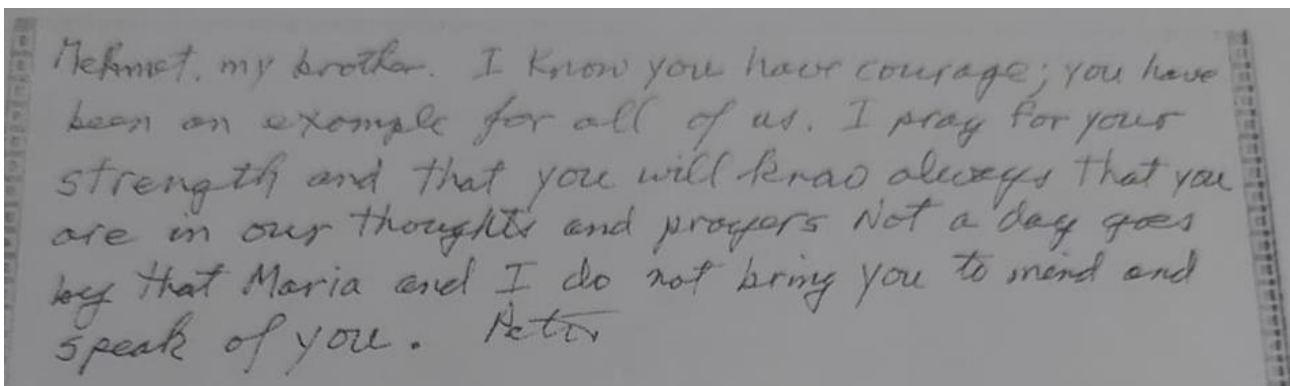


My Condolence to Maria and All Friends

Dear Maria and Colleagues

I had sent a Christmas message to Peter in last December, but received no reply for a while. It was around 02:31 a.m. when I learned my dearest brother, colleague and master Peter's passing away. All of a sudden, my eyes dissolved in tears. In that moment I wished going to his grave, kneeling down and staining the flowers on his soil with my warm tears; I desired to have a heart to heart talk, and pray for him with the most sincere feelings and thoughts.

Five years ago, the warders had come into my prison cell in a morning and told me there was a letter for me. When I opened the envelope, I saw the 8-page's historical letter that was signed by 88 IAJ delegates. Among all of those sincere messages, the one Peter wrote was quite distinctive:



When I read these words, my tears had also stained my pillow.

I have dreamed, since then, the very moment in which I'll express my heartfelt thanks by warmly hugging him because of this message and for all he has done for me during this difficult time. Because, it is impossible to define the hope the letter gave me and the importance of this message. The meaning of Peter's message and the others could be later on penned in a book.

It may be seen as exaggeration for some if I call him as a Saint. But he does. Each of the Saints were those persons who were Jesus Christ's fellow companion, acolyte and guide rigorously transmitting His thoughts and messages to the people. Aren't they? How often do we come across such a person who precisely indicates/displays His thoughts with every jiff of his/her life expedition? He was indeed one of them.

He was the Vice President of IAJ 1st Study Commission.

I met with him first in a restaurant on Bosphorus. This nice dinner in 2011, was a startup of a fruitful relationship between American and Turkish judges. Following day, I saw him, in the IAJ 1st Study Commission meeting, in a position rolled up his sleeves, jotting down diligently the Q/As of the delegates. I had adored him for his dedication to his job, determination and enthusiasm in teaching while watching him. It seems there was nothing for him equal to the pleasure he had taken while he was sharing, teaching and learning.

Next year, we were in Washington D.C. together. Again watching him quietly in IAJ 1SC.. His dialogs with the delegates representing their national judicial associations from all over the world, his politeness, heartedness and sedulity are the very manifest indicators of respect to the voluntary works of a noble soul dedicated to the idea of judicial independence.

At the end of that meeting, so as to find a chance to benefit more from his experience, and especially, be able to bring more efficiently forward then serious problems of Turkish judiciary, I directed to the presidency a question of how I can actively participate in the works of the Commission committee. That's it. I had neither read the Statute of the IAJ nor had any idea about the election-nomination processes for IAJ posts. My only idea was just to seek a way to actively take part in commission works. The following day, I was so surprised when my name was being announced as suggestion of the 1SC's presidency committee for a post of vice-president. Although I knew the fact that I was not qualified enough to meet the demands of such an important task, I did find inappropriate to reject this behest and I accepted it. To learn from the Honorable colleague, IAJ president José Igreja Matos, the fact who was behind this decision has doubled my admiration to Peter. It is because Peter did never insinuate to me, he was who offered me to the presidency committee as V.P. In contrast to many, he prefers to live in the heart of the people but the vitrine. That is why I prefer to call him as a modern saint.

My goals mentioned above have been realized. I found a chance to visit him in his Court and benefit from his deep knowledge about the US judicial system and procedural rules as well as his philosophy of justice. His court lore, his approach towards international collegial collaborations and solidarity, and attitudes towards his colleagues had always been remarkable and should be published into a book. He deigned to meet me at the entrance of the federal building and took me around the court. After the end of the business day he had treated me to a very nice dinner. In that evening he hit out for his home in Vermont and without exaggeration he was carrying an around 20kg's case full of case files. By changing 3 or 4 vehicles he was daily travelling around 9-10 hours to get home. His eyes were full of joy and enthusiasm reflecting, on one hand, his affection to his family, hometown and his land, and on the other hand the commitment to his work and profession. His solidarity to his colleagues and his faith to the international cooperation among judges was unique. I cannot explain how he was cheerful and humble in Foz da Iguaçu/Brazil, when he was treating me to Pumpkin Cookies baked by his lovely wife, Maria especially for his pupil, Mehmet.

He was a perfect example of servants of Justice. It should be emphasized in this respect, that he was, under all conditions, very cognizant of the fact he had been performing the most sacred duty in the world. With his demeanor, attitude, gestures and the strong ties with his wife and family, his job and his friends and colleagues, simply with all behaviors and character, he perfectly represented justice. Such decency, modesty, nobility and sincerity has quite rarely mustered in a single person. He was one of them. He was indeed a good judge, unique master and an infallible witness making unforgettable notes to the history of the judiciary. For all of us. I am witnessing him with these words.

On this anniversary, in my personal name, I am transmitting dearest Maria, all of the members of your family and my esteemed colleagues who suffered from Peter's passing away, my deepest sympathy and condolence.

Lastly, I wish you to know that during the last 5,5 years spent in the prison which was only open to the sky, I have prayed for him, for Maria and for many of you by name (because- let me say - I love you) in every special moment and I will continue to do so.

With all my friendship,

Mehmet Tank