



**SPEECH OF HE MR ANTHONY BAILEY, OBE, GCSS,
DELEGATE FOR GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND OF THE
SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF ST GEORGE
RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF HE
CORMAC CARDINAL MURPHY O'CONNOR
HUNGARIAN EMBASSY, LONDON – 31 JANUARY 2013**

Your Serene Highness, Your Eminences, Your Excellencies, Mr Deputy Speaker, Field Marshal, My Lords, Bishops, Reverend Fathers, Knights and Dames, Ladies and Gentlemen,

HUNGARY

As Delegate for Great Britain and Ireland and with responsibility for the Order's worldwide inter-religious programmes, may I first of all thank our host the Ambassador and my good friend. Janos Csak for his kind words and for hosting this evening celebration.

Janos thank you very much.

It is a for me a personal pleasure to be here at the Embassy of a country which I have enjoyed a 25 year association with having as you know lived, worked and studied there.

I count myself fortunate to have been able to witness, sometimes at first hand, some key moments in modern Hungarian history.

And much like elsewhere in the region I have no doubt that faith played a significant part in empowering the Hungarian People to stand up against totalitarian oppression and dictatorship which in turn led to democracy and freedom.

The Constantinian Order also enjoys a long association with Hungary having over centuries enjoyed among its ranks numerous Hungarian Knights and Dames.



The Constantinian Order also enjoys Formal Recognition by the Hungarian Government by decree of the President of the Republic.

Our Rome based Grand Master, Prince Carlo, Duke of Castro, and Grand Prior, Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino also officially visited Hungary in 2010.

The Order is pleased to have as its Delegate for Hungary the current Deputy Prime Minister Dr Zsolt Semjen.

The Order is also looking forward to working with the Hungarian Government and with the Ambassador on a developing a series of initiatives aimed at highlighting the role of faith in public policy, Christian values in Europe, and inter-religious understanding.

THE ORDER

2013 is a very important year for our Order and for Christians across the world.

Next month we mark the 1700th anniversary of Emperor Constantine's famous Edict of Milan which was decreed in February 313 and granted Christians and indeed others the freedom to practice their faith without fear of persecution.

This decree marks in many ways the beginning of the Christian foundation of European civilization.

This anniversary may also prove to be an appropriate time when those of us of faith should reflect on those centuries old foundations of our society.

This should be felt all the more at a time when for many there is a strong sense that our Christian and wider faith values are being tested and challenged by an increasingly secular society which sadly, at times, appears intolerant in its approach to matters of faith and the views of faith communities in this country.

As an Order headquartered in Rome, we also celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our



formal recognition by the Italian State by decree of the President of the Italian Republic,

In April the Order will also mark the 150th anniversary of the Italian Catholic Church in Britain.

We also mark our Grand Master's 50th birthday and the 80th birthday of our Grand Prior Cardinal Martino.

We also celebrate the Order's granting of Consultative Status of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

THE CARDINAL

Here in the UK, we are all gathered tonight to mark somewhat belatedly the 80th birthday of Cardinal Cormac, Murphy-O'Connor, who is a very unique man.

One of our national treasures.

A far from retired Cardinal with a programme as busy if not more as when he was Archbishop of Westminster.

He has been known through his priesthood for his earthly Irish charm, his command of singing of Italian ditties which have made him many friends and admirers across the world.

He is someone whom for our Order has been its Spiritual guide for over 10 years and who has offered our members much needed guidance with their charitable, humanitarian, hospitalier and interfaith activities.

The Cardinal is someone who as the Ambassador has referred has been an adviser, guide, partner, official and unofficial counsel to countless thousands, including our monarch, successive prime ministers, ambassadors, and other religious leaders of all faiths - some of whom are here this evening.



He is a voice of reason and of common sense and for what many in Rome feel still today to be a welcomed breath of fresh air

For me he is a leader who to use the theme of Pope Benedict's recent Papal Visit to Her Majesty and of the motto of the great Victorian theologian the Blessed John Henry Newman, is someone whose

Heart speaks unto heart.

Your Excellency, Your Eminence, distinguished Guests,

I am delighted to announce that our Grand Master and our Grand Prior extend their special wishes to you this evening.

Mr Ambassador, I would therefore like to present on the Grand Master's behalf a small token of his appreciation.

Finally I received from Rome the good news that His Royal Highness and His Eminence have decided to honour Cardinal Cormac this evening by promoting His Eminence to the rank and dignity of a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Francis I.

Within our delegation such high rank consists of one head of state, three heads of government and four heads of Christian Churches.

So in presenting Your Eminence with your diploma, and conscious of all what you have done for the Order may I ask you to keep us and the Order in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you.