

MARIO MONTESSORI 1898 – 1998



Mario M. Montessori was born in Rome, on March 31, 1898. He was the son of Maria Montessori. He was also her friend, defender and champion, her constant companion and the mainstay of her work.

The Montessori ethos does not admit icons, although the tendency to create them has had to be vigorously fought down like a persistently recurring demon since the inception of the Montessori Movement. Having said this, and in spite of it, throughout the coming year AMI will celebrate the centenary of Mario Montessori's birth with quiet festivity and in the understated manner which best suits his personality. He was a man of extraordinary physical, intellectual and spiritual strength, totally dedicated to Maria Montessori's work.

There was a leitmotif of tragedy to Mario Montessori's life which eschews sentimentality and it is not our intention to sweetly meander down memory lane. The people who lived and worked with him are becoming more and more scarce. A virtual shrine in his remembrance would be out of context and an irritant to those who did not know him.

Why then are we celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth?

For three reasons. The first, because, as the ultimate Montessorian he was, he created a most Montessori construct – the Prepared Environment, tangible and intangible, within which Maria Montessori could best fulfil her potential. This eventually metamorphosed to become AMI.

Secondly, in acknowledgement of the invaluable contribution he made in the development of Montessori materials and methodology, in uninterrupted dialogue with Maria Montessori; and thirdly, and this as a call to action to present and to future generations of Montessorians, in recognition of his preoccupation with carrying forth the Montessori Movement in all its dimensions.

Above and beyond these reasons there is yet another. We tend to forget that life is a joyful affair and must be lived festively. No better example exists of a life festively lived in spite of global and personal vicissitudes than that of Mario Montessori.

AMI celebrates. Do join us.

Renilde Montessori

Reprinted from AMI Communications 1998/1 with kind permission from Renilde Montessori.