

Inclusive Language Policy

The IHM Congregation is committed to fostering right relationship with God, among ourselves, with the Church and the whole Earth community in all we do in word and action. Therefore, in all IHM common prayer, including Eucharistic liturgies, the utmost care and attention will be given to the use of inclusive language patterns. These patterns will be gender-inclusive when using language for the human person, both gender inclusive and expansive when speaking of God, and attentive to the reality of our evolving cosmic consciousness. (Adopted April 7, 2016 IHM Coordinating Council)

Guidelines for Inclusive Language Policy

July 25, 2016

1. We recognize the rich spectrum of spiritualities among us and reverence each individual's expression of personal prayer. We will work together in attentive partnership when drawn into the shaping of communal prayer.
2. We recognize the power of language particularly within communal prayer. Also, we know that all language for God is analogical and metaphorical. We will be vigilant in using inclusive language for the human community and an expansive range of imagery in addressing and expressing Divine Mystery.
3. We recognize that some of our community prayer is also the prayer of the Universal Church. We will work in dialogue with ordained presiders to support their role of expressing and interpreting prescribed prayers with sensitivity to the gathered assembly.
4. We recognize the importance of effective English so that communal prayer does not become awkward or distracting. We will avail ourselves of professional resources to assist us in the task of using inclusive language.
5. We recognize the integral role of music in worship and prayer. We expect that music choices will be made with sensitivity to inclusive language.
6. We recognize that every translation of the Scriptures is, in fact, a translation. We will continue to explore effective inclusive translations. We will assist those proclaiming the Scriptures in making adjustments when warranted.
7. We recognize that "Father" and "Lord" hold particular honor within the development of Catholic communal prayer and many within our IHM family find these terms deeply meaningful. We continue to support their use within a broad lexicon of God imagery. We will be attentive that these terms do not dominate over other language choices, so that the religious imagination of all may be nourished.
8. We recognize that the core theology of the Trinity is about relationality within the singularity of Divine Mystery. We open ourselves to continued exploration of this distinctively Christian contribution to revelation. We challenge one another to develop effective Trinitarian language consistent with gender inclusivity.
9. We recognize that inclusive language must contain expression of an evolving cosmos and the full kinship of life. We will give energy to using language in our common prayer which expresses connections between our Christian faith and contemporary cosmology and integral ecology. This will include moving away from hierarchical and dualistic language patterns as well as exclusive focus on humans within our prayer.
10. We recognize that inclusivity is expressed in multiple ways, taking in all the senses. We will give our attention and imagination to how we express and expand inclusivity not only through language and music, but in art and artifacts, environment and processes of celebration beyond rubrics.
11. We recognize our commitment to contribute to the building of a culture of peace and right relationship. We encourage one another to build bridges of intercultural exchange and to deepen our skill and sensitivity in shaping intercultural expressions of prayer wherever and whenever appropriate.

12. We recognize that communal prayer is an active and evolving process among us. We will receive with reverence each crafted expression and will provide honest feedback in effective ways to those involved in the planning process.