

7/7 Twelve Years On

Today is the twelfth anniversary of the London bombings that became known simply as 7/7. On the 7th of July 2005 a series of co-ordinated terrorist suicide bomb attacks took place which targeted civilians travelling on three underground trains and on one double-decker bus during the morning rush hour. Fifty-two people died, plus the four attackers, and 748 others were injured.

The attacks took place the day after London had won its bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. Jubilation at that announcement gave way to shock and horror. Nothing like this on this scale had been seen in London before. The effect on those injured or bereaved was devastating, and yet there was a resolve to pull through and to resume normal life. The perpetrators could not be seen to have won. Sadly this year alone we have experienced three further dreadful attacks, in Westminster, Manchester and London Bridge.

Those words from St Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome we heard just now seem particularly appropriate (Romans 5.1-5). And I would like to share with you this poem I came across on the internet by Annie Carter who wrote it shortly after the event. Although it is specific to that event it does have a wider resonance:

From elation to deflation
in less than twenty-four hours
From euphoria and applause
on the streets of London,
to sudden, forceful pause
across the transportation network.

Stillness in the city,
but for the sirens, the screams.
From gasps of delight
to gasps of horror,
From cheerful celebrations
to serene silence.

Lives cruelly snatched away.
Hearts leapt on Wednesday,
sank on Thursday –
Hope sapping from the heart of London
and the heart of man.
But our hope is in you, sovereign Lord.

As the nations rage
our hearts remain steadfast in You.
Eight leaders in a room can never save the world,
nor the words, deeds or music of man
But at the King's Cross
we still have reason for faith,
Hope and Love, they too remain
We won't live in fear, but freedom.

This reminds us of our hope as Christians, hope and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ who died a painful death on a cross but who lives and reigns in our broken world today.

7 July 2017, Kingsley Boulton