



## Sant Jordi's Call 2015

*Barcelona, 23 April 2015*

Good morning and welcome,

Today is a day of great revelry: today is Sant Jordi, patron saint of Catalonia. It is one of the most charming days in our country. The fact that we give each other books and roses as sign of our love makes this day unique throughout the world. However, what gives this day life is the fact that it is a shared celebration: for it to have full meaning, the book or rose must be given to someone else. This festivity is fully cherished when we share it with those from all walks of life. One can tell much about the Catalan people when our national festival is based on acts of sharing and is experienced by everyone.

For this reason I would like to encourage you to enjoy the festivity and try to make others enjoy them as well. That everyone, within their own means, give a book and a rose and allow themselves to be given one too. That, if you can, find some time to walk around the streets with the people you love. Try to discover our authors, break a lance for our books and our language, and give that bookshop and that writer a chance. I also ask that, if possible, give a helping hand to entities and students, who are selling roses today in efforts to raise funds of their own. Ultimately, I urge you to go out, relish the Day of Sant Jordi and share it with that civility and joy which distinguishes this collective celebration.

This joint celebration must also make us think about our challenges, which are also shared. Our nation, which on this day celebrates such a remarkable festivity, is a nation that collectively wants to decide its own future. In a poem, Maria de Segarra once wrote:

*“La rosa li ha contat gràcies i penes  
i ell se l'estima fins qui sap a on,  
i amb ella té més sang a dins les venes  
per plantar cara a tots els dracs del món”*

“The rose has told him graces and tragedies  
And he loves it until who knows where,  
With it he has more blood in his veins  
To face all the dragons in the world”

There are many dragons we must face in the world: ignorance, disease, unemployment, solitude, and other dragons such as the lack of respect for the dignity of our people or for our will to govern ourselves. Each one of us can be our own Sant Jordi or Saint Jordina: the extent of all our challenges signifies that we can only overcome them if we face them together.

Another great poet of ours, Joan Maragall, once said: *“When a nation takes a hero as its patron, it means it wants to relive its heroisms”*. With the same courage and certainty as Sant Jordi, and the same love for people and the things that are truly worthwhile, I encourage you to experience our country’s ancient festivity. The heroism that is asked of us today, concerns what is already in our grasp: to fulfil our duty at every moment, to do what must be done and to be prepared to do what is necessary. Today, on Sant Jordi’s Day, we have a great opportunity to do this. *“If we want the mark of a hero, we must constantly renew our strife and victory”*, continued the same Maragall. *“May there be constant purity in our vestments, may our weapons shine, may we have a breath of love in our chests and always, always have a laughter of serene faith in our most vigorous fight”*, he continued. May we do it in this way.

Have a great Day of Sant Jordi beside those whom you love.

Long live Sant Jordi and long live Catalonia!