

SPEECH BY

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

**Holy Mass
Cathedral of Immaculate Conception
St George's
Wednesday 17 June 2015**

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

It is a distinct pleasure for me as Grand Prior, to express on behalf of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George, my sincere thanks for your kind and generous welcome. My delegation and I are delighted to be here in Grenada on this much anticipated visit which has, at its heart our Christian faith and charitable endeavour.

I would like to thank in the name of the Constantinian Order, the Governor General, Her Excellency Dame Cecile La Grenade and through her the Government of Grenada, and most especially the

Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Keith Mitchell for his official invitation and who received us earlier this morning.

Dear friends

I am very happy to celebrate a Holy Mass at this beautiful Cathedral, in this lovely harbor city, named after St George, the patron of our Order, together with the Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Archbishop Girasoli, and the Most Reverend Bishop Darius, Bishop Charles, Mons. Obiedzinski and Father Harris and with the joyful Catholic community of St George's.

I would also like to thank those members of our international Order that have accompanied me on this visit from Europe including Sir Christian Sweeting and Sir Steven Wilkinson.

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 defense 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. I am pleased that our Order includes among its members Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish believers. We remain true to our Roman Catholic heritage yet proud of our 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 civilisation as we know it today.

The Order also celebrated two years ago 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 a growing number of 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,

My visit takes place against the backdrop of the successful Official Visit to the Vatican City made in October 2014 by the Prime Minister, which included an Audience with Pope Francis. It also takes place following a meeting in London between the Prime Minister and the Magistral Delegate of the Constantinian Order, Sir Anthony Bailey and the Order's Vice Delegate Baroness Scotland of Asthal herself a daughter of the Caribbean. During these meetings a decision was made to widen the Order's regional activity to include this beautiful island and its extraordinary people. I am only too aware that the Order's engagement comes at an important time as the country continues to recover and rebuild after the massive destruction and damages caused in 2004 by hurricane Ivan.

The visit to Grenada is also part of a wider multi-million dollar charitable programme launched and funded by the Order last year in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St Lucia. In Antigua and Barbuda the charitable engagement, in partnership with the Diocese of St John's-Basseterre, includes projects such as the completion of the Good Samaritan Catholic Church and Community Outreach Centre in Hatton, the redevelopment of St Joseph's Academy school, the complete renovation of the historic St Joseph's and St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral.

In Dominica the programme launched in partnership with the

Diocese of Roseau includes a significant contribution towards the restoration of the historic Our Lady of Fair Haven Cathedral in Roseau, the renovation of St Peter's Presbytery in Colihaut and the renovation of Our Lady of Morne Carmel Retirement Home in Morne Daniel as well as the rebuilding of the Diocesan Youth Centre in Roseau.

In St Lucia the projects funded by the Constantinian Order include the external restoration of the historic Cathedral Basilica of Immaculate Conception in Castries and the publication of *'How Beautiful the Valley'* a book by Archbishop Robert Rivas, an extraordinary work that reveals the spiritual story, the life and traditions of the Caribbean islands.

As a result of this wide charitable engagement, a Delegation of the Order for the Caribbean was created by the Grand Master and under the spiritual guidance of Cardinal Kelvin Felix, and Archbishop Robert Rivas, who I greet in a special way today.

The Delegate for the Caribbean is His Excellency Sir Anthony Bailey, who I would also like to thank for his deep devotion to this region and the great work that he is doing across these islands to highlight internationally the needs of this region.

I would also like to pay tribute to the late Dr Nicholas Liverpool, former President of Dominica and Vice-Delegate of the Order for

Dominica, who passed away a few days ago and who was one of the first to champion the Order's regional engagement.

This visit and others to the region, will 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. I look forward to a visit of Her Excellency the Governor General to Rome will follow soon.

Your Excellency

I was delighted to meet today with the highest institutions of your country. We will also visit some of the projects that the Constantinian Order has agreed to fund and support here in Grenada. Such charitable projects, totaling over 1 million British Pounds, will include the complete Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Grenada Public Library in St George's, the New Life Organisation Vocational Training Project, the St. Joseph's Convent Education and Training Project, St Patrick Roman Catholic Church, the Dorothy Hopkin Home for the disabled, Top Hill Home in Carriacou, Grand Anse Home for the Aged, Grand Anse Girls Centre and other worthy projects. The benefits of these projects go beyond the Catholic community to impact the wider society and the people of Grenada.

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 beginning of 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 Grenada.

Thank you and God bless!