In memory of Professor Francesco Saverio De Blasi

The current issue of Libertas Mathematica (new series) is dedicated to the memory of our late friend and colleague Professor Francesco Saverio De Blasi, as a recognition of his outstanding contributions to mathematical research, for his human and intellectual qualities, very original ways of addressing life and mathematics, and for being always ready to help, encourage and support (even financially) many mathematicians from Eastern Europe.

Francesco S. De Blasi was born in Naples on August 27, 1941. He obtained the *Laurea in Scienze Matematiche* at University of Naples where he graduated with honors in 1964. He was an Instructor at the University of Naples (1965-66), at the University of Strasbourg (1966/67) and at the University of Florence (1967/68). From 1968 to 1969 he was a Lecturer at the University of Salisbury (Rhodesia), a civilian service instead of the military service.

His scientific interests pressed him to visit several research centers. He started postgraduate studies in the United States at Brown University, in the group of Professor La Salle, but he was not satisfied with the supervisor assigned to him and decided to live this place.

Back to Europe, he spent the period 1970-71 at the University of Warwick (UK). Following the suggestion of Professor M. Cartwright from Cambridge University, he joined the group of Professor Roberto Conti at the University of Florence. Back in Italy he accepted an appointment as Associate Professor (1971-1976) and Full Professor (1976-1981) at the University of Florence. Then he moved to *Tor Vergata* University of Rome, where he was a Full Professor from 1981 until his retirement in the year 2012, and one of the founding members of that university.

Francesco was Visiting Professor at the *University of Paris VI* for three months during the academic year 1978/79 and at the *Institute des Hautes Etudes Scientifique*, Bures-sur-Yvetes, for one semester during the year 1981. Francesco's attachment to his teaching duties should be emphasized. He never missed a lesson in all his teaching career and he has not taken a sabbatical in forty years of service. For several years he taught courses of Linear Algebra, Mathematical Analysis and Functional Analysis.

He was a fine mathematician and a great worker until the end of his life, as it is evident from his list of publications. He obtained fundamental results in fixed point theory, approximation theory, set-valued analysis and in the theory of differential inclusions, during more than fortyfive years of extensive work.

Francesco appreciated the Romanian school of mathematics, had strong relations with Romanian mathematicians and some of the most quoted among his papers have been published in Romanian journals.

Two years ago, at *Equadiff 2011* at Loughborough University, UK, when I met Francesco for the last time, I told him that Professor Constantin Corduneanu entrusted me with the task of preparing a new journal to re-launch Libertas Mathematica. Francesco was very interested, enthusiastic and eager to find out what I was going to do and our intense conversation continued via E-mail and on the phone after the Congress until the end of his life. As always, Francesco was rational, earnest and rigorous, but deeply kind, friendly and sensitive on the human side. From him I received a lot of helpful suggestions, assessments, and also criticism from him, but always with the same conviction and kindness.

The end result of these efforts is *Libertas Mathematica (new series)*, the new series of the journal *Libertas Mathematica*, founded by Professor Constantin Corduneanu founded and edited by him for 31 years (1981-2011).

Francesco died in Rome on March 21, 2012, before the publication of the first volume of Libertas Mathematica (new series) and I consider a debt of honor to dedicate an issue to his memory.

This issue collects a series of original papers dedicated to the memory of Francesco Saverio de Blasi by his friends and colleagues, who answered my call and also some memories of his close friends and colleagues.

My sincere thanks go to all the distinguished scholars who contributed to the special issue dedicated to Francesco and also to those who intended, but were not able to contribute due to time constraints.

Vasile Staicu (Editor in Chief)