



PRINCESS CAMILLA OF BOURBON
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Weekly

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INTERVIEW
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OF BOURBON-TWO SICILIES
"HOW CAN WE
STAND AND WATCH
WHEN SUCH
A PARADISE IS
HEADING FOR SELF-
DESTRUCTION?"



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Interview

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With the launch of the Princess Camilla of Bourbon Charitable Foundation whose aim is to promote the preservation of the environment and sustainable development, Weekly speaks to Princess Camilla of Bourbon-Two Sicilies, about her project and why she has chosen Mauritius as the subject of her interest.

“How can we stand and watch when such a paradise is heading for self-destruction?”

By Touria PRAYAG

You are an Italian princess who's fallen in love with Mauritius and have been living a love story with Mauritius for over 20 years. How does an Italian princess fall in love with a tiny island in the middle of the Indian Ocean?

I came here on vacation with my husband and we just completely fell in love with this magical place. It actually has a lot of things in common with Italy, especially the south of Italy: the colours, the beauty of the sea, the human warmth, the flavours... are incredible. So, for the last 20 years, we have never, ever spent one year without coming here.

Tell me about the life of an Italian princess after Italy has turned into a republic.

There is no longer a kingdom in place but we are responsible for keeping the kingdom's culture and history alive through constant projects and cultural initiatives.

How did you meet the prince?

I met him through Prince Albert, his cousin. I was born in a business family in Rome, I grew up in New York City in the states, and lived for part of the time in Geneva and Mexico. I was at the New York



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HERRING

University Business School and came back to Europe as soon as I finished my studies.

■ Did you find it easy to fit in the royal family?

Yes, because I could relate to their values and their education. I also like that the whole royal family in Europe is related to each other. In fact, we all call each other 'Uncle' and 'Aunt' because of that family link. And everyone is involved in charity. My husband and I do a lot of social work particularly in the south of Italy. Of course, we also do a lot of social work worldwide as in Tanzania, Congo, Lebanon, Pakistan, the United States... My husband's foundation, The Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, has built many hospitals and schools for children throughout the world*. I myself focus more on women's causes, particularly violence against women. Last year, I had the honour to receive The UN Women for Peace Association Award which encourages me to be even more involved in this struggle.

■ But here your interest is more in the environment. Why?

When one looks at this beautiful sea, the incredible sunsets, the enormous landscape that you have, green with palm trees and sugarcane, one doesn't want it to disappear. Through the Scientific Centre of Monaco and the UN report on climate change, I became aware of the research done on how the corals, for example, are getting destroyed because of dramatic changes to the environment and climatic conditions.

■ In Mauritius, in particular?

In Mauritius and all over the Indian Ocean, especially in the Maldives. But what is happening elsewhere is spreading everywhere and is coming to your shores. The fish are dying. The corals are dying. Everything is getting destroyed. One cannot remain insensitive to



"We can't stop it all but we can try to make everyone more conscious of the harm they are causing."

this. How can we stand and watch when such a paradise is heading for self-destruction? For me, contributing to the preservation of the sea is almost a way to give something back to Mauritius. Mauritius has given me 20 years of incredible happiness, family vacations, beautiful moments. Starting the Princess Camilla of Bourbon Charitable Foundation is my way of giving back some happiness to Mauritius.

■ What is the foundation going to do in concrete terms?

What I would like to do is to create a joint venture between the Scientific Centre of Monaco and the foundation, and bring over all the scientific studies that have been done in Monaco in order to prevent the deterioration of the environment and the sea. We may do what they did in Dubai to prevent the erosion of the beaches, like building a coral reef. My foundation will start the fund investment followed by my "conscious friends", associations and other partners. Nevertheless, it is important for me to work with the government and know I can count on their help and support.

■ What is the first project the foundation will work on?

I would like to do something for the coral reef, and look particularly at this mystery of nature in which some corals are dying next to ones that are alive. Why is that happening? What is the problem? Because if they die, the whole ecosystem is going to fall apart. I think the first thing to do is to use the Scientific Centre of Monaco to find the answer. I hope that I can be a link

between Prince Albert's Foundation, which is well known, and my foundation. Prince Albert has big projects on sea exploration and climatic change studies. Three years of experiments in the Indian Ocean, possibly. I would like to be able to encourage foundations like his, or the Bill Gates Foundation, to come over and consciously try to do something important for the environment here.

■ When you talk about the foundation and the damage done to the coral reef, I don't hear you blame anybody for this. Do you think there is anybody to blame for the state that our seas and environment have reached?

