

Anti-Semitism and the Passion Narrative

A sample text might include statements such as these:

As we prepare to hear the Passion of our Lord proclaimed, we are mindful that the Gospel account is not a simple history or biography of the life of Jesus. Rather, it is a text with theological intent and arose in a complex first-century environment that was in a state of turmoil socially, politically and religiously.

Negative references to certain Jews or Judaism should never be interpreted as a collective condemnation or denigration of the Jewish people, for this is neither the message of the Gospel nor the teaching of the Church.

Sadly, anti-Judaism and antisemitism have been given expression by Christians for many centuries. Historically, this was fuelled by distorted preaching on the passion narrative, including the unjust accusation that “the Jews killed Jesus” and a lamentable ignorance about Judaism and key Jewish beliefs, or worse, deliberate misrepresentation. Correcting these aberrations and healing the deep wounds caused by Christian antagonism toward and persecution of Jews, is an essential building block for our Christian commitments today.

We pray that, as we receive the proclamation of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, our hearts and minds will be cleansed of any lingering anti-Jewish misconceptions in our Christian culture and be receptive to the true depths of God’s all-embracing love to which the word of God testifies.

Issued by the Synod Office of the Diocese of Islands and Inlets