Humility Woman Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Congregation of the Humility of Mary
Davenport, Iowa

My soul sings to
you in utter joy. To my God,
And my spirit is glad in your
saving might. You have looked on me
with love because of my SIMPLICITY and
HUMILITY, and all men and women will
say! am blessed. It is because of your Holy.
Name that! have been exalted. To all those
who know you, you are GRACIOUS and full of
mercy. You show favor to the powerless and oppressed, and turn your face from the proud and
domineering. Those who hunger in any way
You have filled with their heart's desires; But
the self-satisfied remain empty of your
PEACE. In your mercy you remember
your chosen people, Our ancient
fathers and mothers, and
their children forever.

Luke 1:47-55

In a world of power lunches, strategic alliances and celebrity culture, is humility a relevant virtue?

Is the lived reality of a 'humble life' still to be defined as in the dictionary — "a feeling of inferiority and subservience?"

Or has it changed? Especially in light of new intellectual and professional opportunities; of evolving psychological and spiritual insights, especially for women?

In searching to define a 21st century spirituality, these are important questions to ask, particularly for a Catholic religious community whose corporate name — Congregation of the Humility of Mary — proclaims their commitment to the term.

And so, we asked.

For six months in late 2001, in preparation for the 150th anniversary of our community's founding, we asked both vowed members (over 160 women) and associates (over 75 lay women and men) to explore "What does it mean to be a 'Humility Woman' in the 21st century?"

The insights and inspirations, words and phrases, poems and prayers that make up these pages are the result of both personal reflection and conversation within Community Small Groups (CSGs). I hope you'll agree that true humility, as currently experienced and defined by the CHMs, is not only relevant for our time but is, perhaps, desperately needed for authentic living in an often fragmented and superficial world.

Jude Fitzpatrick, CHM, President

peaceful







Their distinguishing characteristic
— and may the good God keep it always so —
is Christian simplicity,
which embodies straightforwardness,
candor, and the absence
of all affectation.

1948 Constitution



"To be a Humility Woman is to be truthful and honest, accepting of self and others; creating an environment of justice, love and peace. It is to live simply with joy. . . being one who loves others and rejoices in their accomplishments. To be a Humility Woman is to know God through life and living, prayer and meditation, in order to assist the poor and the powerless, work for justice and take care of the earth."



Montana CSG

A Humility Woman. . .

- ... has an open mind;
- ... accepts and welcomes others with joy;
- . . . attempts to see God as a loving parent who wills only good for her;
- . . . is a woman of our time with gifts of strength, courage and faith;
- . . . is happy to say "I'm a Sister of Humility and proud of it!"



"Being a Humility Woman means being willing to stand up for what's right and to take any 'flak' that comes in doing that. Part of our mission is speaking for those who can't speak for themselves and to give them hope."

2

"Humility women show hospitality to community members and to all they meet by their gracious welcome and thoughtfulness. They are good listeners and show openness to others' ideas while retaining practicality and a sense of humor."

Davenport CSG #4

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"The word "humble" comes from "humus" derived from the Latin meaning *earth* or *ground*. Humus is matter essential for fertility of the soil. It is integral to the cycle of life; plants need it for growth. . . Thus it is appropriate that in our mission statement we commit ourselves to care for the earth itself."

Bernadine Pieper in Spirituality of the Sisters of Humility

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"The Humility Woman is willing to leave the comfort of the familiar; to risk moving into the unknown in response to the changing signs of the times."

onsible

The word humility comes from 'humus' meaning earth, ground, lowly, basic. Therefore:

Humility is truth —

What you see is what you get. What you see on the outside is what is really on the inside. There is an absence of affectation — no airs, no facade — only candor and simplicity.

A Humility Woman ...

- ... is a joyful person; one of wisdom with a sense of humor. She is a gracious, welcoming person.
- ... acknowledges her gifts, talents and virtues. She can easily do that because she knows that her gifts, talents and virtues came from God and not herself. By the same token she can acknowledge her limitations, vices and weaknesses because of her human-ness.
- ... depends on the power of the Holy Spirit. She is not competitive but cooperative.
- ... is other-centered and adaptable.
- ... listens to the Spirit in our changing world; takes initiative, makes decisions and is not afraid to risk. She keeps abreast of the times.



