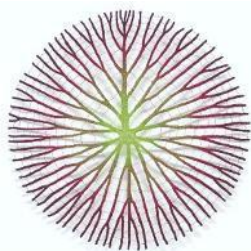


## Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Position on Integral Ecology



1. We live in a time when science and theology offer reliable global insights about the interconnectedness of life and matter in all forms throughout the universe. This enriches our understanding of the world as a source of deep contemplation and sacred activity, calling us to the heart of what it means to be inclusive and reconciled in all ways with the Whole. It challenges us to re-evaluate prior perceptions, previous understanding, and unquestioned practices.

2. We also witness in our time an increasing “ill-considered exploitation of nature” (Pope Paul VI) and “ecological catastrophe.” (UNFAO) Not only world peace but the survival of life forms, human communities, and mineral resources - the earth itself - is threatened by an irresponsible and inadequate relationship with our own planet and universe. We cannot ignore that the “dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species.”\* We see injustice when “communities are being undermined and the benefits of development are not shared equitably.”\* We know that “injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and cause of great suffering.” The discord we experience within the very air we breathe, the water we drink, and among our communities calls for a response consistent with our mission of reconciliation which calls us to “join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace.”\* (\*Quotes excerpted from the Earth Charter, 2000)

3. We recognize the importance of Pope Francis’ contemporary focus on integral ecology, expressed in the encyclical *Laudato Si*. Indeed, “we stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future...” (*Earth Charter*) The encyclical is a comprehensive work that includes insights of Saint Francis of Assisi, current scientific knowledge, increasing political resolve, ecumenical sources, as well as concerns stated by every Pope back, at least, to John XXIII, all related to world peace and ecological well-being. Judaic and Christian scriptures have always demanded contemplative respect for the universe, redistribution and restoration of the land, rest from production, and reparation for past harm done. The urgent appeal to sacred relationship with our common home requires work for a sustainable and integral development based on unifying love. We realize that ecological degradation and suffering of peoples and life forms across the globe are entwined; they are one phenomenon.

4. Our first response is to contemplate reality. We learn from the natural world and from groups, such as women and indigenous communities, who are most adversely affected by ecological violence.

5. We admit our complicity in perpetuating dualistic and domineering attitudes about the earth. We understand that reconciliation with our earth calls for a new consciousness, a new identity, and new behaviors centered on the kinship of all creation and the implementation of human rights for all. Interdependence demands inclusion of all – non-living and living, non-human and human – without discrimination.

## 6. In responding to Integral Ecology, it is critical to:

- a. Activate a transformative spirituality that understands earth science, rights of Mother Earth, insights of cosmology, and knowledge of inclusive and universal rights.
- b. Engage in critical analysis of one's own culture toward awareness of inherited traditions and the possibility for dynamic participation in new forms of incarnational reality.
- c. Convert individual and communal behavior from ecological ignorance to environmental responsibility, evaluating uses of energy, technology, water, diet, practices of waste and consumption, economic investments and political policy.
- d. Study Catholic Social Teaching. Do communal study and apply documents such as *Laudato Si*, The Earth Charter, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, notably section K on Women and the Environment, and the UN SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030, particularly numbers 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15.
- e. Ensure strategies for empowerment of women and girls in all our programs, including women's participation in decision-making and advocacy. Environmental sustainability ought to be considered in every strategic plan for mission development.
- f. Advocate locally and internationally with positive movements such as the 2015 Paris Climate Accord and the continuing processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC.)
- g. Engage in political action led by communities and groups, such as indigenous and women, who have been historically dominated and excluded but who hold ancient and sacred knowledge of the earth.
- h. Evaluate our communities, service projects and programs according to principles of respect for the earth, inclusion of and care for all communities, and reverence for the sustainability of future generations.
- i. Evaluate and adjust personal and communal decisions in areas of consumption, production, and use of natural resources in light of the sustainability of the universe. The common good of all is a guiding principle directing actions such as fair trade purchasing, avoidance of non-renewable energy and disposable products, support of local agriculture, home composting, low energy production, land ownership, etc.
- j. Be politically active on issues such as trade, climate, practices of trans-national corporations, harm of military industry and armaments, national energy policies, and sustainable water usage, in order to "eliminate the structural causes of the dysfunction." (Benedict XVI) Any investments held communally require analysis for environmental justice and sustainability.
- k. Use cross sectional analysis to confront economic policies that lead to human, animal, and earth degradation. OLCGS Advocacy in areas such as trafficking in human persons, migration, economics, or the girl child should always include ecological and environmental data.



## Glossary of acronyms used in OLCGS Position Papers

*Alphabetically listed*

CEDAW	Conventions on the Eliminating of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GSIF	Good Shepherd International Foundation
GSIJPO	Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GCM	Global Compact on Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
IDP(s)	Internally displaced person(s)
ILO	International Labor Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OLCGS	Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
PP(s)	Position Paper(s)
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
US	United States
UNFAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

## Mission Development Process –

*a diagram for Implementation of OLCGS Position Papers*

The implementation of the OLCGS Positions in Mission and Ministry requires effective program development. The diagram below, based on the work of the GSIF and adapted by the GSIJPO, provides interrelated elements necessary for an integrated process of mission development. It can be adapted and enhanced for all levels of programs, communities, and formation. Groups can analyze their own strengths and needs by consideration of the total framework. Development can take any starting point along the schema and will necessarily move to interact with and include all elements, resulting in a dynamic process of ongoing learning, change, and development. Some elements will require technical help and professional training; many will challenge a sense of security or routine. All are critical to meet the mission demands of today.

