

# 24th International Montessori Congress

Paris, France, 2-4 July 2001



## OPENING SPEECH

Patricia Spinelli-Délivré

I share with the President of Association Montessori de France the feeling of pride and like her, I am greatly honoured to welcome you in this special place.

Education as an Aid to Life.

Such was always Maria Montessori's view of education. We have organized the next few days around three main themes in order to develop this subject

- the Foundations of Life
- the Foundations of Wisdom
- the Foundation the Future

### Foundations of Life:

I would like to quote from the start one of the speakers of this congress, Mr Edgar Morin, who writes as follows: « Life is a woven fabric of prose and poetry. » One can define prose as the practical, technical, and material activities which are necessary to our existence. One can define poetry as that which puts to us in an altered state: initially Poetry itself, then Music, Dancing, Pleasure and, of course Love.

Professor Luciano Mazzetti, Dr Catherine Dolto, Mrs Linda Burney and Dr Silvana Montanaro, each in their own field and with their own thought will open for us a new space of reflection on what Life is, how it structures itself, and which are the conditions in which human development may happen as harmoniously as possible. .

### The Foundations of Wisdom:

Is wisdom accessible to Man, though himalayan not very reasonable? In every human being there are capacities, possibilities, of the best as well as the worst. I would say nevertheless that wisdom can articulate itself around an individual conscience - to live in peace with one-self - a collective conscience - to live in peace with the Others - and a broader, more universal conscience - to live in peace with and in Nature.

From his deep and complex thought, Mr Edgar Morin will introduce us to the fundamental knowledge necessary to Education in the 21st century.. Knowledge, Comprehension, the complexity of the beings, the complexity of Human nature.

Mr Camillo Grazzini, Mr Vincent-Paul Toccoli, Mrs Jane Healy and Mrs Lynne Lawrence, will guide our vision towards the way in which acquired knowledge of things, wisdom, humanizes the Self.

## The Foundations of the Future:

We are in the dawning beginning of the 21st century. The Future, this immense, gigantic Future, unknown, opens itself to us. Man, we know, is a creature of Language. Through the (Spoken) Word, Man has access to Thought, Meaning, Conscience.

However – and here I quote Gregoire de Nysse in his Treaty of Creation - « It is above all for Language that Nature has added hands to our body ; it is the hand which releases the (Spoken) Word ».

Dr Frank Wilson and Mr Gérard Dartois, each with his own voice\* - whether through his words or the direction of his thoughts - will show us how the Hand is, and always will be, the founder of the Future of Man.

Mrs Rénilde Montessori, Mr Alphonse Tay, Mrs Muriel Dwyer and her associates, Mr Andrés Guerrero, through the projects they have lead, will speak to us about all that is possible.

But it is through the experiences of Éducateurs Sans Frontières that we will reach the doors of the Future of Montessorian Action, so that the highly humane social ideal which Maria Montessori always asserted, may be achieved.

I thank you for being here.

\* “voix” and “voie” in French the two words are pronounced the same but one means “voice” and the other means “path”