Davenport CSG #6

"Humility is not ignoring your gifts but recognizing that, ultimately, your talents are not for your self but for the world. It is false humility to deprecate one's gifts as though God made a mistake in giving them to you. God doesn't make mistakes. God makes beautiful, talented, brilliant, wonderful human beings whose task is to know, develop and use their many gifts to light up the world — wherever they are."



"The Humility Woman sees a need and responds; works hard to achieve a goal; is compassionate and community minded, responsive to the needs of others regardless of status; combative at times but assertive in response to needs; a problem solver; does not forget her source."







Humility is not struggling
to 'cover up' but
being at peace with ourselves.

2

- She is a happy person who is prayerful and has a great love of God and others.
- o knows the importance of membership in the community and who supports and fulfills the responsibilities of being a member.
- o is a woman of God listening, searching, loving, serving, ever grateful, joyful.
- o gives herself generously to God, having experienced God's lavish and generous love, grace and forgiveness.
- has a trusting reliance on God, believes God is good, and will receive the strength to endure difficulties and persevere through temptations and trials.
- o is a pilgrim on a journey with other Humility Women.
- realizes we are sometimes called to stand with those "in the lowest place" and share with them.
- o is a totally unique person who is happy, adaptable, gifted and graced.
- o is one who serves others, looks out for the interests and needs of others and does what she can for others.

o in simplicity and joy, reaches out to others within and beyond the congregation in a spirit of gracious welcome and hospitality.

o is willing to leave the comfort of the familiar and risk moving into the unknown in response to the changing signs of the times.

- responds as a prophet and pilgrim, aware that her vision is sometimes dim and the way is not always clear, but ever reaffirming the choice to live the Beatitudes.
- is a person whose life of prayer reflects the Magnificat hymn of praise and thanksgiving for God's unconditional love for her.
- has prayerfully discerned to commit herself to living the Charism and Mission of the CHMs according to her individual gifts, energy and age.
- o as a member of the CHM community, believes and intentionally accepts her responsibility for sharing her gift of service in humility, simplicity and joy, especially for the current needs of the poor and powerless, as her lived expression of love of God and neighbor.

Davenport CSG #1

The Humility Woman commits herself to the virtue of humility, our founding charism, with Mary as her model.

She strives to express this value by:

- o Practicing Christian simplicity, straight-forwardness, candor and the absence of all affectation;
- o Showing reverence and respect for self and others, acknowledging her place in all of God's creation;
- o Recognizing the word humble comes from "humus" and thus commits herself to the care of the earth itself;
- o Practicing honesty in her relationship with God and others.



The Humility Woman commits herself to living and building true community.

She strives to express this value by:

- Participating fully and actively in the common gatherings of the community for prayer, business and recreation;
- Participating and being involved in community committee work – cognizant of her gifts and talents;
- Contributing energy, finances and moral support for the common good;
- o Opening her heart and home in sincere hospitality to other CHMs, Associates and those in need.



The Humility Woman recognizes the need for wholistic growth in her relationship with God and others.

She strives to demonstrate this value by:

- o Providing regular time for prayer and reflection to "listen to the Spirit in the changing world;"
- Participating in the celebration of the Eucharist, remembering Jesus ate with his friends often;
- Participating in community small groups, spirituality groups and prayer partners, or other opportunities for sharing on a deeper spiritual level;
- o Practicing healthful habits of eating, exercise and recreation;
- o Providing for her psychological and intellectual well-being.











seeker

celebrates

The Humility Woman is willing to leave the comfort of the familiar; to risk moving into the unknown in response to the changing signs of the times.

prophetic

The Humility Woman participates fully and actively in the varied ministries of the Sisters of Humility and the Associates.

She strives to live this value by:

- Praying for the success of all the sisters' and associates' ministries;
- o Supporting, verbally and morally, the sisters and associates in their chosen ministries;
- Contributing finances directly, or through the funding provided by the community, and/or volunteering services to the sisters' and associates' ministries;
- o Inviting others to join the Sisters of Humility in our life and work;
- o Choosing a ministry, after reflection, prayer and consultation with community leadership, that is in keeping with CHM charism, mission and Spirit and Goals.



The Humility Woman, as an individual and as a member of the global community, commits herself to working toward justice within the human family and care for the earth.

She strives to live this value by:

- Being aware of and responding to the needs of the time and place in which she finds herself;
- Being willing to risk all in direct service to and/or empowerment of the powerless and others in need;
- o Responding to the call of the Spirit by keeping "eyes on the horizon and feet on the ground;"
- o Enhancing community living, which begins among members in the Congregation and radiates outward to include all people as well as non-human creation forming "one sacred community."

