



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057

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Chief Minister praises Polish awards on the late Bishop Charles Caruana and Anthony J P Lombard

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo MP, has welcomed the news that the late Bishop Caruana has been posthumously awarded a Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland by the President of Poland, His Excellency Mr Bronislaw Komorowski.

The Chief Minister has also acknowledged the award of the Knight Officer's Cross of the same Order on Poland's Honorary Consul in Gibraltar, Anthony J P Lombard.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, the Polish Ambassador in London, Her Excellency Barbara Tuge-Erecinska, recognised Bishop Caruana was a true friend and advocate of Poland. She highlighted the fact he devoted much of his life to the Polish cause, in particular to the preservation of the memory of General Wladyslaw Sikorski. Bishop Caruana also spared no effort to provide assistance to Polish nationals who found themselves in difficulties. The Ambassador added: "We greatly appreciate those years of dedicated and passionate involvement and work. Bishop Caruana is sorely missed; however, he has left us the heritage of his life and work, by which he will always be remembered, as an outstanding individual and a true friend of Poland".

In his reply, the Chief Minister has said: "It is a great pleasure and delight to hear about the significant award being made posthumously to the late Bishop Charles Caruana by the President of Poland. The words of the Polish Ambassador, in her letter, echo very closely, the sentiments felt towards Bishop Caruana by the people of Gibraltar and I know his family are greatly honoured to learn of this important and prestigious honour. I am equally pleased that Tony Lombard's long-standing efforts on behalf of Poland and Polish citizens in Gibraltar, have been further recognised with an additional award".

The investiture will take place later this year.