**LAND ETHIC AND PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY**

**Congregation of the Humility of Mary**

**Davenport, Iowa**

**March 15, 2017**

*A Land Ethic serves as a guide for decisions made by the entire congregation and by those in congregational leadership regarding the land for which we are responsible.*

We, the Congregation of the Humility of Mary, claim our history of being connected to the land, our common heritage and sacred trust.

Our Land Ethic is rooted in and flows from Scripture, CHM heritage, CHM Charism and Mission statements, Church documents, Catholic Social Teaching, and contemporary theology and spirituality. It affirms, as a matter of justice, the prophetic call to ecological sustainability and nonviolence in all of our relationships.

We honor our interdependence with all ecosystems as an ethical obligation. The spirit of our founders and the charism of humility inspire personal and communal choices as we witness to our respect for and commitment to God’s creation wherever we reside and minister.

With wonder and awe, we participate in divine creativity and invite others to share in abundant opportunities for healing, spiritual enrichment and education through the presence of our Sisters, CHM Associates, employees, and colleagues in ministry.

Scientific and theological insights encourage us to deepen our evolutionary consciousness with a cosmic worldview that continues to be revealed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge our need for such deepened awareness and on-going assessment of our attitudes and actions toward conservation and sustainable living. Understanding the consequences of our decisions, we will evaluate all potential changes to the use of all land under our care in light of this Land Ethic.

Our Land Ethic strengthens our hope for a sustainable future for generations to come as we celebrate our unique place in the cosmos. Acknowledging all the unique connections in this beautiful web of life, we receive with gratitude and humility the amazing trust placed in our hands. Thus we commit ourselves to these C*HM Principles of Sustainability* that motivate us to join in solidarity with those most affected by the degradation of Earth locally and globally:

**Recognize and honor the interdependence of all life communities.**

***Be conscious of connections.***

**Make choices that express our commitment to simple living and ecological sustainability.**

***Be serious about simplicity and sustainability.***

**Maximize the use of natural, renewable energies and minimize waste.**

***Follow Earth’s waste-less ways.***

**Promote ecojustice and ethical responsibility.**

***Live in right relationships.***

HM Original 2009

HM Revision 2013

CHM Original 2017

**Sources**

* ***Scripture***: invites us to a listening attitude.

*“You have only to ask the cattle, for them to instruct you, and the birds of the sky for them to inform you. The creeping things of earth will give you lessons, and the fish of the sea to provide you an explanation; there is not one such creature but will know that the hand of God has arranged things like this! In God’s hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of every human being!”* Job 12:7-10

* ***CHM Mission Statement:*** invites us tofocus our efforts on justice for all life.

*“We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for the earth itself.”*

* ***CHM Search and Service:*** calls us to accept our responsibility for all creation.

*“In common with all people, the sisters of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary have the right and duty to build the universe by the strength of their spiritual and material contributions. They view the building of the future from the perspective of the Christian. They believe that God, who is love, is creating, redeeming, and making holy the world, and therein lies the ultimate answer to the mystery of creation. In the profound and unique union of all people and nature in God, all human strivings toward justice, love, and peace take their origin.” #92*

* ***Catholic Social Teaching*** articulates the principle of care for God’s creation that guides us to contemplation and responsible action:

“*We ask the members of our Church to examine our life-styles, behaviors, and policies, individually and institutionally – to see how we contribute to the destruction or neglect of the environment and how we might assist in its protection and restoration. . .”*

Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching, USCCB, 1994

*“Care for the earth . . . is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.”*

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, USCCB, 1998

* ***Papal messages*** speak to the reality of the human presence in relationship to all life communities:

“. . .*we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations.”*

Pope John Paul II, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation, 1990

“. . .*respect creation and promote an environmental culture that is based on respect for ethical values, the protection of life, an economy of solidarity and sustainable development.”*

Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Italy’s Parliament, 2007

*“Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation! . .To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope…”*

Pope Francis, Homily*,* Saint Peter’s Square, March 19, 2013

* ***Contemporary Theology and Spirituality:***

*“What is needed on our part is the capacity for listening to what the earth is telling us.”* Rev. Thomas Berry, CP,The Great Work, 1999

*“As with all privileges, human beings will be held accountable for their stewardship. If they are caring and cultivate harmony in all their dealing with each other and the Earth, then they grow in the image and likeness of God.”* Rev. Sean McDonagh, SCC, To Care for the Earth, 1986

*“The Great Work now…is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.”*

Rev. Thomas Berry, CP, The Great Work, 1999

*“Far from being created merely as an instrument to serve human needs, the natural world enjoys its own intrinsic value before God.”*

Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ “The Banquet of Faith,” Keynote Address, CMSM-LCWR, Denver, 2008

*“When Christians gather for Eucharist they bring creation with them. Every Eucharist can be understood as the lifting up of creation to God, the living memory of both creation and redemption, the sacrament of the cosmic Christ, participation with all God’s creatures in the communion of the Trinity and solidarity with victims.”*

Rev. Denis Edwards, Ecology at the Heart of Faith, 2006