

**SWEAR TO GOD, CROSS MY HEART, BELIEVE ME**

Another graduation...when will these descendants of ours get over it? But we're proud of each one, so what can we do?

The candidates parade one by one...get screamed and whistled at by over-excited mini-cheering sections...hooded and photographed and finally seated.

Almost over, but not quite.

A sobering quiet as they are called to stand and repeat their oath.... "One of the oldest binding documents in history, the Oath written by Hippocrates, is still held sacred by physicians":

*"...to treat the ill to the best of one's ability, to preserve a patient's privacy, to teach the secrets of medicine to the next generation, etc."*

I was sitting next to Jean, her head still swathed in gauze wrapping, one day out of the Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto. She had been strapped onto a gurney by medics for an ambulance ride to the hospital emergency room. It happened that our grandson who I saw repeat his Hippocratic Oath had spent time there in his training. It is also the same place where his wife is completing her medical residency.

I thought of all the hours of study and training that preceded the taking of that oath. And how more than a half dozen people involved in Jean's treatment were doing the work that oath allowed. An oath is more than a ceremony.

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Something in our human nature tends to rebel at regulations. Genesis offers the tale of Adam and Eve. Even a God-given regulation is violated. Our human attempt at civilization requires regulations and asks for oaths to uphold our sacred commitments. Even the President of the United States swears on a Bible, "so help me God," to obey the Constitution of the United States of America. A sobering oath.

I thought of the whole subject again as the former FBI Director swore to tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help me God.

Then I read the headlines of our morning paper: "*The President Strikes back: Says Comey didn't tell the truth.*"

My last thought as I come to the bottom of my page is of a historical board at a rest stop on our trip back from California. It told of the Cow Indians who fought American troops because the United State Government did not keep its treaty agreement with them.

**SWEAR TO GOD, CROSS MY HEART, BELIEVE ME,  
AND DON'T SPEAK WITH A FORKED TONGUE.**

I was moved by seeing those men and women soberly repeating their Hippocratic Oath. I am thankful for those who make sacred promises and keep them.

*Art Morgan, From Salish Sound (Native American name), June 10, 2017*