

## London Bridge Attack, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017

It is just two weeks ago that we gathered here to pray for the victims of the Manchester Arena attack. I am sure we did not expect there to be another terror attack so soon, that in London last Saturday evening.

We may never know exactly why the three men carried out this attack – an attack that was particularly brutal and indiscriminate. The victims who died were all in their twenties or thirties, enjoying an evening out. They had lives ahead of them, doubtless with ambitions and aspirations – plans that were so terribly cut short. That is not to forget those who were injured and traumatized by those dreadful acts of violence.

Our reactions may be ones of shock, disbelief, anger, or perhaps despair and resignation, or more likely a mixture of those. So what can we do?

Firstly we can pray – which is why opportunities like this to gather in this holy place are so important. God of course knows the needs of humanity, but our prayers join us with those who have suffered and with God. Prayer is an act of solidarity and mutual support.

Secondly we can show those who commit such acts of violence that goodness overcomes evil. In all the recent attacks we may have seen the worst in human nature but we also see the best: acts of courage to protect and help others, even at risk to their own lives; acts of kindness and selflessness; the compassionate professionalism of emergency, security and medical personnel.

Thirdly we must challenge hatred, prejudice and thoughts of revenge. It was particularly disturbing to hear of one of the nurses who had been tending for the injured only to be verbally abused in the street because of her Muslim faith.

Above all we as Christians must spread the message of hope and love. Those words of Isaiah we heard earlier are particularly fitting (Isaiah (61.1-3a). Our Lord himself quoted them when he spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he then declared: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4.21). That is our cause for hope: God’s love revealed in his Son Jesus Christ and made known in our world today through the Holy Spirit. God is with us. God is there in our pain and suffering, in our grief and sorrow. That is our comfort and our joy.

As after the earlier attacks our prayers are offered particularly for the victims: for those who were killed, their families, friends and colleagues who mourn their loss; for those who were injured; for the emergency, medical and security services; for those who witnessed those terrible events.

As we do so let us not forget those who in different parts of the world experience such acts of violence on a daily basis.

9<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
Kingsley Boulton