BISHOP’S LETTER 20

13 August 2024

Dear Friends,

The heartbreaking events in Southport followed by civil unrest in many of our cities and towns has been shocking. Watching the news is often challenging, but it has become more so over the past weeks. Where is God when these terrible things happen?

Shortly after the events of 9/11, someone wrote a poem entitled “Meet Me in the Stairwell,” asking “Where were You, God?” Here are just a few lines of the poem that tried to answer that question.

*Where were you, God? God replied,*

*I was on the 110th floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say good-bye.*

*I was at the base of the building with the Priest ministering to the injured and devastated souls.*

*I was on all four of those planes, in every seat with every prayer.*

And one part of the poem says,

*Some met me for the first time on the 88th floor.*

*Some sought me with their last breath.*

*Some chose to ignore Me, but I was there.*

We continue to pray for the families who lost their children in such inexplicably appalling circumstances in Southport. As we do so, we pray for those wonderful people in our communities who seek peace, understanding and reconciliation. Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers. They shall be called children of God.” And as we pray, we remember that we are not trying to twist God’s arm to get involved. He was already involved long before these shocking events hit the TV news.

And what about us? May the God who walks beside those in Southport and across the country who are responding to hatred with courageous bravery, give you contagious peace.

With best wishes

The Venerable Richard Ormston

Archdeacon of Northampton