

Speech by Mr Vivian Wineman, KFO,

Thank you very much.

Your Royal Highness, Sir Sigmund and Lady Hazel, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, distinguished guests.

Ladies and Gentleman, it's a great pleasure, an enormous honour for me. In our Jewish custom is to commence with praise of the host. That of course is a double pleasure to thank our hosts Sir Sigmund and Lady Sternberg. There is a double aspect here, they have done so much for the Jewish community, the Board of Deputies and for interfaith work. They really have set the way there, Sir Sigmund has been a pioneer in this work. When he first started involving himself, there were very few people active as it was an area which was little understood and people didn't understand the significance of it. Sir Sigmund has been a pioneer in that work over several decades and I have said in the past, it is the more remarkable when you consider his background, that he comes from an era where understanding and tolerance between faiths was the exception, not the rule and he witnessed the beginnings of such awful times in the last century and he has risen beyond and put it behind him.

Of course I have a personal debt to him because he's been a great supporter of the Board during my time as President and he hosted this this afternoon so thank you very much Sir Sigmund and Lady Sternberg.

I have my next thanks to the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George. I want to thank you for this honour and the excellent work you do for charity, especially interfaith work. I want to thank His Royal Highness The Grand Master and His Eminence Grand Prior as well as the Delegate for Great Britain and Grand Magistral Delegate Anthony Bailey who has made the nomination to Rome and who on behalf the Grand Master bestowed the declaration.

I couldn't do any occasion like this without my family who are a great support. At a moment like this, I do want to think of my own parents. When we actually remember on our holy days, we are meant to think about parents and we have a prayer in the Jewish religion. We think about parents whose whole intention and goal was to raise us in the words of the prayer in the path of righteousness and truth and teach us to figure out our traditions and my parents are no long with us but my mother who passed away three years ago, that truly could be said of her. She was a lady who loved Jewish tradition, burned inside her but that sensual decency that goes with being a Jew and that openness to people of all faiths of where she came from in the North-East of England. It had a long tradition of rigid Orthodoxy combined with a very open attitude to the people around them.

I do feel that interfaith work goes right back to the origins of the Jewish religion. In classical times, the people who were admired by the Jews were known as Metuentes who feared god but in the Bible, they are known as they fear the Lord. We go through the Five books of Moses in a cycle each year and last week we read about the story of the infant Moses and how he was rescued by the

daughter of Pharaoh. The Talmud says Moses has ten names but the name that has stuck, not the name that was given to him by his own people or by any Jew either before or since but the name given to him by the non-Jew, the non-Israelite, daughter of Pharaoh who saved his life and this has been a message to us Jews down the ages. We've always respected those people from other faiths, from other backgrounds, ethnicities, races, as long as their conduct entitles them to that respect. So I think of no better note on which to think back on to that particular portion of the Lord that we read, with this evenings proceedings and to thank you once again for the honour and everyone here for attending.