

NOTES FOR A TOAST BY

**THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA,
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**AT A DINNER HOSTED BY
HIS MOST EMINENT HIGHNESS THE PRINCE FRA' M. FESTING,
GRAND MASTER OF THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA**

MAY 16, 2009

Your Most Eminent Highness;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your Most Eminent Highness, please accept my greetings. It was just last summer that I congratulated you on your election as Prince and Grand Master of the Order of Malta in March of 2008. Today I would like to congratulate on the completion of your first year in this venerable role.

Fra' Matthew, you bring to the post of Grand Master an impressive background of service as Colonel in the Territorial Army and as Deputy Lieutenant for Northumberland. You were also an art expert at Sotheby's.

As Speaker of the Senate of Canada, I have once again come to Rome to meet with officials from the Holy See and the academic community. It is an honour that you have taken the time to meet with me as well. On a personal note, I have been a Member of the Order of Malta since 1984 and, many years ago, I studied here at St. Thomas Aquinas University and at Pontifical Lateran University. Spring in Rome always conjures wonderful memories of my time in

academia. I remember my learning experience at both institutions with great fondness.

Since we last met, a truly noteworthy diplomatic achievement occurred between Canada and the Order of Malta. On June 4th, 2008, Canada and the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta established official relations. This mutual official diplomatic recognition of our long relation of close ties is truly a cause for celebration.

The establishment of official relations between Canada and the Order of Malta will facilitate discussion on a broad range of questions of common concern and on the great global issues. We will both benefit from a greater sharing of our respective approaches to social and humanitarian problems, as well pressing policy questions such as human migration, bio-ethics and science, as well as the environment.

Canada has a great deal to learn from the Order of Malta. Its contributions to humanitarian good works around the world are admired both for their selflessness, but also for their professionalism and competence.

One need look no further than the assistance provided by the volunteers of the Order of Malta Italian Relief Corps to the areas of Abruzzi

affected by the recent earthquake. Specialised nurses from the Order provided immediate medical care for the injured, while volunteers from the Order served up thousands of meals each day and set up a city of tents with hundreds of beds for those who were rendered homeless by the earthquake. The world truly owes the Order a debt of gratitude for these selfless actions.

During our discussions, I am anxious to hear about some of the Order's other humanitarian projects. I am also interested in being brought up to date about the Order's diplomatic work with the international bodies such as the Red Cross, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations.

At the same time, I would like to convey to you the warm greetings of the Members of the Order in Canada. In a world that changes so quickly, it is comforting to know that ancient institutions such as the Order of Malta continue to carry on their work.

In closing, allow me to thank you again for your warm hospitality.