

# IN MEMORY OF GUIDO STAMPACCHIA

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Dear friends and colleagues, I am happy to have the occasion to take part in this international Congress in memory of Guido Stampacchia, that starts today.

Many of you, at least those closer to him, have come here not only to honour the memory of a great mathematician, but also in the name of the friendship and the affection for a friend and, in the case of the younger participants, for a real master. The personality of Stampacchia was both strong and simple, open and helpful. His human qualities are well known to all of you. I do not want to recall them with words that may sound conventional. All the participants here, who more, who less, have had the occasion to experiment, know and appreciate them, both within the common mathematical activity and outside the scientific work. I know that everybody shares my feelings at the only mention of them. Our being here together is already an implicit commemoration, more effective than any speech, and a testimony of admiration and of sincere unchanged affection.

What I just mentioned well explains the nature of this Congress: an International Conference and at the same time, how to say?, an almost

familial gathering. This is a gathering of the scholars that have worked with Guido Stampacchia, who have shared his directions of research, who have known him well and not only superficially, who have been his students. In this Congress there is only one conference dedicated to the aspects of Stampacchia's own mathematical work, the one given by Professor Magenes. This is just as Stampacchia would have liked. The rest of the congress consists of scientific communications mostly dealing with the continuation of his research. This is the best commemoration for a man who has devoted his entire life to research.

On my side, I only want to add a personal recollection. The place: Pisa. The time: the year 1966. I had just come out from a difficult period in Rome, due to a worsening of human relationships that had rendered my activity at the University unbearable. (I was not responsible for that situation, but that is not important.) I was tired and discouraged, and also exhausted from the birth of my younger daughter Adriana. Well, at that time Ennio De Giorgi, a close friend of mine from the years of our common University studies, introduced me to Professor Stampacchia. That was a decisive acquaintance: Stampacchia encouraged me not to leave the University, a decision that I was on the verge of taking, and to go back to scientific work.

I then started working again, this time under his direction. He was satisfied with my work, and gave me his full scientific and personal support. Until Stampacchia moved to the University of Rome, I went to Pisa at least once a month. On those occasions I had the chance to know people such as Nirenberg, Levy, Brézis, Kinderlehrer, and other important mathematicians that used to visit Guido Stampacchia. My scientific life (and not only scientific) changed completely.

In my opinion, this is not a small reason for my gratitude towards a master.

Thank you very much.

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