

## 7th July

*Just about everyone can tell you where they were on the 7th July! That evening I was in Manchester Town Hall at a meeting of our newly formed Muslim Christian Forum. As news filtered through about multiple terrorist attacks in London (just hours after the capital had exploded in celebration at the winning of the Olympic bid) and the press was full of headlines blaming "Islamic extremism" we stood together in shocked silence and pledged to continue to stand together in solidarity in the days ahead. We ended by praying together in the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

60 years on  
we celebrate  
the end of world war 2  
yet still we do not  
live in peace.

London's celebrations  
of an Olympic dream  
are exploded,  
ripped apart,  
lives lie in ruins.

Security alerts are high  
thousands evacuated  
from our city centres  
fear is projected  
on the "other" in our midst.

A casual conversation  
comments on  
events this week  
it's "them"  
those Islamic extremists.

A meeting is held  
in a town hall  
a child shares  
her homework with me  
and recites prayers to Allah.

Debate is lively  
condemnation shared  
in the name of God,  
the Merciful,  
the Compassionate.

These are the events  
we carry with us,  
here, to this sacred space.  
These are the context  
of our worship this morning.

So come,  
not to avoid the events of this world,  
but to reflect on them,  
not to escape the joy and pain of this week,  
but to re-member them before God in prayer.  
Come, for it is Christ who meets us here.

*©Clare McBeath & Tim Presswood, 2005*