

I am going to look at just two passages in today's gospel. The first is something you guys said. Pilate washed his hands and said "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves." And the whole people said in reply, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." That sentence is known as the blood cry and it lies at the heart of antisemitism—blaming all Jews everywhere for the death of Jesus. The Catholic Church firmly rejects antisemitism. You can find reference to this in the Second Vatican Council document *Nostrae Aetate*. It is in the modern catechism and the Roman catechism from the council of Trent. Today's catechism says this: "The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the gospel accounts. The personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd... Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places" (CCC 597). It is the Roman Catechism from the council of Trent which probably has the most shocking and sobering statement: "The guilt for the suffering of Jesus is especially great in US because we who profess to know Christ deny him with our sins." The catechism goes on to say: "It can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews" (CCC 598). We can only be betrayed by our friends. Jesus has called us his friends; when we sin, we betray him.

The second passage is something I didn't pick up on until last night. We are familiar with Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane: "Father let this cup pass me by, but not my will but your will be done." Did you realize he prayed it three times? I said it twice in that gospel and then the narrator told us he prayed it again. Even Jesus dreaded the suffering he was about to undergo. He knew he had to do it; he did it out of love because he knew it was the only way he could save us, and he wanted to save us. But one of the other gospels tells us he dreaded the suffering coming his way so much that he sweated blood in anticipation of it.

Jesus could have turned back; he could have just no. He didn't. He courageously persevered. When we are faced with trials, we can turn to him and ask him for help and the courage we need to persevere knowing that he is beside us because he has already walked that path. Also, knowing how much he suffered for us also shows us how much he loves us; he would not have been willing to lay down his life in such a horrible way if he didn't.