

**Speech by**  
**HE Mr Anthony Bailey, OBE, GCSS,**  
**Delegate for Great Britain and Ireland and Grand Magistral**  
**Delegate for Inter-Religious Relations of the Sacred Military**  
**Constantinian Order of St George**

**on the occasion of the investiture of**

**Mr Vivian Wineman, KFO,**  
**President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews**  
**as a Knight First Class of the Royal Order of Francis I.**

**Held at Branksome, London N6**

**Thursday 19 January 2011**

Your Royal Highness, distinguished guests,

As Delegate for Great Britain and Ireland and as Grand Magistral Delegate for Inter-Religious Relations of the Constantinian Order, it is my pleasure to extend the cordial greetings of our Grand Master and Grand Prior to our hosts Sir Sigmund and Lady Sternberg and also to the members of the Board of Deputies and the Constantinian Order here present.

May I also extend in a special way the warm wishes of our Delegation Prior, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor and our Sub Prior Archbishop George Stack of Cardiff.

Dear friends, we are gathered here today for a very special reason. As you are aware Vivian Wineman was decreed a Knight First Class of the Royal Order of Francis I at a ceremony held at Westminster Cathedral last October. This distinction was granted by the Order's authorities in Rome in recognition of the personal contribution which he has made to society in his numerous roles and functions including that of President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

In particular the British and Irish Delegation which I lead, in its submission to the authorities in Rome, highlighted the significant work which Mr Wineman has undertaken in fostering greater

inter-religious relations here in the United Kingdom. The Delegation also wanted to recognise the significant work which he continues to undertake for the Jewish community in this country.

Ladies and Gentleman, our Order, which has existed in the British Isles since 1728 and in Italy for many centuries before, is proud of the relationship of cooperation and trust which we have today built across the boundaries of faith and race - relationships which have led to a understanding that has borne fruit especially in times of tension as we see today.

Our Order has taken its inspiration from the late and blessed Pope John Paul II, and from the current Supreme Pontiff, Benedict XVI, whose conviction was that what unites the faiths is far more important than what divides them, and the belief that the religions must be the primary bridge-builders in our fractured world.

Allow me also to remember a very dear family friend of mine who was especially committed to this work, Dr Jurek Kluger, who passed away in Rome on 31 December and who was the childhood friend of the late Pope with whom several books were written including the Holy Father's own *'letter to my Jewish friend'*. He will be greatly missed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the encouragement of a culture of dialogue and solidarity is at the heart of the Royal Order of Francis I, which was created in the mid-1800s to honour people who have contributed in a significant way to the well being of society.

In Britain among its members are the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Gregorios of Great Britain, The Duke of Westminster, Baroness Thatcher, Lord Carey of Clifton, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Athanasius Toma, the late Sheikh Zaki Badawi and of course Sir Sigmund himself who is unique among the Jewish community in being recognised by two successive Pontiffs as well as this Order for his lifetime contribution to interfaith relations.

Much like the Order, you Mr Wineman and if I may say so, the Board of Deputies, has continued to played a significant role in effectively fostering a greater peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among the wider faith communities in Britain.

These activities illustrate how we are brought together *because of* our faith, not *in spite of* it, and this message is one that needs to be heard loud and clear in our contemporary culture, which often can only see conviction as intolerant.

Two days ago, Italy marked the Day for Dialogue between Catholics and Jews, an initiative launched by the Italian Bishop's Conference in 1990 with the aim of increasing mutual understanding among the members of the two religions.

In an interview earlier this week with Vatican Radio, Rabbi Giuseppe Laras, president emeritus of the Italian Rabbinic Assembly, explained that the aim of the Day

*"is to simplify and intensify Jewish-Christian dialogue. To this end, Jews and Catholics meet to reflect especially on those themes we can confront together, such as the search for peace and mutual understanding after two thousand years of misinterpretation and distressing events. Thus, both the Catholic and Jewish worlds await this Day with high expectations, because the more dialogue is consolidated the more the risk of anti-Semitism diminishes".*

I very much hope that our Order and the Board of Deputies can explore areas of mutual interest such as that which is currently taking place across Italy and which we already are undertaking with the Council for Christians and Jews in Britain.

Ladies and Gentleman, in times past some Orders of Knighthood granted special privileges to new recipients. Some were for example given the right to ride on horseback in church or be granted titles such as *Cavaliere*, or were granted special access to the throne rooms of Europe or authorised to wear elaborate golden uniforms and carry swords. Sadly Vivian your nomination has come a few years too late for this!

Nevertheless the Grand Master, Prince Carlo of Bourbon Two Sicilies, Duke of Castro, and the Grand Prior Renato Raffaele Cardinal Martino, wish to recognise your efforts, and so in thanking you for all you have done, is doing, and will continue to do in partnership with the British and Irish Delegation, it is my honour in the name of His Royal Highness and His Eminence to invite you to come forward and receive the insignia and diploma of Knight First Class of the Royal Order of Francis I.