



WE ARE CHURCH International

Saturday, 13 December 2025

Celebrating 'Intimacy with Innocence'

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Introduction (Facilitator)

In today's Eucharist we focus on the theme '*Intimacy with Innocence.*' Perhaps the expression could be provocative as both these words 'Intimacy' and 'Innocence' are loaded with connotations. In today's world where those with cunning minds have the upper hand, 'innocence' does not have much market value. It is looked down as a state of being naïve, as a quality that marks those who are not sharp enough to sense manipulation, which in turn makes them susceptible to exploitation. Adding to this, the patriarchal understanding of innocence sees it as a state of female passivity and purity expected of women and so, feminist outrightly reject such perceptions. The term intimacy though it signifies relational closeness, in many contexts it is seen mainly through a sexual lens. So, the question could be: what do we mean by 'intimacy with innocence' and why celebrate this now?

We are in the liturgical season of advent, a time that invites us to prepare for a meaningful celebration of the Christ event, by becoming more sensitive to the liberative significance of this event for today's world. Advent calls us to become pregnant with Christ energies and to birth this divinity in tangible ways that bring hope and freedom to those around us and to life at large. Hence, advent is apparently the right time to understand innocence more deeply and to grow into a true intimacy with innocence within us and outside of us. We shall begin this celebration invoking the Spirit of God, Ruah, Sophia that She may accompany us in this process of growing into deeper innocence/inner freedom and joy.

Song: Ruah *haKodesh* (Holy Spirit/Holy Breath) blow through me

https://youtu.be/Jk3blu_9sOs

We now listen to a few readings that could help us understand 'Innocence' from different perspectives.

Reader 1. Elza F.

We live in a world where power is wedded to domination and corruption is the order of the day. Those who govern the nations get elected mainly depending on their power to control resources and manipulate people's minds using money power and religious ideologies. The triumph of the right wing and fascist forces in many parts of the world are telling instances of the unholy nexus between religion and politics, with capitalism being the grounding ideology upholding it. This has strong implications on the way life is defined for a great majority of humans and for the earth.

Church's functioning in many parts of the world is not different from this shadowy state of affairs in the secular world. Structured on an all male clericalized and hierarchical form of leadership, the Church continues to function on a feudalistic and colonial mode, excluding women and the gender non-conforming people from being the official mediators of Christ and other responsible positions of leadership and authority. In this context 'innocence' is a rare commodity, and so it becomes necessary that we allow the Spirit to awaken and revitalize the spirit of innocence within us as individuals and communities, so that our lives carry something of the radiance of the '*babe of Bethlehem*', the embodiment of innocence who was born into a politically and religiously corrupt world, but who lived his life and mission without getting tainted by this corruption.

Reader 2: Patricia M.

Innocence holds a sacred essence. It is pure and free from life's complications, free from the taints of ego, manipulation, hidden agendas, or ingrained negative emotions like anger or greed, regardless of outward expressions. A key aspect of innocence is perceiving the world with "clean, unbiased lenses," without applying conditioned labels of "good" or "bad" learned from society. This allows for a fresh, non-judgmental experience of reality.

Innocence is often compared to the state of a child, involving a natural curiosity, an ability to live fully in the present moment, and a capacity for awe and wonder at the world's mysteries. It is linked to a deep, unconditional trust in the divine or the universe, and the capacity for unconditional love for others. It encourages an open heart and vulnerability, rather than defensiveness or suspicion. While worldly perspectives might view innocence as naivety or weakness, the return to a state of original innocence is considered a direct path to spiritual liberation, self-realization, or a closer relationship with God. It's about remembering one's true, pure essence.

- (Vince Gowmon, *Walking the Way of Innocence*)

Facilitator: Innocence is about authenticity, it is a call to return to our authentic self. Psychologists say that within every person lives a child who remembers love before fear, joy before sorrow, and truth before silence. This child still lives within us, waiting, watching, and hoping to come alive in greater fullness. Perhaps it's time to let this inner child be healed of wounds, release shame, fear, and feelings of unworthiness. It is time to awaken the joy, creativity, and wonder that still lives inside us by reconnecting with our original innocence and divine essence.

Let's pause for a few moments in silence and reflect on what this call to intimacy with innocence means to us, in relation to the challenges from the outside world and in terms of our growth from within.

Exercise: We do a few minutes of mindful breathing for centering ourselves and coming to a deeper stillness.

Let us allow the inner child, our authentic self, innocence to be awakened as we pray through the words of this song:

Song: Child in Me (till 4.30 mts)

<https://youtu.be/BtLM6rt6RkU>

Reader 4: Gert H. Gospel texts

Gospels are dotted with stories of Jesus commending innocence through his words and deeds:

- Mt.5:8- *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God!*
- Mt 18: 2-3- *At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. ³ And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*
- Jn 17: 16- *"I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"*

Pause

Reader 5: Margaret G. Interestingly the birth narratives of Jesus in the Gospels signal to the deeper implications of innocence, how the pure in heart see the manifestation of the Divine in the vulnerable babe in the manger, who is the icon of innocence.

- Lk 2: 7- Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the Inn.
- Lk 2: 10 ff: The angel said to shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."... So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.
- Mt 2: 9-12: The Magi went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the manger, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Facilitator: Let us now break the Word in the light of the readings we have heard, sharing what the call to grow in intimacy with innocence means to us for living a meaningful and liberative spirituality in our troubled times.

Eucharistic Prayer

Reader 6 Paul U.

Blessed be Jesus, whom you sent to be the friend of children and of the poor. He came to show us how we can love you, loving God our father and mother, by loving one another. He came to take away sin, which keeps us from being friends, and hate, which makes us all unhappy. He promised to send the Holy Spirit, to be with us always so that we can live as your children.

Loving God, we now ask you to send your Holy Spirit to change these gifts of bread and wine into the body + and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Reader 7 Martha H.

The night before he died, Jesus your Son showed us how much you love us. When he was at supper with his disciples, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. Then he broke the bread, gave it to his friends, and said:

Take this, all of you, and eat it;

this is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, Jesus took the cup that was filled with wine. He thanked you, gave it to his friends, and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it;

this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.

Then he said to them: do this in memory of me.

Facilitator: With childlike openness in our hearts let us pray together

All: *Our Father/Mother in heaven, holy be your name within our homes, our Church, our world. May your ways mark our relationships. May we be eager to fulfil your desire , your dreams in this world. Provide for our daily needs, and enable us to forgive and be reconciled with one another, as we have been forgiven and reconciled by you. Let us not be tempted to remain silent in the face of injustice, but may we live our lives with greater authenticity as your children. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Facilitator: Let us now extend to each other a sign of peace and we proceed with the communion as we consume the bread and wine, praying with this song.

Communion song:

Song, song of silence, song of love, song of peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKjEGsbGEog>

Facilitator: Final blessing

May we look at life with childlike wonder and learn to live in the present moment, in the now, without inhibitions and repression, without fear and greed for the future and without repeating the past again and again!

All: Amen

May we allow ourselves to remain fresh and young in spirit, unhampered by memories and unhindered by imaginations!

All: Amen

May we live in alignment with our truer selves with greater authenticity and freedom from social conditioning that our lives reflect the beauty and radiance of Jesus, who shows us through his birth and life, the way to become a blessing!

All: Amen

We conclude with the song of Blessing (Miriam Therese Winter)

<https://youtu.be/ewJljRBDqVA>

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