

Sermon on Wednesday 9 December

by Rev. Bill Church

Readings: Isaiah 40. 27-end; Matthew 11. 28-end

In the last few weeks, leaders in politics and medicine have been talking to the public a bit like a desperate football manager trying to get his flagging team to keep going for the last quarter of the game in the hope of clinging on to a draw.

That is not surprising, because many people are tired and dispirited, and asking: "When is all this going to end?" "Will all our cherished plans vanish into thin air?" We are more in need than ever of today's two short readings.

From Isaiah: "Those who look to the Lord will win new strength. They will soar on eagle's wings. They will run and not feel faint, march on and not grow weary."

Just hearing those words is cheering; following them would be reinvigorating, would give a renewed spring to the step and new solace to the soul.

Look at the red kites we see so often circling overhead. It looks effortless. It is because they rely on the breezes and the updrafts to do the heavy lifting. But they are not just idling or just showing off – they are going about their daily business harnessing all the help available to them.

And Jesus' words in Matthew - "My yoke is easy to bear, my load is light" - are not meant to assure his followers of an easy or lazy life. They are linked with scorn for ritual observances that were consuming too much of the energy which should have been going towards enjoying the wonder of God and towards helping his people.

Jesus is saying the best way to find the kingdom of God is not to go around with a heavy burden of worry or secular or religious rules on your shoulder, but with a real love of God, a real embrace of Jesus' redeeming mission, and a real sense of the Holy Spirit lifting us on wings above the nagging cares of today.