

The prophet Nahum 2:1 3:1-3, 6-7

Matthew 16:24-28

I am reminded today of the little children's story about the wind and the sun. They have a wager about which can make a man remove his jacket. The wind blows and howls, but the man merely pulls his coat tighter to him. Then it is the sun's turn. With one burst of its fiery rays, the man removes his coat instantly!

Nahum, in the first Reading, is expressing his trust and belief in the way that, no matter the power and strength of opposition, God will act and, indeed, is acting. He is, 'restoring the vineyard of Jacob and the vineyard of Israel'. If God can work for the Israelites in the face of such adversity, He can, and will, act for us too. Nahum rejoices because he has faith and trust in God.

When beset by adversity, we need the positive mind set that comes in believing in the power of God who can overcome all things.

Jesus' words to his disciples in today's Gospel expresses this in a way that, at first sight, might provoke uncomfortable feelings. "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me." However, for those who do, "The Son of Man is going to come in the Glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour. This says to me two things...Firstly, believe in the power of God, that he is acting and can change all things. Secondly, that, no matter we experience negative feelings, it is our behaviour that is ultimately important. If we act through belief in the power of God, we, "Will not taste death (defeat) before we see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom." In other words, the sun will shine, and we will overcome!