

**VP1 Valérie Damaseau**  
**Saint-Martin's Day Official Speech**  
**NOVEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Dear St martiners,**

**Chers concitoyens,**

En ce jour de célébration de la fête de Saint-Martin, The Saint-Martin's day, j'ai une pensée toute particulière pour vous tous qui continuez à forger la réputation de cette île au travers de vos initiatives, votre liberté d'entreprendre, votre amour du risque mais surtout vos réussites pas toujours remarquées.

Vos choix de continuer d'aller de l'avant, de construire,

Votre abnégation, votre résilience, font désormais partie de notre patrimoine immatériel.

Aujourd'hui, en plus de notre gentillesse, de notre joie de vivre, refuser la fatalité, se relever et sourire, sont aussi les caractéristiques qui nous définissent.

As we commemorate this St. Martin's Day 2020, I can't help but think back of the historic relations between the two local governments of this island, the intertwined realities of WE the people not French not Dutch, but WE who through much English speaking have forged together this reality called Saint-Martin.

St. Martin's Day is a time to re-examine our aspirations of nation building and dream of founding fathers, the various initiatives have been taken by our local Governments and must continue the fight until the day where we will be able to co-governed this unique territory that no one understand but WE.

However on this 11<sup>th</sup> day of November, Saint Martin's day, in my capacity as 1st Vice President in charge of Culture, I ask that we do so with traditional enthusiasm in an attempt to highlight and preserve the centuries-old rich culture of this little island of ours. This day must be a demonstration of the peaceful identity that characterizes the culture of our country.

November 11th must always be the day when we speak of who we were, of who we are and who we are aspiring to be.

We are crossing some very rough paths since 2017 but if we are honest with ourselves it goes beyond and through it all we continue to demonstrate our resilience.

Today I urge that we as a people don't lose track of, our day, I dare you to be part of the solution and not the problem. It is our duty to preserve this day through full demonstration of our culture and uniqueness.

Saint Martin is known around the world as

The friendly island

The melting pot of the Caribbean

The gastronomic capital

Today let us celebrate moderately but more importantly proudly as one people.

So while we celebrate our culture, I call on every woman, every man, every boy and every girl to stand at the gates of progress, recall the courage and determination of our forefathers, stir up pride, bravery and watchfulness and continue that which our ancestors begun with conviction.

Sisters, pick up your large flowers printed frock, brothers brace yourselves. The task before us is significant but together we can be the architects of progress for our country, for us and our children.

All the strides we take seek to realize the cherished vision of peace and prosperity for Sweet St. Martin land as well as stability in the region and beyond.

In couple weeks we would be celebrating Christmas, despite the challenges, I wish for us to share love, peace, harmony, let's slam the dominos, light up those grill in the backyard, play rounders, reap those guaverberry, bake those tarts and puddings, simply pull out all our traditions all of which will help us preserve our way of living and our culture.

En conclusion, en ce jour précieux, prenons le temps pour partager ces valeurs qui nous rassemblent tels que l'amour, l'amitié, le vivre ensemble.

N'oublions jamais que nous formons une communauté de destin avec pour obligation de toujours s'entraider, s'encourager.

Long live Saint Martin

Happy St Martin's Day to all!