

Speech by HE Cardinal Martino On the occasion of the receiving the Order of Skanderbeg

Monday 2nd December 2013

Mr President,

Thank you for your warm words.

As Grand Prior of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, I join with the Prince and Grand Master in expressing my pleasure to be back in Albania for your country holds a special place in my heart.

For together with millions of others throughout history I have a deep respect and admiration for two of your nation's greatest spiritual exports - Skanderbeg and the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

It is particularly pleasing to receive your highest national decoration, the Skanderbeg Order, which honours someone whom Pope Pius the Second called 'a true soldier of Christ'.

Albania is also the homeland of the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Her continued inspiration to millions of people is much to your nation's honour.

Mr President

The opportunity during this visit to visit both new and restored places of worship for all faith communities is most heartening.

This is felt especially so Mr President, knowing of the great lengths which the former regime did to tear out and destroy the spiritual heart of your noble people.

My delegation appreciates the opportunity afforded to us during this visit to meet and exchange opinions with the Christian and Muslim leaders of your nation's diverse faith communities.

It is very much expected that we can develop mutually beneficial areas of cooperation.

Mr President

I commit myself to working with your country and further charitable appropriate projects. I would like to reiterate the wish of the Prince and Grand Master to see you in Rome very soon when we can return some of the generous hospitality you have extended to me.

I extend to you the blessing of the Holy Father, His Holiness Pope Francis, and my own prayers to you Mr President and the Albanian people. Thank you.