I think all of us are guilty in a certain way. It is years and years of unconsciousness that have landed us in the situation we are in today. I don't think we are able to change overnight but one thing is for sure: if we don't shout loudly today, nobody is going to do anything. And then it's going to be too late. It is already too late. So I think the Indian Ocean at least has to be preserved. The Mediterranean is really in a catastrophic situation and I think it's going to get only worse. When you look at some of the reports, it's a disaster. So when you say who is to blame, I would say we all are to blame but we should avoid our children having to plead guilty too. We have to stop this. The big industries and vehicles have to take a large part of the blame. We can't stop it all but we can try to make everyone more conscious of the harm they are causing.

■ When we meet again, say five years from now, what are you going to be able to tell me?

I hope to be able to tell you that we have made some progress, that a team from all over the world has done some real studies here, explored the sea, diagnosed the disease, found how to preclude the destruction of the coral still alive and even revive

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the dead ones.

■ **Are you going to work with countries which are ahead like Dubai?**

Absolutely. Also, Italy and Monte Carlo are really far ahead with experiments. I am going to work with Americans who have done some studies on medicines and corals. I rely on the friendship and collaborations that we have developed throughout all these years to have an urgent helping hand.

■ **There was a big polemic recently concerning the contribution of the hotels to the degradation of the environment. Do you think the hotels contribute to the deg-**

"I don't think hotels help preserve the environment but, on the other hand, they cannot take the sole responsibility for the damage."

radation of the environment or they help preserve it?

I don't think hotels help preserve the environment but, on the other hand, they cannot take the sole responsibility for the damage. Hotels are part of a necessary big loop in tourism development. They preserve tourism and make sure people like me come here and enjoy it. Helping the environment? No. But you don't have tourism if you don't have good hotels. I think what is bad is all the chemicals that we throw in the sea, the pollution by the big companies and cars...

■ **Don't you think tourists who swim with dolphins and get very close to them contribute to the destruction of the environment?**

Using animals just to have fun should be banned. We need sustainable development. If everybody becomes conscious of this big issue instead of saying it is not my problem, we will make a lot of progress.

■ **How optimistic are you?**

Not very optimistic, to tell you the truth. I don't think we are going to stop it all. I don't think it's convenient for everybody to stop destroying our environment. I am not positive at all but I believe that it's not too late. I want to keep hope. ■

* More information on this is available on the website: www.ordinecostantiniano.it and www.constantinian.org.uk



[THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS]

By Shanda MOORGHEN



Pascal's wager

There are days when any sort of political analysis is rendered redundant by the predictability of our power-hungry overlords. Raffick Sorefan left the opposition bench to cross the floor into government, following the likes of Joe L'esjongard and Zoubert Jomaye. Most observers were not surprised by the announcement, convinced that Sorefan's inescapable descent into government had already occurred weeks ago.

Sorefan argued that he was not in it for the money — they never seem to be — because he could have made so much more as a doctor in the private sector. We are not sure who told him to make that sacrifice. The voters, for one, did not. Sorefan tried his luck twice at a general election, once in 2010 and again in 2014. Both times, he came out fifth, only making his way into parliament via the best loser system. It must have been hard giving up on his lucrative career in medicine for a cushy job with a meagre six-figure sum sneaking into his bank account every month. We thank you for your sacrifice.

Then again, we can't blame the man for wanting to sacrifice himself for the country even if the voters don't want him. After all, this is not his first sacrifice. He was mayor of Quatre-Bornes for the Labour Party in 1996, while Navin Rangoolam was in power. He was elected as municipal councillor for the MMM in 2001 during the MMM/MSM government. He then left the MMM in 2015 as they were at the arguably lowest point in their history. He left the MP in 2016 when hopes of a potential coalition with the government faded away. He served a few months as an independent member of parliament waiting for his chance to get into power. With the opposition now more divided than ever, Sorefan has finally made it into power. The ultimate sacrifice!

It would be unfair to say that this is anything new even if the likes of Sorefan have taken it to a different level. After all, it is a simple probability theory based on Pascal's wager. Famous mathematician Blaise Pascal argued that any rational individual should believe in God mainly because of its potential benefits. Believers would gain infinitely more from God's existence than atheists would gain from God's non-existence.

In the case of Mauritian politics, spineless politicians like L'esjongard, Monty Wong, Jomaye and Sorefan have put aside any principles to abide by Pascal's wager. They don't need to agree with the MSM or Pravind Jugnauth. They just need to believe in him for the time being because that's how they will maximise their gains. Pravind Jugnauth is their feudal lord these days even if he is not ours.

Pascal only argued for the rational belief in God. He did not say which one. When the demi-God ruling the country eventually changes in 2019, so will the allegiances. We look forward to hearing more torments telling us about their sacrifices for the country.

"PRAVIND JUGNAUTH IS THEIR FEUDAL LORD THESE DAYS EVEN IF HE IS NOT OURS."