



KENSINGTON PALACE

December is traditionally a time when we look back over the past twelve months and hope for the New Year that beckons. This year, perhaps more than any other, we hope for brighter prospects and a return to some form of normality as soon as that may be possible.

2020 has seen every aspect of our daily lives blighted by the coronavirus and our masonic activities have not been immune from that. I have been greatly encouraged by the way in which you have all adapted to the challenging circumstances we have faced and by your willingness to commit to helping those in need within our Order as well as the vulnerable within the communities in which we live.

Charity has always been at the heart of what we do and throughout the last nine months, the Trustees of the Mark Benevolent Fund have ensured that we remained focused on supporting worthy causes, particularly those engaged in the fight against Covid-19.

In more normal circumstances, many of you would be looking forward to attending Grand Assembly today to witness the investiture of those Brethren I have appointed to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank – a distinction which recognises faithful and distinguished service and is a relatively recent introduction in the Order, having first been bestowed on deserving Brethren in 1967. To each of you being promoted today, I send my warmest congratulations and trust that you will have many opportunities to enjoy your new status.

In my Address to the Annual Investiture meeting of Grand Mark Lodge in June last year, I reflected on the many changes I have seen since my Advancement just over 40 years ago. Little did I know then what was to come but I feel sure that a spirit of optimism still prevails among us; that our collective reaction to the adversity we have faced in recent months will positively influence the way in which our Order develops; and that our heritage will be the foundation upon which we will build our future.

The festive season is just a couple of weeks away and even though our celebrations this year may be somewhat different, they will undoubtedly be a welcome distraction in these difficult and unprecedented times. I wish you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

M.W.Bro. HRH Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO
Grand Master