Temporary Commitment Committee Roberta Brich, CHM, and Ramona Kaalberg, CHM, co-chairs

Humility Not a trendy word Nor a windy word

> But a deep Earth-rich Ground-fertile Aliveness

Rich and ready
To receive god seed
To nurture new growth
To spread and to
strengthen
The gifts of us all

Woman
Woooo- man
Almost "womb-an"
A rich and fertile
Quiet place of new life
Growth
Strength
Energy

Held fast
Deep inside one's self
'til birthing time
to pour forth
to enrich
to renew
to revive
this world of ours

in the love and the grace of our Godman born of Mary, the humble one earthy





A Humility Woman is real, not a façade.



The Humility woman doesn't pretend to be something she isn't and continues to learn who she is by meditating, listening and being of service.



caring



simple

Woman of the earth
Walking gently on sacred ground
Connected to all of life
She journeys through each cycle
and season
Dying and rising
As moist humus.

Nourishing with her life Young, old Sick, poor Hungry, homeless Her sisters in community Companions on the journey

Nourished in return
In prayer
In community
In mutual love
In the wonder of creation
In bread and wine

Open to the Spirit . . .

Committed
To search
To serve
To act justly
Love tenderly
Walk humbly with her God

Her life is a little magnificat Sung in simplicity and joy With an every-grateful heart:

My soul proclaims your greatness,
O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,
my savior
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant . . .
Holy is your name.

Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM

2

 She does not put on airs or pretend to be someone she is not, but lives fully the gift of her own person.

 Knows that she does not have a total grasp of truth or of God and thus does not try to contain God in any single word or way of life.

 Lives in openness because God's grace can come from any person, at any time, in any place.

o Is able to accept the unfolding of God's plan, to take the next step without knowing exactly where she is going. To see small increments is sufficient for her faith.

o Is aware of emptiness. She knows the mystery of having nothing but is filled by the goodness of her God.

o Is never in need of luxury; always takes what is given but seldom takes more than is necessary.

o Prefers to associate with the poor, especially those in need because their hearts are aching.

 Believes in peace and justice in the ordinary unfolding of life. Tries to break the cycle of violence in her own surroundings.

 Is filled with earthly simplicity and does not mind getting her hands dirty.

> Kathleen Tomlonovic, CHM and Paula Evitts, CHM Associate







Humility women are down
to earth people.
When we see something that needs
to be done, we do it.



strona

Since their foundation in 1854, the sisters have been characterized by their capacity to change with the times and to adapt to new circumstances and new challenges while holding to a core of faith.

Search and Service / Introduction



115k-taker Each of us is created and designed

Each of us is created and designed for our special role in the Master plan. We are gifted to live out our role. From its beginning our life is a seed to be nourished and developed. We are really called to be co-creators, not just passive participants, in our coming to Wholeness.

Knowing that we — and all of creation — are endowed within God's Plan, makes us realize that we are interconnected with everyone and all creation. Further, we are stewards of it. Hence comes our ever-present need to be prayerful, grateful, open, trusting, positive and loving since our Creator, out of love, accompanies us all the way to the Wholeness to which we are called. Thus we must be a self-determined person in the best sense of the word."

Adrienne Marie Savage, CHM



unaffected



A Humility Woman's Ten Commandments

- 1. Do not equate anything with God. Let God be God, believing that God provides the all-encompassing guidance for my life.
- 2. Trust in God. I will experience that God sets me free when I am confined; God enkindles light in my darkness and delivers me from anguish.
- 3. Observe the Sabbath, keeping it holy. Let me accept the fact that achievements and success are NOT the ultimates in life.
- 4. Be grateful for the heritage God has given me. Accept myself with my past and all the influences that my past has on my life today.
- 5. Accept the life of others. Do not consider others as rivals or competitors whom I have to seek to out do. Look at my own shortcomings and leave other people's alone.
- 6. Love people without taking advantage of them. Never use others as a means for my own plans or ends.
- 7. Appreciate without envy the gifts and possessions of others. I thank God wholeheartedly for the goods and gifts of the other person.
- 8. Be truthful. Become more transparent so I can radiate happiness to others.
- 9. Accept existing connections and relationships. Try not to impose myself on others or try to buy into friendships.

10. Be content in everything, especially growing old!

Ottumwa CSG

Mother of our God — Humility was your gem. Share with us your gifts.

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