

## Address to Calgary City Council October 2006

I am honored to be with you today as Toronto's cultural ambassador. I bring greetings from Mayor David Miller who is dedicated, as you are, to the maintenance of civility as a prelude to the design and prosperity of the urban experiment.

I wish to share with you today some thoughts on civic grace. Civic grace is the style a city has of honoring and inspiring its citizens. It means we build with empathy, we plan with kindness and we love the same thing—the city we live in, with a loyalty that produces exuberance.

Enthusiasm is the only thing that cities will be identified by in the future. All major cities will offer similar things. It is called globalization. We will tap into it, benefit by it, and meet the challenges of remaining unique. This uniqueness is only in the style of enthusiasm. That's why people will come, or will not come. Enthusiasm predicates investment, prosperity and attractiveness. People come to a town and stay in a town because the style of mutuality and creativity releases a gusto for life in the signature of that city's history and aspiration.

Diversity and market energism alone do not ensure our urban future. That is the insight on our minds in Toronto right now. We prosper with capital projects and private sector initiatives, aware that unless we have a cohesive fabric of identity, the civic heart will not be awakened into doing extraordinary things.

I am the Curator of a project called Humanitas, an archive of what Toronto has been and what it offers sister cities as a global strategy for sustainability and quality of life. What we have discovered is that Canadians are talented in the alchemy of civility. Civility is the architecture that goes up before the buildings and urban designs. The architecture of the space between people is the blueprint for city development. And that space is architected by common ideals and a common love.

Commonality is a casualty in contemporary life. And enthusiasm does not come of diverse interests. We are keen in Toronto on arriving at a communion of purpose, not a system of alliances that privilege growth at the expense of civic coherence.

We are learning that the transactional model of business and city-building cannot remain ignorant of civic allegiance, or a city runs the risk of losing its signature enthusiasm.

Calgary's robust spirit is her greatest asset. I wish you Godspeed as you steward this spirit onto the global stage.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco  
City of Toronto Poet Laureate

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