



BRIEF REMARKS

by

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MINISTER OF EDUCATION

on the occasion of:

***A Celebration of Commonwealth Day at
St. Cecilia's Catholic Primary School***

at

St. Cecilia's Catholic Primary School

Third Street, Coconut Grove

Nassau, The Bahamas

10:00 a.m.

10th March, 2010

Salutations:

- (1) Ms. Tiffany Glass – Principal
- (2) Mrs. Marie Rodgers – Vice-Principal

- (3) Monsignor Simeon Roberts

- (4) Former Principals & Vice- Principals

- (5) Past & Current Teachers

- (6) Chippie & the Boys

- (7) Parents & Students
- (8) Ladies & Gentlemen

Good Morning!

It is wonderful to be here with St. Cecilia's School family in celebration of Commonwealth Day. On this day, we are called upon to examine who we are as citizens of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and to demonstrate and reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of harmony amongst the other Commonwealth nations. Students, there is much to be learnt from your celebrations today. Therefore, I want you to pay careful attention to all that is said and done during this very special assembly.

I am certain that your teachers would have told you that schools around the world began celebrating Commonwealth Day from as early as 1977, with activities such as singing, dancing, exhibitions, the display of the native dress of other countries, and the hoisting of flags. On this day, you are to reflect on the love you have for your country, for all of humanity, and for the world in which we live.

The theme: ***“Science, Technology & Society”*** reminds us that our world is in a continuous state of transformation, and we, who make up the various societies will always be affected by such changes. Therefore, it is important for us to think about how we may sustain ourselves and our country

through these changes. Staying in school and gaining a good *education* is one way in which we can stay abreast of global changes. Education is key to your being able to make competent decisions about the future of The Bahamas, and your overall success in life.

What does being Bahamian mean to you? Does it mean eating boiled fish, peas n' rice or guava duff? Dancing to the beat of Junkanoo? Swimming in our clear aquamarine waters, or attending a church service? Some of you may choose one or more of these options, while others may choose all of them. Students, while these are all an integral part of our lives, being Bahamian should encompass much more. As Bahamians, we have a responsibility to our African forefathers who passed down to us a deep rooted sense of spirituality, a rich and diverse culture, and an excellent sense of values. We must honour their indomitable spirits by upholding the values that they handed down to us so long ago. We must honour them by protecting the firm foundation that this country was built upon, because in so doing, we ensure that it is around for succeeding generations to enjoy.

Are you going to make the decision to adhere to those high standards set by our forefathers, or are you going to be influenced by the negativity that you sometimes see about you? We must think about these things and make some decisions from the perspective of an African heritage, British past having once been a colony of Britain, American values due to our close proximity, and European influences brought about by globalization. Students, I want you to think about what you can do today to make yourselves and your country better.

I want you to promise me that you will stay in school, and that you will make *respect* and *responsibility* your watchwords. Remain actively engaged in your learning here at St. Cecilia's School and ensure that you:

- Are reading at or above your grade level;
- Do well in the Grade Level Assessment Test (GLAT);
- Participate in at least one extra curricular activity such as your school clubs and groups, sports or music;
- Avoid physical violence, hurtful words and thoughts;
- Work hard to obtain 3.0 GPA's and above; and
- Begin preparing now for your Junior High School years.

St. Cecilia's which operates under the auspices of the Bahamas Catholic Board of Education has a rich history of providing an excellent standard of education to Bahamians, which began as early as 1956. The school is certainly living up to its goal of: *"Producing highly motivated, well rounded productive citizens who will contribute meaningfully to the indelible fabric of our country."* The Ministry of Education applauds the caring administrators, teachers, parents, support staff and other stakeholders for the positive opportunities they have given to their students by way of the curriculum, sporting, spiritual and musical activities. There is no doubt that you have produced many citizens who are now contributing to the country in a most positive way.

In closing, I wish to encourage all Bahamians to be proud of their country, to find ways to give back, and to promote harmonious living amongst all nations. Students, enjoy this special day, and remember that education unlocks all doors and leads to success. Work diligently to improve yourselves and The Bahamas, and be respectful in your attitudes, and responsible in your ways.

Thank you