

**St Joseph's Academy
St John's Antigua
Monday 14 March 2016
Sir Anthony Bailey**

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is my great pleasure as the Delegate of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George to be here today and on behalf of the Duke and Duchess of Castro and the Grand Prior Cardinal Martino. TRH are currently in New York where only a few days ago the Secretary General of the UN, HE Ban-Ki-moon was invested into the Order and where the Duchess was presented the prestigious UN Women Award.

It is a most auspicious occasion to be inaugurating today this symbol of educational excellence in this beloved land of Antigua and Barbuda.

The Constantinian Order is an old Roman Catholic Order of Knighthood, which from its origin has revolved to work for the propagation of the faith. Today the Order manifests its mission through humanitarian work across the world.

In 2014 at the invitation of the Hon Prime Minister Gaston Browne, a high level delegation of the Order paid an Official Visit to Antigua and Barbuda and launched charitable projects including this one here.

I would like to thank all the partners who supported these projects and our 64 donors who contributed to these projects. Our Order is proud of its interreligious activities and includes among its members Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Moravians, Christian Orthodox, Jews, Muslims.

We manifest our diversity through our work and reaching out to other communities. The fact that majority of the students of this academy are non-Catholic is an example of this.

Tomorrow morning we will be making a donation to the Anglican Cathedral of St John the Divine. Today we met with representatives of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and I was delighted to learn from the Most Reverend Kenneth D Richards, Bishop of St John's-Basseterre, that the Greek Orthodox community will be also using the former Catholic cathedral, which is one of our other Antiguan projects.

This also comes against the backdrop of the new pontificate of Pope Francis and the attention of the Holy Father to the small nations in all parts of our globe. Our Grand Prior refers to Antigua and the Caribbean as the 'Jewels of the Christian crown'. I would like to pay tribute to the Leader of the Opposition who first upgraded the relations to ambassadorial level with the Holy See.

In November 2015 HE The Governor General Sir Rodney Williams paid the first ever and highly successful Official Visit to the Holy See organised by Ambassador David Shoul here present.

I know too that the Holy See is looking much forward to the visit of the Prime Minister in the near future.

This project is yet another example of the advancement of the country in education and development.

The charitable endeavour as well as our ecumenical diversity are at the core of our international engagements. Our support to Antigua and Barbuda reflects the principles of interreligious harmony that characterise widely your society and that are embedded in your national identity.

I would like to thank the Bishop Kenneth Richards, the Diocese of St John's – Basseterre and the wider Caribbean clergy who have championed and contributed to establish the basis of a long-standing relationship with Antigua and Barbuda and the region.

In conclusion, we know you call Antigua & Barbuda “the land of sea and sun” but let me say that the beauty of a country is also made by its people and its young especially the students present here today who I am confident will follow the footsteps of the Foreign Minister and of other former students who are an illustration of academic achievements and life skills that embed the values of this institution.

Thank you