

Liberation Day
Monday 9th May 2016

Your Excellency, Chief Minister, ladies and gentlemen

1. First of all, a very warm welcome to you all to Liberation Square for our annual Liberation Day celebration.
2. Hawk-eyed attenders at this event will see a small change in the programme this year in that the Bailiff's address comes at the beginning, and not during the religious service to which we will shortly turn. 71 years ago there was undoubtedly a huge excitement and relief at the deliverance from the occupation of the enemy – and whenever there is a deliverance, it is a human reaction to be thankful, and entirely appropriate, as did our predecessors, to reflect that in the religious service conducted by our religious leaders; led by the Dean because the Church of England is the established church in the Island, but appropriately he is joined by not only the other Christian leaders but also leaders of different faiths, reflecting our multi faith community.
3. We all know why Liberation Day is so important. Unwelcome Nazi military forces had been in occupation of the Island for five years. They had placed a restraint on freedom of speech, of freedom of movement. The freedom of choice to live our lives in this Island was for some disrupted by deportation to camps in Germany. Indeed the threat of Nazi occupation had led to the evacuees

leaving the Island in 1940, whether to join in military service against the enemy or to return to their families in the United Kingdom. Liberation Day 1945 was the beginning of a rebuilding of our Island institutions, our homes and our economy; above all else under a banner of freedom so well captured by the sculpture before us in the middle of this Square. The foul Nazi ideas of the purity of the Aryan race, of anti-Semitism and anti-homo-sexuality – indeed anti-minorities of very many kinds – were put to one side in a triumphant recognition of tolerance that is embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

4. Even those of you who do not follow English football will probably be aware that Sir Alex Ferguson was one of the most successful football managers of all time. His mantra was to enjoy success on the day it was achieved and the following day to start work for next year. Liberation Day requires we should adopt a similar approach. It is a time for renewal by looking backwards to remember the release from oppression and looking forwards, reviewing what we face today. During the last month or so, there has been much publicity given to the wave of anti-Semitism which seems to be increasing across Europe. As a result of terrorism and perhaps mass migration, there seems to be a growing anti-Muslim feeling in some quarters too.

5. If it is right, as it seems to be, that such hostile ideas are gaining ground, we need, don't we, to be on our guard? Are we entitled to protect the security of our island? Yes, against extremists who threaten it. Should we anxiously protect our way of life, a way of tolerance for minorities? Yes, against any extremists who threaten it. Should we anxiously protect our freedom of speech, our freedom to disagree with the views expressed by others? Yes, against any extremists who threaten it. We should settle our own beliefs and values and be prepared to stand up for them, but our island value system recognises that as a small community we respect our differences.
6. So we do not discriminate against people who wear a cross as a symbol of Jesus Christ their Redeemer, or those who wear the kippah or skull cap to fulfil the requirement in Jewish law that a man cover his head in prayer, or those who wear the hijab – a partial veil regarded by many but not all Muslims as a symbol of religion but also a symbol of modesty, privacy and morality. This principle of non-discrimination we must adopt for ourselves, and instil in our children and grandchildren.
7. We can remember the recent bombings in Turkey, Paris and Brussels and the more historic bombings in London, Madrid, Bali and of course 9/11. Yet we make no progress looking back on those events if we cannot learn from them. So in this Island today let us be beacons of tolerance, respecting those of different

backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or religion. We are small enough as a community to do that successfully, as I believe we do - and as individuals we must whether we be Christian, Jew, Muslim or of other or no faith; whether we be black or white or somewhere between; whether we be heterosexual or homosexual; whether we be Jersey born or not, British nationals or not. This is the true message of Liberation Day because it sets the standard for the sort of community we aspire to be.

So after the service, let us re-kindle the excitement of Liberation and the restoration of freedom with this shared standard today and for the future. That really is a good reason to party!

9 May 2016.

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