

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

**Reflection for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost
The Sower and his seed**

Last Sunday we thought about the possibility that God can choose whether or not one becomes a believer. This is, in many ways, a difficult idea for us to accept. Today we think about the fact that people either hear and discern God's word to them or they do not.

We live in an era when so many of our children have abandoned or not accepted the Christian Faith about which we may have encouraged them. Parents who have lost their children from the Faith often blame themselves for the loss. All kinds of thoughts race through their minds such as a failure to have taught or encouraged enough, or that they sent them to the wrong school, or possibly that the Church herself let them down. Nevertheless it is true that even the most vibrant Christian families have lost children from the Christian Faith. No matter how fertile the soil children and younger adults can be lost.

If we refer to people who have left the Church as "lost" we may well be wrong. Our children can still grow to be fine adults who contribute well to their society. Surely God is still at work within our children or partners. Most of us have neighbours, too, who are not churchgoers but who shine as good people. It is said that no matter how small a space someone makes for God in life, God makes the most of it.

When Jesus criticises a group of people for behaviour or attitude he is not necessarily going after that particular group. He is rather addressing each one of us and referring to the tendency we all share of failing to do the good we wish to do. This is a universal tendency. It includes Pharisees, communists, right wing extremists and ordinary people. No matter how exemplary our upbringing of our children may have been, or is, the fact remains that there are so many destructive factors in our society which can undermine our influence.

The desire for security based on shopping, consumption and human status, together with individual problems such as complacency or lack of confidence are dilemmas most of know only too well. Drug addiction is another tragic problem. One aspect of our abiding hope about life is that God is full of surprises and ready to be surprised by us!

It is a great blessing to hear the word of God and then do it in faith. Is this achievement due to our virtue or thanks to the grace of God and his mercy? We cannot know this. It is one of the mysteries of life. However, we as churchgoers are called to try to make the Christian Faith as attractive and understandable as we can. It is wise to remember that we are, quite possibly, the only tangible signs of Christianity which people may see or hear. Our aim is to grow closer to Jesus so that we become more like him in daily life. We hope to live as Good News ourselves.

Fr Graeme Kaines