

# **Transcript – Prime Minister Rowley’s Remarks -A Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving (2016)**

**Date:** Saturday 24th September, 2016.

**Time:** 8:30am-10:30am

**Venue:** Queen’s Park Savannah, Grand Stand

**Notes:** On Saturday 24th September 2016, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, hosted a Day of Prayer at the grand Stand, Queen’s Park Savannah. During his remarks, Prime Minister Rowley noted that while “our land may not be as bountiful as it was yesterday...tomorrow holds out for us a better day”. Dr. Rowley also emphasised that nationhood is an endless journey - no nation, from its birth to today, has had only good times. The Prime Minister urged citizens to be grateful and take responsibility for our land.

---BEGINNING---

Thank you very much. President of the Senate, Ms. Christine Kangaloo, Distinguished members of The Clergy, Leaders of the various religious denominations, Members of the Cabinet, Members of Parliament, Members of The Diplomatic Corp, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Citizens.

I am delighted that I am able to join you here this morning at this location to celebrate the existence of our Republic for four decades. At this point in the morning, we would have gone well beyond the allotted time and last night I told the Minister, “Take me of the program.” Because today is not a day for me to address anybody, but to be addressed as you have been addressed today by those who duty it is to call upon us as citizens regardless of our stations to acknowledge our land is still good. This land is still good. So it is not for me to deter you and lower your spirit from where it has been elevated by the performances of our many guests. But to remind all of us that before we can give thanks, we must first acknowledge that there is something to give thanks for.

On reflection every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, who has the authority under our constitution to claim this land as their own will acknowledge there is more to give thanks for. Nationhood is an endless journey. You will never arrive at a place and say yes we arrive so we can stop travelling to perfection. The yard stick of life of a person and particularly our nation is one that ranges from possible hopelessness through helplessness to perfection. It is for us as individuals and as a people to determine where we place ourselves on that measure.

I can confidently say when Trinidad and Tobago, we are well away from the starting point of hopelessness and we do not now reside in the location of helplessness. But perfection is the long way away. But ask yourself, if you compare yourself with others, what will happen in Trinidad and Tobago? If we are so minded at some point in time, maybe now, to be so despondent of ourselves and our own circumstances, which have changed maybe not for the better. But suppose the response that we believe that we are not and the place we want to be and we open up all our restrictions, remove our immigration department and say there are no restrictions to this place call- Trinidad and Tobago and anybody from anywhere in the world can come and stay as long as you want and find out if anyone would choose Trinidad and Tobago as the place they want to be.

I guarantee you that if we open our borders to the rest of the world many, many others around the world will want our circumstance and want to be here in Trinidad and Tobago. That is something to be thankful for. Notwithstanding the fact that our land may not be bountiful as it was yesterday, tomorrow holds out for us a better day. The best vehicles in the world at the Grand Prix, Formula 1 cars, and you see where they test them? Not on a straight track, where they accelerate to infinity. But on a very tortuous track, with long stretches and deep and dangerous curves and the journey to the checker flag is always on that root. There are days and seconds where we accelerate like there is no tomorrow and if we don't need any brakes but as we enter the dangerous curves we have to slow down very carefully and very efficiently we negotiate the curve to get on the next straight way and at the end of the race is the checker flag where only the victor will celebrate. That ladies and gentlemen is the root of a nation.

There is no nation known to me that from its birth to today, has only had good times and merriment. In fact, some of the greatest nations in the world today, have entered the darkness and despair and even today, we in Trinidad and Tobago regardless of circumstance, there are teachers in all the schools for all our children. There are doctors and nurses in our hospitals and there is food on the table. Let us be thankful and let us be a grateful people, the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

So, all I can do now is to thank those who organise this function and particularly thank those who came out this morning and more importantly, thank the leaders of the denominations who have come here today and that provided us with an incentive to do better and to do so in the name of whoever we pray to because at the end of the day we are all one people, one nation under God.

As we go forward to tomorrow and the days, months and weeks ahead, let us take personal responsibilities for this land, let us do our duty and let us be proud to be associated with and to be owners of Trinidad and Tobago. Go and enjoy the rest of the day, Happy Independence, Happy Anniversary, Happy Thanksgiving Day, and Happy Republic Day in Trinidad and Tobago. Thank You.

--END--