

A message from Prof. François Treves

Dear friends and colleagues,

as many of you know, I have been the Ph. D. supervisor of Paulo Cordaro, as well as of Antonio Gillioli and Jorge Hounie. I regard myself as very lucky to have had them as students and, later, as friends and collaborators. On a personal note, my work in the last ten years could not have been possible without the constant help, support and patience of Paulo. But beyond my personal feelings, I think it has been a very good thing that mathematical analysis of the highest quality has blossomed in the universities of São Paulo and San Carlos. To this I must add my admiration for the level of professional and ethical standards Paulo and Jorge were able to maintain. During many decades of contact I have witnessed the most exemplary behavior on their part and that of their entourage. I have seen Paulo react very strongly to the temptation that ‘we do like everybody does’ and that anybody ‘in our team’ ought to be accorded privileges, solely for being on our team. Many mathematical institutions and institutes, in all parts of the world, famous and less famous, are plagued by pervasive cronyism. This tendency must be resisted.

Mathematics in its totality is an awesome temple under construction. Every one of us in it, believe me - every one, feels very small. Outside the temple, people reluctantly share the awe, often resent it and some denigrate the relevance of mathematics - at the same time as it is impacting, in various guises and more than ever, many important aspects of life. We are not sure what kind of god inhabits the temple: a gigantic algorithm, or something more? That question is crucial, not only to the philosophy of science, but truly to the debate about what it is to be human. We do not know the answer. But for the time being we must do our daily job, try to add some bricks, however minor, to the building. In this, the life and the dedication of Paulo Cordaro to math is a model for all of us.

I wish you a happy and productive 7th IST-IME Meeting.

François Treves