Awakening to a New Consciousness
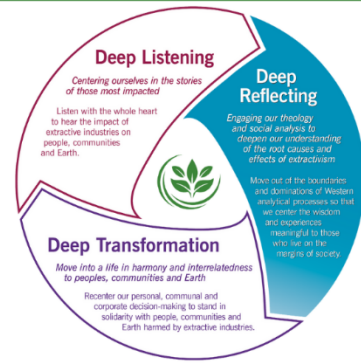
Listening to the Cry of Earth and the Cry of the Poor

Mercy's Theological Reflection Process

Deep Listening
Centering ourselves in the stories of those most impacted

Listen with the whole heart to hear the impact of extractive industries on people, communities and Earth.

Deep Reflecting
Engaging our theology and social analysis to deepen our understanding of the root causes and effects of extractivism

Move out of the boundaries and dominations of Western analytical processes so that we center the wisdom and experiences meaningful to those who live on the margins of society.

Deep Transformation
Move into a life in harmony and interrelatedness to peoples, communities and Earth

Recenter our personal, communal and corporate decision-making to stand in solidarity with people, communities and Earth harmed by extractive industries.

Overview – Social Analysis

What does it mean to do social analysis? Especially in the context of this Theological Reflection?

Goals:

- **To use tools of social analysis to unpack the systemic injustices that are part of the extractivism.**
- **To more deeply understand the intersection of the Mercy critical concerns and extractivism.**

As we engage in a social analysis of the extractive development model and its intersection with Mercy's Critical Concerns, we place ourselves into a listening and learning stance. We will discuss what we have learned about the various impacts of the extractive development model (social, communal, political, economic, etc.) through the theological lenses and seek to understand how these impact our Critical Concerns.

At this stage of the process we continue to be cautious about any tendency to problem-solve or to make decisions about what should be done or what could be done. Instead, we must identify the areas of intersection with our Critical Concerns and encourage one another to ask the harder questions. The focus here requires us to ask Why? rather than What can we do?

Our analysis comes from a place of harmony and right relationship with the community of life. We remind ourselves that, as we shared in our theological reflection, we as humans are within the dynamics of the planet. We are in a reciprocal, non-dominant relationship with the community of Earth. We can no longer take the view of subjugating Earth; rather, we are called to be responsible stewards.

When we engage in social analysis, we work to answer the question What is really going on in this situation? We continue to ask and answer questions to understand and analyze the situation. Authors Joe Holland and Peter Henriot define social analysis as "the effort to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships."

Here in Mercy's Theological Reflection Process, participants do not need to be experts in extractivism or extractive industries, but we must be confident and informed to use the right questions to uncover the systems that have made the extractive development model thrive. Recommended questions are framed below, and the answers to these questions should be developed in the experiences heard through our deep listening and seen through the various theological lenses that have been shared.

When we engage in social analysis, we review a situation through the following perspectives. Click on any of the topics to review questions specific to that area of focus.

- **ECONOMIC**
- **POLITICAL**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL**
- **MEDIA/PUBLIC INFORMATION**
- **SOCIAL**

ECONOMIC

Production/distribution/consumption. Patterns of ownership and decision-making about land, capital, technology, resources and labor.

- Who owns?
- Who controls?
- Who benefits?
- At whose expense does the economy benefit?
- Do Black, Indigenous Peoples, and Communities of Color have equitable access to economic resources and benefit?
- What role does a global economy play in the economic decision-making?

- Where do we see a recentering of relationships in community of life over profits? (Red Deal)
- How are the labor and needs of Black, Indigenous Peoples and Communities of Color centered in the predominant economic model at play? (Red Deal)

POLITICAL

Structure and health of country's political system and individual politicians and their influences.

- Who has the power?
- Who is making decisions? For whom?
- Who has access to the governmental decision making?
- Who is prioritized in political decision making and policy setting?
- Who is accountable?
- What role does corruption play?
- How do outside political structures influence decisions?
- What role does judicial power play?
- How is judicial, police or military being used against human rights and land defenders? (Are human rights and land defenders criminalized for their protection efforts?
- Are popular and social movements' demands heard?
- How is the current issue, policy, or program shifting power dynamics to better integrate voices and priorities of communities of color? (from https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/5%20Ps-%203-24-14.pdf)
- Are there legal barriers to racial equity at play?

ENVIRONMENTAL

Health of land, water, air and living species.

- How are decisions impacting the land, vital ecosystems and species in the short term?
- How have decisions contributed to the climate emergency?
- Who has access to clean resources?
- Who is determining access to water?
- What priority does health of Earth have in decision-making?
- How is the worldview held on creation of just relationships between all beings in the community of life?

- How are Indigenous Peoples' social, cultural and ancestral rights to land honored?
- Are corporate polluters and extractives industries held accountable for destruction and payment for remidiation?
- Do Indigenous Peoples have control over ancestral territories?
- What is environmental impact for communities of color?

MEDIA/PUBLIC INFORMATION

The flow of information to the people.

- Who controls the messaging within the community and to the wider public?
- Who owns the media or other information channels?
- Who benefits from the media messaging?
- How is messaging manipulated?

SOCIAL

How people relate to one another: ethnicity, race, class, age, gender

- Who is damaged? What do they lose?
- Who is visible and valued to the decision makers? Who is not?
- What is the basis for inclusion?
- What is the basis for exclusion?
- What systems have reinforced the decisions of inclusion and exclusion?
- How do decisions reinforce white supremacy and colonialism?
- How are we meaningfully including or excluding people (communities of color) who are affected? What policies, processes and social relationships contribute to the exclusion of communities most affected by inequities? (from https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/5%20Ps-%203-24-14.pdf)
- Are Black, Indigenous and leaders of color integral to social system and planning?