



ADDRESS BY  
HRH PRINCE CHARLES OF BOURBON  
TWO SICILIES, DUKE OF CASTRO,  
GRAND MASTER  
SACRED MILITARY CONSTANTINIAN ORDER OF ST GEORGE

45 Millbank, London SW1  
Friday 7 June 2013

MR PRESIDENT, FIRST LADY,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, YOUR SERENE HIGHNESS,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

YOUR EMINENCES, YOUR GRACE,

FIELD MARSHAL, MY LORDS,

ALDERMAN,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

First, may I express sincere thanks on behalf of the Duchess and myself for the recognition bestowed on us in the form of the Grand Cross of the Order of San Carlos.

We accept this award with humility and in the spirit with which it has been granted, marking, as it does, the coming together of our mutual aspirations for peace, charity and helping those in need such as the poor, victims of aggression

and working toward the creation of a greater understanding between the Catholic and the wider faith communities.

As Grand Master of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, one of the oldest internationally recognised Catholic Orders of Knighthood in existence today, 2013 is an auspicious year.

We mark the 1700<sup>th</sup> 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 the Golden Jubilee of our formal recognition by decrees of the President and Government of Italy and the recent granting of Consultative Status at the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

With Delegations throughout Italy and across Europe and North America, today's event allows us to focus and recognise the importance of Latin America to the global Catholic family.

And now with the election of an Argentinian as Pope, to the worldwide Catholic Church.

The Order already maintains delegations in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Panama and I very much hope that we can have a presence in Colombia built on a true and lasting friendship especially in the areas of culture, charity and other meaningful activities.

In particular, Mr President, we wish to recognise the progressive and impressive political agenda that you have set to bring equality and prosperity to all Colombians. By driving through historic pieces of legislation such as The Victims and Land Restitution Act that will see the rightful return of some

two million hectares will benefit over three and a half million Colombians.

Recently and to much international acclaim, you courageously entered into the formal negotiations that will, in all hope, end nearly half a century of conflict that your country has endured; resolving to bring about an equitable solution that will end this drawn-out struggle for once and for all, addressing many of Colombia's deep seated problems through political inclusion, policies for rural development and the issue of victims rights, as mentioned earlier.

The method you have gone about these initiatives is remarkable, including forums, local discussions and even a website to ensure that every Colombian can have his or her say in this tumultuous national debate.

But, distinguished guests, this afternoon, we invested not only the President of Colombia but the First Lady as well.

And I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Mrs Maria Clemencia Rodriguez de Santos, in recognition of her tireless charitable work over the years and continued interest in social issues.

From the "Linea Lanza" programme, that offers much needed psychological support for the law enforcement agencies, to the "De Cero a Siempre" Development Strategy, that she champions, to give disadvantaged children a better start in life.

To raising much needed funds for the victims of the devastating floods which raged across Colombia two years ago.

These are noble and caring endeavours, much in line with the values and principles of today's Colombia, which my wife,

Princess Camilla and I closely identify with in our own charitable work and that of the Constantinian Order.

In due course, we very much hope to be able to visit your beautiful country, to understand the full extent of your achievements and to study how the Order might be able to offer further assistance.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Colombian Ambassador in London, Mr Mauricio Rodríguez Múnera, and my Delegate for Great Britain and Ireland, Mr Anthony Bailey, and their respective staffs for gathering us all here today.

Finally, Mr President, First Lady, we would like to express our solidarity and admiration for your courageous work in the peace process. This demands of all parties reconciliation and, perhaps the greatest God-given gift of all - forgiveness.

I know that for Your Excellency and the Colombian people this is a truly worthy and achievable goal. The Constantinian Order is ready to play its part.

Thank you.