



## *Real Casa di Borbone delle Due Sicilie*

*Il Segretario Generale*

Rome, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Knights and Dames,

On the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016, an English newspaper, The Mail on Sunday, published articles which included references to the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George of which I have the honour to serve as Secretary General.

The articles contained a series of allegations about the Order's activities in Great Britain and the Caribbean. I wish to reassure the Order's members and its supporters that those allegations are not true, and that the Order remains totally committed to the projects and philanthropic endeavours in which it is engaged in a great many countries.

As its members will be aware, the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George is an ancient and internationally recognised Order of Knighthood, which, from its remotest origins, has resolved to work for the glorification of the Cross, the propagation of the Faith, and the defence of the Holy Roman Church. The Order is formally recognised since 1963 by decree of The President of the Italian Republic, has Consultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna and maintains a close historic and continued working relationship with the Apostolic See, sovereign Royal Houses, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and is recognised by numerous Governments across the world.

Our membership of several thousand men and women can be found in many countries and across every province of Italy. Our membership include countless prominent figures committed to fulfilling the worldwide mission of the Order from charity workers to Heads of State and Government and with the spiritual guidance offered by many Cardinals and Archbishops including our Grand Prior HE Renato Raffaele Martino, Proto Deacon of the Roman Catholic Church.

One of the principal obligations of membership of the Order has been charitable and humanitarian assistance, and this remains so today. More recently, the Order's members have made significant contributions to charitable projects in the areas of education, national patrimony and social welfare, stretching it outreach to different communities, countries and continents. This work usually follows an official invitation being issued to the Order from the state or religious high authorities in each country. It has also played a significant role, and made great achievements, in inter-religious dialogue initiatives following the Edict of Milan made by the founder of the Order, Emperor Constantine the Great (313 A.D.). Knights and Dames of powerful authority all over the world and across all levels of society are committed to the Order's charitable principles.

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In making its allegations, The Mail on Sunday has sought to undermine the Order and cast doubt on the legitimacy of its activities. This is unfortunate and regrettable and both articles are now subject to a legal complaint and procedure.

Following the visit of the Grand Prior in November 2014, the Delegation of the Caribbean was established to bring direction and structure with several charitable programmes being launched in Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, St Lucia, Grenada. These programmes continue to go from strength to strength and, contrary to The Mail on Sunday's claims, have the full backing the state and religious leaders in each country.

I should add that it is untrue that the Order played any role in the election campaign of its longstanding member and former Vice-Delegate, Baroness Scotland of Asthal, to take the office of Secretary-General of the Commonwealth following her election by 53 member states of the Commonwealth in Malta in November 2015. Contrary to what has been alleged, there is no suggestion that the Order, or any of its members or delegates, sought to lobby or secure support for Baroness Scotland in that campaign. Baroness Scotland was first invested in 2002 as a Dame of Merit with Star of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George. In 2014 she was promoted to the rank of Dame Grand Cross of Merit and appointed Vice-Delegate for England – a post she held up until assuming office as Secretary General. Being a daughter born in the Caribbean, she has been a great supporter of the Order and its activities.

It is a matter of sincere regret and disappointment that the Order has found itself the subject of such allegations. However, I wish to extend by sincere gratitude to those who have offered their support and understanding to us over recent days, in the face of these scurrilous attacks on the good name of the Order and its good work.

*With my best regards*

**Ambassador Giuseppe Balboni Acqua KCVO**

**Secretary General**

*Giuseppe Balboni Acqua*