

**INVESTITURE CEREMONY OF  
HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III OF LESOTHO  
AS A BAILIFF KNIGHT GRAND CROSS OF JUSTICE OF THE  
SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF ST GEORGE**

OPENING REMARKS BY

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

Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the Italian Republic  
Tuesday 8 October 2013

YOUR MAJESTIES, YOUR EMINENCE, YOUR EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is a privilege for me as Grand Magistral Delegate to greet in the name of our Order the distinguished personalities here present. First it is my singular honour to greet Their Majesties King Letsie III and Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso of the Kingdom of Lesotho on their visit to the Eternal City and following their audience with the Holy Father, Pope Francis yesterday.

I would also like to greet in the name of the Order those members of His Majesty's Government here present including Their Excellencies The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relation, and the Minister of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation.

May I also like to greet Charge d Affaires of Lesotho to the Italian Republic who host us here in her Embassy today.

May I also warmly greet the Cardinal Grand Prior of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George, His Eminence Renato Raffaele, Cardinal Martino, Prefect Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace of the Holy See who is accompanied by His Excellency Ambassador Giuseppe Balboni Acqua, Secretary General of the Royal House and Constantinian Order and former Chief of Protocol to the President of the Italian Republic.

Your Majesties, Your Eminence, Your Excellencies,

The Constantinian Order of Saint George is an ancient and internationally recognised Roman Catholic Order of Knighthood that is recognised worldwide and which from its earliest origins has resolved to work for the glorification of the Cross, the propagation of the Faith and the defence of the Holy Roman Church.

Today, the Constantinian Order manifests these principles through hospitalier and humanitarian assistance as well as the charitable relief of the poor and those most vulnerable in society.

Uniquely, among Catholic orders, the Constantinian Order and its sister Order, the Royal Order of Francis I, continues to play a significant role across the world in furthering inter-religious understanding between the followers of all faiths and of none. We therefore

remain true to our heritage yet are proud of our diversity.

2013 marks the 1700th anniversary of Emperor Constantine's *Edict of Milan* which granted religious freedom to Christians and those of other faiths and is therefore considered by many to be the beginning of European civilization as we know it today.

The Order also celebrates this year the Golden Jubilee of our formal recognition by successive decrees of the President and Government of the Italian Republic.

We also celebrate the recent granting of Consultative Status at the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

And with Delegations throughout Italy and across Europe and North America, today's event allows us to focus and recognise the importance of Africa to the global Catholic and wider Christian family.

The Constantinian Order in recent years has been engaged in charitable projects across Africa most recently Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Morocco and Egypt. We are hopeful that following today's events that Lesotho will be adopted for social and charitable programmes.

Your Majesties, allow me to say a few words of my connection with your country. My association with Lesotho is some twenty five years old. In 1990 I had the opportunity to meet in London the late King and your august Father, Moshoeshoe II and if I recall when your Foreign Minister was then High Commissioner in London.

This relationship with your Kingdom continued through various Commonwealth forums where I became better acquainted with your history, its noble people as well as the challenges Lesotho and the surrounding region face today.

When Your Majesty's brother, HRH Prince Seeiso was appointed High Commissioner to the Court of St James's in 2005 this relationship was greatly enhanced and discussions were held about several charitable initiatives that the Order could adopt including Sentibale which was jointly founded by His Royal Highness and Prince Henry of Wales. This included meetings we established for Prince Seeiso with the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury in 2008.

Later on opportunities arose to meet and converse with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister which enhanced that relationship further.

The opportunity together with my wife, Princess Marie-Therese, to dine with Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso of Lesotho in October 2010 in London instilled in me the great efforts which your ancient Royal House and your Government are devoting to those most in need.

In July and August 2012 the Constantinian Order was pleased to welcome Lesotho at its major Faith-in-Sport events held to celebrate the 2012 London Olympic Games and the faith inspired origins of the Olympic movement. Over 57 Heads of State and Government and Ministers attended including the Minister of Sport of Lesotho here present.

Your Majesty

We have assembled here today to pay tribute to you and your Government because you acknowledge that with constitutional peace the social agenda is essential to maintaining a lasting peace. When you met with the Holy Father yesterday I believe His Holiness remarked as such.

Your faith inspired contribution to furthering the constitutional and peaceful transition to coalition government, Your dedication to promote the principals of your Roman Catholic faith, your efforts to promote inter-religious harmony among the followers of all faiths in Lesotho and in recognition of your dynasty and your Government's leadership in promoting public service and charitable endeavour are among the reasons for the Grand Master granting you this singular high honour.

It is therefore my honour to invite our Grand Prior, His Eminence Cardinal Martino, in the name of the 59<sup>th</sup> Grand Master, HRH Prince Charles of Bourbon Two Sicilies, Duke of Castro, to present Your Majesty with the insignia of the Bailiff Knight Grand Cross of Justice of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George.

And to receive the diplomas of investiture into the ranks of the Constantinian Order and the Royal Order of Francis I for Their Excellencies the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Gender, Youth, Sport and Recreation for the prominent part they have played in pushing this policy forward.

Our Grand Master and his delegation also formally accept the high Lesotho national honours which the Order has been notified by your Government will be bestowed on them in the coming weeks following a meeting of the Council of State.

Your Majesties, Your Excellencies,

The Order very much hope that with this formal exchange of honours with the Kingdom of Lesotho we can move forward and together develop a presence in Lesotho built on a true and lasting friendship and focused in the areas of charitable, humanitarian and hospitaller activities.

I know that for Your Majesties and the Basotho people this is an achievable goal and something I can assure you the Constantinian Order and its worldwide family are ready to fulfil its part.

Thank you.