



**Dinner in honour of HE Sir Rodney Williams,
Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda
Monday 23 November 2015
Il Circolo della Caccia, Rome**

SPEECH BY

HE SIR ANTHONY BAILEY, KGCN, OBE, GCSS,

Governor General, Your Excellencies, Your Serene Highnesses, My
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a very great pleasure to warmly welcome you all this evening
and especially our Guests of Honour, Her Majesty's Governor General
of Antigua and Barbuda, HE Sir Rodney Williams, and HE Lady Williams.
I am particularly felt knowing that this evening celebrates the succe
ful conclusion of the first ever Official Visit by a Governor General of Ant
igua and Barbuda to the Holy See.

Thanking Ambassador David Shoul most sincerely for all of his ef
fective friendship, may I in the same spirit warmly welcome His Excell
ent Bishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the
Holy See and the Chief of Protocol, The Rev Monsignor Jose Bettencourt.

some 30 year ago that my engagement with the Caribbean region began and since that time both at a parish and Diocesan level I have travelled from St Kitts to St Lucia and Dominica, I have become only too aware of how vibrant and important the Catholic and other faith communities are to each nation.

In November I was honoured to have accompanied Cardinal Ruffini to Antigua and Barbuda as part of a series of wider visits across the region. He was in a number of cases the first ever cardinal to visit and His Eminence, like so many others, shared the conviction that in an ever more uncertain world, there is absolute need for a tradition across the islands of CARICOM in what relates to the role of the Church in society today. These small nations have founded their national identity on their Christian values and they can indeed be seen as part of the worldwide Christian crown.

The Excellencies visit to the Holy Father today is a very timely one. The moral message of Pope Francis continues to resonate across the Caribbean in a way that no pontificate has done so before. The hoped for ending of the impasse between Cuba and the USA is but one example.

The Governor General's visit also comes at a time when the attention and focus on the needs of the peoples of smaller states, which can be overlooked, is clear for all to see.

ties being established between CARICOM states and the Holy See larger than ever. Almost all countries have now upgraded their relations on resident ambassadorial level and I very much hope that Tobago will be represented on a resident basis here in Rome soon.

Grenada and Barbuda is a proud member of the Commonwealth. I delighted to welcome fellow Commonwealth Ambassadors from Australia and the United Kingdom. Commonwealth leaders are also meeting this week in Malta and their decision on the election of the new Secretary-General will greatly impact on the future relevance and added value of the Organisation which is the theme of the Summit.

I very much hope that it will be the turn of the Caribbean to lead the Organisation in the next four years as this could allow for a new dynamic in the relations between the Commonwealth family of 53 nations and its people and the Holy See. It is worthy to mention that Pope Francis will visit later this week two member states of this global family: Kenya and Barbuda. I very much hope this will prove to be a highly successful visit.

In conclusion, may I once again thank Your Excellencies and all other guests for your presence here this evening. May I ask you to be upstanding in prayer to our Holy Father Pope Francis. THE SUPREME PONTIFF!

I ask you to remain standing and to toast the health and happiness of our shared head of state, Her Majesty The Queen. THE QUEEN!