

SPEECH BY
HIS EMINENCE RENATO RAFFAELE CARDINAL MARTINO
GRAND PRIOR
SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF ST GEORGE

Holy Mass
St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral
Bridgetown
Saturday 8 November 2014

YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR GENERAL,
HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS,
YOUR GRACE,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is a distinct pleasure for me as Grand Prior, to express on behalf of the Constantinian Order, my sincere thanks for your kind and generous welcome. I am delighted to be here in Barbados on this much anticipated visit which has, at its heart religious and charitable endeavour.

I would like to thank in the name of the Constantinian Order, the the Governor General, His Excellency Sir Elliott Belgrave and through him the Government of Barbados, and most especially the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Freundel Stuart for his invitation the Leader of the Opposition, The Honourable Mia Mottley who will receive me during this visit.

Dear friends,

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

Today, the Order manifests these principles, through charitable and humanitarian assistance, focused on 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. Nevertheless, we remain true to our Roman Catholic heritage and proud of its diversity.

Recently the Order marked 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 celebrated last year the Golden Jubilee of our formal recognition by successive decrees of the President and Government of the Italian Republic.

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

With the recent upgrading of the diplomatic relations between many Caribbean countries and the Holy See to the ambassadorial level greater focus on the Caribbean among international Catholic charitable institutions such as our Order has followed.

Your Excellency, dear Prime Minister,

Our Official Visit to Barbados, is part of a wider regional visit. These visits would allow the Order to focus and recognise the importance of the Caribbean region to the global Christian family which the Holy Father Pope Francis has highlighted in his discussions with regional Leaders.

We started our visit in Antigua & Barbuda, and from there to Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. I would like to note the efforts of our Secretary General, Sir Anthony Bailey who has championed this regional engagement together with a daughter of the Caribbean, Baroness Scotland.

Your Excellency,

I am very happy to celebrate a Holy Mass at this beautiful Cathedral, together with the Most Reverend Bishop Gordon and Monsignor Vincent Blackett and with the joyful Catholic community of Bridgetown.

Tomorrow I will be delighted to attend the Remembrance Day Service together with the highest institutions of your country. I will also pay a visit to St. Michael's Cathedral and I would like to thank you The Most Reverend and Dr. John W.D. Holder who will receive us.

To conclude, the dedication of this beautiful and blessed nation to promote the principals of the Christian faith, so clearly embedded in your national identity, its efforts to promote inter-religious harmony and the charitable endeavour in favor of the well-being of the people are the foundations for developing a long-lasting relationship of our Order with your country.

In conclusion, and on behalf of the Holy Father Pope Francis I impart his Apostolic Blessing to you here present and to all good people of Barbados.

Thank you and God bless!