

# 2024 State Convention Theme Proposal

## Fall Torch Article

Baala Shakya, TSJCL President 2023-2024

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### Proposed Theme:

*“non aqua, non igni locis pluribus utimur quam amicitia”*

- *“We enjoy neither fire nor water on more occasions than friendship.”*
- *Cicero, adapted from De Amicitia.*

The search for this year’s theme was quite an odyssey. For months, I scoured the internet, consulted with Latin teachers, and skimmed through pages and pages of Latin quote books. However, no quote felt right—nothing fully captured the spirit of the TSJCL and its community, as I wished to portray, while also having a “theme-like” translation. As my proposal for the new State Theme at the 2023 Fall Board Meeting drew closer and closer, my search became ever more frantic—to the point of calling a JCL friend for help. As I presented them with my “short list” of ideas, they stopped me at a particular one, *“itaque non aqua, non igni, ut aiunt, locis pluribus utimur quam amicitia.”* After inquiring about my choice for this quote, I explained my reluctance in choosing this as the theme (despite my love for it) due to its rather clunky translation (*“Indeed, we use neither water nor fire, as they say, in more places than friendship”*).

After my friend explained that there could be more than one translation of the quote and that I could even edit it as I wished—a concept I hadn’t seriously considered—I felt compelled to craft a translation of it to my liking. After seeking further help from my Latin teachers, Mr. Chu and Mr. Van Eimeren, who graciously aided in the process of editing the Latin and creating the new translation, the official theme was born: *“non aqua, non igni locis pluribus utimur quam amicitia,”* translated as *“We enjoy neither fire nor water on more occasions than friendship.”*

Now, as for the true meaning of this quote (and why I first fell in love with it), Cicero means to say that we *benefit* from friendship more often than from *“fire and water,”* which is a phrase of special significance, as when someone was exiled from Rome, it was termed as an *“interdictio aquae et ignis”* (a prohibition of fire and water, i.e., nobody was allowed to provide you with either one in Roman territory). Cicero himself had been exiled for a year and a half, 14 years before writing *De Amicitia*, a treatise on friendship to Laelius from which this quote was pulled from. Therefore, Cicero knew firsthand that what sustains you during exile and hardship is not the Roman fire and water that you’ve been denied but your friendships, which transcend spatial and temporal limitations.

I felt that this quote, and the meaning it holds, reflects the nature of the TSJCL, highlighting the importance of friendship in every aspect of the JCL community. From the bonds formed and sustained between students from different schools and cities miles apart to relationships formed between Certamen teammates and even within local chapters, friendship is genuinely the most prevalent force that unites our community together and which fuels the JCL spirit. And, coincidentally, it is also a friendship forged by the JCL that I have to thank for the making of this year’s State Theme.