



# PROVINCE OF EAST LANCASHIRE



To All Members of the Province

3 December 2020

Dear All,

2020 is the anniversary of the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Whitehall, as well as the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, both events I am sure would have been commemorated with much pomp and ceremony.

Sadly, like so many milestone events this year they have either been cancelled or scaled down because of the incidence of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing.

Who amongst the millions of people watching the Ceremony of Remembrance from Whitehall, with the centrepiece of the Cenotaph, could have failed to be moved by a Ceremony stripped of its crowd.

I was struck, indeed greatly moved, by the picture of Her Majesty The Queen, face covered with a mask, standing alone at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. Her black coat and mask seemed to reflect the black Belgian marble of the grave itself. In a year of so much pain it was a very poignant moment as she did her duty as she has done for over so many years.

Yet, still maintaining that sense of occasion, in many ways the service could be seen as a metaphor for daily life and our current situation.

We are about to enter the period leading up to the joint most important date in the Christian calendar and this always is in close proximity to the Festival of light (Chanukah).

We are about to start our journey to celebrations which so many of us share, for Christians, it is Christmas and for Jews, the Festival of light (Chanukah).

Both Festivals will be celebrated in a totally different way than in other years.

Usually, we would be busy preparing for the influx of family and friends, who we would be expecting to celebrate the holiday with.

Presents would be bought, wrapped and exchanged.

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Gargantuan quantities of food would be prepared to accommodate the hordes who are expected to descend on households up and down the country.

This year, sadly, none of this will be possible, presents will be sent remotely and the festive period will be consigned to no more than three households.

It would be so easy to despair and allow the privations and lack of physical human interaction to dampen the Festive spirit.

Just as the lights of the Chanukiah (the Festive Lights) illuminate the dark winter nights, so must the commemoration of the Birth of Jesus, bringing light into the world, give rise to hope that the New Year of 2021 will see out the despair and deprivations of the old year.

That science, which has restricted the whole world in 2020, will lead the way out into a brighter future.

That once again we will be able to meet up with our family and friends and colleagues, especially our Brethren and Companions.

Until then we must redouble our efforts to keep in contact with everyone we love and are close to.

Keep doing acts of kindness within our community and remember at all times that as asons our raison d'être is to help our fellow man and woman.

On behalf of the Chaplaincy we wish the best festival possible to each and every one of you.

Yours Sincerely and Fraternaly,

WBro Russell Conn

Provincial Grand Chaplain