

**Devotion and Unity in
Preserving And Building Our Island, Our Home**

Sint Maarten Day Message

by

**Eugene B. Holiday
The Governor of Sint Maarten**

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Fellow Sint Maarteners,

Happy Sint Maarten's Day. I am particularly happy to be here, to address you today and to join you in observing and celebrating our national holiday.

Our November 11 holiday calls for us, all of us, to embrace and celebrate the traditions unique to Sint Maarten. I therefore call on you to join in the festivities organized around our island and observe our national day. For as a people we can only forge forward successfully in the preservation and building of our home through knowledge of, through appreciation for and by building on our heritage.

My fellow Sint Maarteners, my brothers and sisters,

As we strive to forge forward and build our island, our home, we, like those who went before us, face many recurring challenges.

As a result I will, on this Sint Maarten Day, take this opportunity to highlight the building blocks which we must employ if we are to continue to build on the foundation and privileges which has been passed down to us.

In that regard I believe that we can draw inspiration from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he states and I quote:

"For we are labourers together with God: as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another

*buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”*¹ Unquote.

Over many years successive generations of our men and women have laboured to build this island, our home. As a result we are the beneficiaries of a treasured natural, cultural, and economic heritage. The challenge, the call to our generation is that we take heed, that we be mindful, how we build to preserve our home.

Like the generations that went before us we face important challenges. Our challenges include:

- a) social imbalances as reflected in too many of our people and in particular our youth being out of work;
- b) political and community tensions in regards to the quality of Governance;
- c) unresolved and increasing debate about border issues;
- d) Chikungunya concerns; and
- e) the impact of Gonzalo and the recent flooding,

to name a few.

My fellow Sint Maarteners, my brothers and sisters,

To preserve and continue building our home we must take determinate action in regards to these challenges. I believe that it is crucial and trust that we in our efforts to address these challenges will be guided by certain fixed values embedded in the spirit of Sint Maarten day. These values are devotion to Sint Maarten and unity of purpose.

¹ First Corinthians Chapter 3 v9 and 10.

They are essential values for good governance and thus for the building of a brighter future for Sint Maarten.

Our devotion to Sint Maarten dictates that in our conduct and actions we honor and respect our identity, our heritage, our home. It dictates that to preserve our home we leave no stone unturned in tackling the challenges we face. It means that we may not rest while any one of our people is without work. Devotion to Sint Maarten means that we may leave no stone unturned to promote integrity and good governance. That is because our devotion to Sint Maarten calls for us to protect and develop every person, every resource to ensure their involvement and participation in making life safe, free and just on our island. Devotion to Sint Maarten, by caring for our people and natural resources is the fundamental commitment to the guarding of our home against the challenges we face. It is a central value that makes the protection and continued building of our home by us possible.

My fellow Sint Maarteners, brothers and sisters,

Our individual and collective devotion to our island is strongest when coupled with our unity of purpose. For it is only through our unity of purpose that we can stand ready and unwavering in our defense of the common cause of our island, our home. Our belief in the unity of purpose of our island has a long tradition. It is a way of life, it is a value rooted in the DNA of our people. A value so profound that, our traditions of unity was formalized in the Treaty of Concordia 366 years ago. A treaty that manifests, builds and preserves the unity of purpose of our

way of life. The declaration of November 11, as a National Holiday on the entire island 66 years ago further underscored the importance of *unity of purpose* as a vital value of our people. This unity extends beyond those official documents and declarations, it is a unity lived every day through family ties, work relations, cultural identity, business relations and shared challenges across the island.

Thus as we celebrate our 66 Sint Maarten/St. Martin day I call on all to take heed of the values of our national holiday: Devotion to Sint Maarten and Unity of Purpose. It is a call to be mindful in the preservation and building of our island, our home. It is a call to each person, each home, each family, each neighborhood in the North and in the South and in the East and in the West of our island.

I trust that all of us – as builders of our home – will heed this builder's call and embrace these values. For it is my hope that in addressing the challenges we face that we will be known to all peoples by these values. For by their observance our heritage, our inheritance, our Sweet Sint Maarten land, our home, will through our devotion continue to grow in unity, culturally, socially and economically. For that is how we will continue to realize the vision of Sint Maarten Day.

It is in that spirit that I trust that you are enjoying our national holiday with family and friends enjoying the privileges, embracing the values and envisioning the potential of our sweet Sint Maarten land.

My fellow Sint Maarteners, my brothers and sisters,

It is with this positive prospect for value based governance towards a brighter future that I hereby, on behalf of my wife Marie-Louise and myself, wish you the people of Sint Maarten/Saint Martin a happy and safe Day.

Thank you!

God bless you!

And may God bless our beloved island, our home!