

Woolwich heroine says Catholic faith inspired her to confront attackers



A mother of two who calmly confronted the Woolwich attackers on Wednesday has attributed her courage to her Catholic faith.

Ingrid Loyau-Kennet, a practising Catholic, told the Daily Telegraph: "I live my life as a Christian. I believe in thinking about others and loving thy neighbour. We all have a duty to look after each other. A whole group of people walking towards those guys would have found it easy to take those weapons out of their hands. But me, on my own, I couldn't."

Mrs Loyau-Kennet was travelling on the Number 53 bus through Woolwich in south east London on Wednesday afternoon when she saw a man lying in the road. She immediately got out to help him.

She said: "I took his arm to feel his pulse. There was blood on the pavement where he had been dragged and blood was pouring out of him. Suddenly this excited black man came up to me and said: 'Get away from the body; don't touch it.' I looked up and I could see red hands, a bloodied revolver, bloodied meat cleaver and a butcher's knife. OK, I thought, this is bad."

After speaking to the first suspect, Mrs Loyau-Kennett asked the second suspect "if he wanted to sit

down and give me what he had in his hands”.

Mrs Loyau-Kennet remained with the soldier, identified yesterday as Drummer Lee Rigby, despite an onlooker advising her to move away. She said: “I told her I wasn’t leaving; as long as I don’t see professionals here, I’m staying. He knows me; he knows I’m calm. I’m not afraid whatsoever. I’ll stay until something happens.”

In a statement on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales on Thursday, Archbishop Emeritus Kevin McDonald of Southwark said: “The events in Woolwich yesterday have shocked us all. First and foremost, our prayers are with Lee Rigby, his family and friends.

“At this time it is vital for people of all faiths to show real solidarity in their rejection of violence and in their commitment to peace. In particular it is vital that we build on the excellent relations we have between faith communities in this country, not least with the Muslim community.

“The words of Pope John Paul II in 1986 resound more clearly than ever: ‘Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is today more necessary than ever. It flows from our fidelity to God and supposes that we know how to recognise God by faith, and to witness to him by word and deed.’ That spirit of mutual respect is vital for the future.”

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