



**SPEECH OF HE MR ANTHONY BAILEY, OBE, GCSS,
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RELATIONS AND DELEGATE FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND
IRELAND OF THE SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER
OF ST GOERGE**

STATIONERS' HALL – 28 JULY 2012

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As Delegate for Great Britain and Ireland for the Constantinian Order of St George, and as a Londoner, it is my great joy to welcome you all here to the historic surroundings of Stationers' Hall in the City of London.

The Constantinian Order and the Order of Francis I are ancient and internationally recognised Orders of Knighthood dedicated either to the defence and promotion of the Roman Catholic faith; or which play a prominent role in furthering dialogue and understanding between other Churches and other faith communities.

Together both Orders, across the world, work in partnership to promote spiritual, humanitarian, hospitaller, inter-religious and charitable endeavour. It also ultimately has at its heart the wish and means to improve and assist those most in need.

From time to time, the high authorities of our Order decide to honour exceptional individuals in public life who have fulfilled these objectives and who has made a real and significant contribution to those most in need and worse off in society.

The honour ceremony which will now take place this evening usually happens in Rome or in the recipients' own country. But because the world has come to London, the Order has taken full use of this great historic opportunity to honour five statesmen –

one from Europe, one from Latin America, two from Asia-Pacific, and one from the Carribean.

All are heads of state or Heirs to the Throne, governing nations whose importance far outstrips the size of their land and their populations. In bestowing these high honours on them for their own personal merits, the Order also desires in turn to honour the people of those nations. They in turn honour our Order by their distinguished presence as knights or dames.

1. PANAMA

The first recipient is the President of the Republic of Panama, His Excellency Ricardo Martinelli Berrocal.

The Order has had a long relationship with Panama, dating back a good number of years to the formal exchange of honours which took place in Rome in 2003 between the Republic of Panama and the Constantinian Order and which saw one of your predecessors, Mireya Moscoso invested into the Order.

Panama is at the pivotal point of the Americas between north central and south America, and looking out to the world.

His Excellency's government has attracted major foreign investment into Panama, while seeking at the same time to tackle poverty in all its forms; he has a long and distinguished career in business; he is married, with three children. We want to pay special tribute, Señor Presidente, to the work of the Ricardo Martinelli Foundation, which you founded and offers grants to Panamanians of scarce means and help children and young people of ability to get the qualifications they deserve, often in spite of the obstacles of poverty or disability which they may face.

We look forward to working with Panama and your Foundation in the future and to develop more closely some worthy charitable, humanitarian and inter-religious programmes which link the peoples of Panama, Italy and the United Kingdom.

It is therefore my great pleasure to invite Your Excellency to stand and receive the insignia of Knight Grand Cross with Gold Star of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George.

2. DOMINICA

I now turn to His Excellency Dr Nicholas Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Dr Liverpool has many links with the United Kingdom: he received his law degree from Hull and was called to the Bar not far from here, in the Inner Temple, and received his doctorate from the University of Sheffield.

Before he turned to the governance of his beautiful volcanic island in the east Caribbean, Dr Liverpool has had a distinguished career as a jurist across the region. He has served as a Judge of the High Court in both Antigua and Montserrat and an Appeal Court judge in Grenada, Belize and the Bahamas; and he has served on a number of tribunals and commissions for legal reform, as well as being Ambassador to the United States.

He has been President of Dominica since 2003. We want to pay tribute to you, Your Excellency, for your integrity and your fidelity to the rule of the law, and for the example which you give as a Catholic statesman governing for the common good of your people. And we look forward to deepening our collaboration in the years to come. It is therefore my great pleasure to invite Your Excellency to stand and receive the Insignia of Knight Grand Cross with Gold Star of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George.

3. MONTENEGRO

It is now my personal pleasure to address His Excellency Filip Vujanovic, who has served as President of Montenegro since before it regained its independence in 2006. His Excellency is an outstanding peacemaker, working tirelessly to heal the wounds of the Balkans' recent past; I am delighted to say that the Order has very strong links with Montenegro and the Balkans, funding projects which the Holy See developed there as part of a significant deepening of relations between the Churches and

other faith communities in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo during past 10 years.

With a recent agreement ratified between the Holy See and Montenegro, President Vujanovic has confirmed his reputation as a builder of tolerance and understanding, especially between the majority Orthodox and minority Catholic Churches in his country.

We are delighted also to make this award because of the very special anniversary to be celebrated next year – the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan, which under Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and proclaimed tolerance of all religions. Constantine the Great was from the Balkans, but there is a British connection too – for he was crowned in York in the north of England. Your Excellency, we look forward to continuing and deepening our collaboration with you and Montenegro and your people in the years to come.

It is therefore my great pleasure to invite Your Excellency to stand and receive the Insignia of a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Francis I.

4. TONGA

Finally it is my pleasure to welcome Their Royal Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Tonga. In February of this year, His Majesty King George Tupou V, the Crown Prince's uncle, paid an official visit to Pope Benedict XVI and while in Rome, he met with senior representatives of the Constantinian Order, including the Grand Prior, His Eminence Cardinal Martino, and myself.

We held detailed discussions about how the Order and Tonga can work closely together in charitable and humanitarian and religious programmes internationally. To mark this new relationship there was an exchange of honours.

It was therefore all the more tragic to hear a few weeks after that meeting of the news of the sudden passing of His Majesty The King.

Your Royal Highnesses, I would to express how much we appreciated our dialogue with the late King, your uncle. We ask

that Your Royal Highness pass on to your father, King Tupou VI, our very sincere condolences on the loss of his brother, and to congratulate His Majesty on his own accession to the Throne.

We look forward to continue the work that has been planned with the late King, who as a Methodist made a number of significant ecumenical gestures throughout his reign. I hope that the talks that began so fruitfully with him might now continue with Your Royal Highnesses.

It is therefore my great pleasure to invite Your Royal Highnesses to stand and receive the Insignia of a Knight Grand Cross and a Dame Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Francis I.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests: the Grand Master has decreed in recent months some awards; and it is my pleasure to ask them, one by one, to come forward to receive them.

1. HRH Princess Elena of Romania and her husband His Excellency Mr Alexander Nixon
2. The Ambassador of Montenegro
3. The Ambassador of Panama
4. The Acting High Commissioner of Dominica
5. The Honourable Alexander Brennan