John, Elsie, Rex, Gwilym, James

They were innocently caught up in a conflict which had nothing to do with them. That’s so often what happens in violent conflict: the innocent are the ones who die. The memorial records that they died in a terrorist attack. This tragedy spills over into other lives, and other people’s memories will still be scarred, over 75 years later.

In Coventry we have found a way of marking and remembering the brokenness of the world, the terrible tragedies which scar our history. We have made it our practice to do that without pointing the finger of blame: so we remember the victims of war, and of terrorism, and acknowledge our shared human responsibility in failing to find other ways of resolving our differences.

Behind every act of violence there is a narrative that seeks to justify that violence. We look to a different narrative, the narrative of God’s love made known in Jesus Christ. A message that does not deny the need for justice, but places alongside it mercy and the call for reconciliation as the only hope for humanity. In our ruins and new cathedral we embody Honesty, Hope and Healing. Honesty in the ruins, whose open roof speaks to the truth of a broken world. Hope in the building of the glorious new cathedral, and the image of a better future which it conveys. And the possibility of Healing, as those who were enemies find themselves drawn together, through the combination of honesty and hope, to rebuild their relationships and create a new story for themselves and their children.

We are placing this memorial, to honestly remember the pain and suffering which results from terrorism, to honour those who died, and who were injured or bereaved, and also to prompt us once again to find a better way of resolving our differences and build a world of peace.