

Independence Message 2008

By His Excellency Dr. Nicholas J.O. Liverpool, DAH

President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

3 November 2008

Fellow Dominicans,

On 3rd November, 1978, we the people of Dominica as a manifestation of our will and desire to be free, took charge of our affairs and decided to create our own future. We must give thanks to Almighty God for bringing us thus far. This year marks a further milestone along this path as we proudly proclaim the attainment of thirty years as an independent nation. We can be justly proud of our achievements.

We should all reflect on where we were thirty years ago in terms of our social, political, cultural and economic development; and look to the future with guarded optimism as we seek to build on our accomplishments. As we celebrate another year of independence we are once again called upon to assess our situation and to ask where do we go from here. It is a time for introspection to determine where we are and where we intend to go as a people. For the vast majority of Dominicans this holiday is a glorious opportunity to be away from work to relax and to have some fun. But in addition to this we should be engaging in some serious thinking and ask ourselves for example what is it that really defines us as a people, what is the national vision that is shared by all of us - what essentially is a Dominican? We should find some time to think about these and similar questions.

This is also an opportune time for sober reflection as we congratulate ourselves on those things which we have done well, as individuals, in our families and in our clubs and other social organizations throughout this country.

We must never forget the efforts of our past leaders who paved the way for a better Dominica and made it possible for us to realize these 30 years of political independence. Their contribution must be remembered and respected at all times. They were not perfect, they made mistakes; but they worked hard and sacrificed so that we may live a better life.

The programme for our celebrations in this Reunion year has been crafted in such a manner as to invite as many of our brothers and sisters who reside abroad to join us at home, and

celebrate with us. We should greet them with open arms and ensure that their stay will be enjoyable as we celebrate the journey together. They too have made and are making great sacrifices, and have contributed significantly over the years to their families, their friends and to this country.

Families and communities are the cradles of development, and they must nurture succeeding generations to have confidence, mutual respect and a sense of nationhood. However modest we may be we should not be complacent at what we have achieved in the last 30 years. Judging from the resilience of our people we should not be daunted by the grave challenges which lie ahead of us. The future of Dominica looks positive indeed. I am hopeful that as a people we can bridge the gaps that appear to divide us in every sphere of our lives. Politicians come and go, governments rise and fall, but at the end of the day this country belongs to all of us and we must make every effort to secure it for future generations.

I call on every one of our citizens to be considerate, honest, caring and respectful of each other and to remember that politeness and patience are very good substitutes for high expectancy and quick results. We should always seek to maintain a thriving democracy where all citizens enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms; and a progressive society where all have an opportunity for participation and development.

Finally as we look to the future let us recommit ourselves to noble ideals, and to be loyal to our nation without regard to political or religious persuasion. We must place country above self and strive for a totally just society.

My wife and I extend to each citizen and resident of this fair land every good wish for a very happy and enjoyable 30th Independence Anniversary. We join you in praying for God's guidance as we strive to move our country forward.

May God bless you all and may God bless Dominica.