arriving running to class from work or daily life. You always look excited and hopeful.

I want to motivate you to channel this same hope into the remaining tasks of this Master: the Investigation Project and your internships. But above all, I want to encourage you to leave your mark wherever you go. It is clear that improving the situation for animals is important to you; that it forms part of your “daily landscape”, and that you will give the best of yourself to making sure it becomes the “daily landscape” for many others. We owe it to animals.

I recently saw a pillowcase with a crossed swords – almost like a pirate flag – with this latin *dictum* written in the corner. Needless to say, I did not resist the temptation and bought it, and today it forms part of my most personal “daily landscape”. I see it and I think: of course, onwards! *navigare necesse est!*

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[1] Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse

[2] PESSOA, F., Navegar é preciso: Quero para mim o espírito desta frase,/transformada a forma para a casar como eu sou: / Viver não é necessário;/o que é necessário é criar.'