



REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ADDRESS

BY

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE JENNIFER BAPTISTE-PRIMUS
MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

AT THE

TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL FOLK CHOIR

AWARD CEREMONY

JUNE 19, 2016

ST. AGNES ANGLICAN CHURCH

4:30 P.M.

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, brothers and sisters. How is everyone this afternoon? Where are our fathers this afternoon? Happy Fathers' Day to you all. I hope you had a wonderful day thus far and I know you will have a delightful evening as you share your time with us at this Award Ceremony.

Archdeacon Primus, thank you for that uplifting prayer... I start everything with prayer, when we put the Good Lord before us, we know He will carry us through anything and everything. I know you will agree with me.

Mr. Eddie Cumberbatch, renowned Tenor, I thank you for that pore-raising piece and how fortuitous that I am going to speak about achieving excellence after that excellent performance. Ladies and gentlemen, again another round of applause for Mr. Cumberbatch.

I feel very special this afternoon for having been invited to bring remarks at this very intimate event as we recognize excellence. What is excellence? Why do we work so hard towards this end? Why do we strive for excellence? We strive for excellence because it means we

want to be at our very best...we want to be at the top of our game and we want to be in a league of our own! It is about being the best at our craft.

Not all of us are concerned with excellence. Unfortunately we live in a world where mediocrity is becoming the norm. It is as if we are losing our zeal for going the extra mile. We seem to only be interested in the task we have to do and no more. Let us remember the Scripture, the Parable of the Talents. Remember the man who got the talent and he hid it away? Are you hiding away your talent, doing just what needs to be done to get by? Or are you working your talent for the glory of God and your fellow man?

That ladies and gentlemen is the question we ask ourselves when we're striving for excellence. It is hard work. Ms. Stewart and the members of the Holy Trinity Cathedral Folk Choir can tell you... it is rehearsals and more rehearsals; breaking the Choir into groups to practice their respective parts; synergizing these parts so that we have one harmonious sound... it's not easy. And when you listen to them raising

their voices to the Lord to uplift us...that ladies and gentlemen is striving for excellence.

Today, we celebrate with the Holy Trinity Cathedral Folk Choir this milestone – twenty-one years and I was particularly heartened by the theme chosen to mark the occasion, ***“Achieving Excellence...The Way Forward”***. It spoke volumes to me. It said to me, we’re not content to be any middle-of-the-road choir. We want to be at the best at our game but even when we get there ... there’s still more to do...further to go. The sky is the literal limit. And I say go for it!

This choir, of approximately thirty persons, meets every Friday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. going later when necessary to prepare. Friday evening... when they could be liming or home with family, there are with their Choir Family preparing to be of service to you and me... that is the commitment that is being lost these days. And there is a culture in this choir, a family spirit – Auntie Barbara, yes... I’ve heard about Auntie Barbara, Mrs. Barbara James and her husband Mr. James organize family days for the Choir. From breakfast, chief cook and

bottle washer is Mrs. James because these are the little things that build the camaraderie and foster the family spirit that makes a successful body such as yours.

I want you to really give a heartfelt round of applause to Choir Director, Ms. Tricia Stewart. Tricia has held this post from inception. She has an excellent relationship with her choir members, who describe her as having a beautiful voice and wonderful disposition. And I want to point out her astute management in this regard for acknowledging the importance of recognizing hard work, commitment and drive in hosting this Award Ceremony. This is how you build morale and continue the journey forward as you continue to forge your success.

To the members of the Holy Trinity Cathedral Folk Choir, continue to strive for great things as you chart your way forward. I want to congratulate each of you for your amazing contribution to this Choir that is not only interested in building but in giving back. From its first year, this Choir committed to visiting the Mt. Hope Hospital at Christmas time to bring cheer and inject the Spirit of Christmas to those

not as fortunate to be able to spend this Season with family. Six years ago, the Richmond Street Boys' School Choir joined in on this noble initiative. I share this with you because I want you to appreciate how special this choir is and how your work is testament to the greatness you strive for.

Today, is Labour Day. Today we observe the seventy-ninth anniversary of the birth of the Labour Movement in Trinidad and Tobago... **but** in 1937 when Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler led the revolution that many say gave birth to the labour landscape as we know it in Trinidad and Tobago little did he know that that was only the beginning... and he was charting a roadmap that many, including myself, journey on and we continue to recognize the struggle for decent work for all in Trinidad and Tobago.

And as I close ladies and gentlemen let us remember the struggles and contributions of the pioneers of the Labour Movement and recognize the achievements of the Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir. Excellence is not beyond reach, it is always within grasp. It is not only about aptitude but

attitude; it is not only about talent but working that talent – it is about sharing and sacrifices for a greater good.

Congratulations to this evening's awardees and to Ms. Stewart for embarking on this honourable initiative.

May God bless you all and may God bless our nation.