

**NOTES FOR A TOAST GIVEN BY**  
**THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA,**  
**SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**  
  
**AT A DINNER HOSTED BY**  
**CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE HOLY SEE,**  
**HER EXCELLENCY ANNE LEAHY**

**MAY 15, 2009**

Your Eminences,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ambassador Leahy,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your Eminences, please accept my sincere appreciation for meeting with us tonight. I had the opportunity to visit Rome last year, and it is a great pleasure to return and see you all once again.

Let me also say how happy I am to meet with Ambassador Leahy. Since your posting last year, you have worked tirelessly to represent and defend Canadian interests in the Holy See. As Canada's first female Ambassador to the Holy See, you will be an inspiration to the generations of Canadian female diplomats that follow you. Through your work, you have also contributed to a better understanding of Canada within the Holy See. Your accomplishments are on display tonight.

On a personal note, many years ago I studied here at St. Thomas Aquinas University and at Pontifical Lateran University. I have also been a

Member of the Order of Malta since 1984. Because of the history that I have here, it is a particular honour for me to be addressing this distinguished audience tonight.

2009 is a special year in the long relationship between Canada and the Holy See. In October, Canada and the Holy See will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties. Since 1969, our relationship has grown significantly. In particular, Canadians will never forget the 3 visits to our country by His Holiness John Paul II. These visits left a profound and lasting impression on Canadians of all faiths.

The past year was also a very significant one in the relationship between Canada and the Sovereign Order of Malta. In June 2008, Canada established official relations with the Sovereign Order of Malta; and just last month, I had the pleasure of hosting a gathering in recognition of the establishment of official relations. The recognition of official relations was a seminal moment in our relationship, and it provides an excellent opportunity for Canadians to learn more about the humanitarian work that the Order of Malta does around the world.

I look forward to our discussions tonight and tomorrow. I am also anxious to discuss with both Ambassador Leahy, as well as other distinguished

guests, how the relationship between the Holy See and Canada can be strengthened even further.

In closing, on behalf of my colleagues, let me once again thank you for hosting this wonderful dinner tonight. As Speaker of the Senate of Canada, it is always an honour to speak in front of an audience as distinguished as this. I look forward to the productive discussions that I have no doubt will occur over the coming day. Thank you.