

**St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church  
Moore Street, Adelaide**

**Reflection for the 4th Sunday after Pentecost: A Gospel Theme: Hospitality**

One theme of today's Gospel is hospitality, and it is difficult to know exactly what this means if it is not the obvious. This is very confronting to many of us, because we are good at showing hospitality to people we know or to loved ones – even next door neighbours – but we are not so good at hospitality when it comes to people we dislike or fear. It seems to me that Australia as a nation is inhospitable to asylum seekers who arrive in boats. This is where Jesus challenges us to think again about our attitude.

In our world we live at present with millions of people on the move. Some wish to find homes where opportunities for their families are better. We can relate to this desire easily as so many children or grandchildren have migrated overseas or interstate because work opportunities are better than here in Adelaide. Others who come to Australia find they cannot bear the constant danger and oppression of their homelands. They long for and need a more peaceful and just society. There are other serious and understandable reasons why people need to move.

The problem of settling asylum seekers and migrants in such huge numbers is gigantic. There are no easy solutions apart from prohibiting people from entering one's nation. That solution is easier for us than for the victims prohibited.

One way of working out what can be done in the face of such huge demand for asylum and resettlement is for us to take a hard look at our core values and self-understanding. What are they, do you think? Does anyone really know? What is it to be "Australian"?

The Gospel reminds us that when we welcome strangers we become the people welcomed by God. Indeed, everything we set out to do for anyone else is as if we are doing it for Jesus.

The way we treat immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees tells us a lot about ourselves and each other. It confronts us with our prejudices and fears and enquires after the quality of our love and the foundations of our faith.

It is good to remember that in many and often small ways each day God calls upon our love. The way we answer helps us face up to the reality of what we are like.

Hospitality is a defining issue for humanity both in Australia and in many other nations.

Fr Graeme Kaines.