

Church Column

St. Mathew's Gospel and the Cross - II

By Rev. Bern Barrett
St. Mary's Anglican Church
St. Mathew presents Jesus as He who fulfills all the expectations of the Old Testament.
Accordingly, St. Mathew's Gospel is filled with Old Testament references as it tries to show how Jesus, in every word and action,

brings to fulfillment all that the Old Testament was looking for.
Jesus is pictured, for instance, as the new law giver. As in the Sermon on the Mount, He gives a new way of life to people which fulfills all that Moses began to do as the first law giver.
It is made very clear, however,

that St. Mathew sees this new way as something which is not restricted to any nation or group in the world.
Right at the beginning of his Gospel, St. Mathew tells the story of the coming of the Wise Men to visit the Christ Child in order to emphasize that this Jesus is for all people.

Thus, although the Gospel is full of the Old Testament, it is meant to teach all people that they are made one, as a new family of God in Jesus Christ.
The church is to be the means by which all people are helped to live in the new unity.
When St. Mathew goes on to tell

the story of the death of Jesus, he certainly sees the death as for every person in the world.

This is the thing that I would like to stress most fully about St. Mathew's view of the Cross. In His death, Jesus dies that all people may know the love of God and, through

this self-giving, come to not only a new relationship with God but to a new relationship with each other.

Let one of our priorities in Lent be that this may be a time for all of us for growth together in the unity that God alone can give us in Jesus Christ.

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