

# Awakening to a New Consciousness

*Listening to the Cry of Earth  
and the Cry of the Poor*

**Mercy's Theological Reflection Process**



**Session Five | Facilitator's Guide**

**February 2022**

# DEEP TRANSFORMATION: ANSWERING THE CALL TO RESPOND

## Session Goals:

- To identify learnings through the process to date.
- To identify opportunities for transformation in personal, communal and corporate decision making.

## PREPARATION FOR THIS SESSION

Using the [Awakening to a New Consciousness, Mercy's Theological Reflection Process](#) webpage, participants will have completed the following before the start of the session:

- 1. READ-** Read [Overview of Session Five: Deep Transformation and Action](#). After reading the overview and reflecting on the questions that are raised, participants are asked to spend additional time responding to the following questions with the new perspectives we have gained:
  - Who is leading our decision-making? What do we need to prioritize in our decision-making regarding extractives?
  - How can we continue to learn and be open to continued transformation? We acknowledge this is not the END of the process but part of the circle.
  - What does it mean to ensure that our decisions and actions are driven by a desire to be in solidarity with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities and Earth?
- 2. READ-** Read the [Extractivism Case Studies](#) presented as preparatory materials. Participants are asked to read these stories with the same curiosity and engagement that they have used for all the stories and witness accounts throughout this process, and to consider these questions: Where else in the videos and articles in this process did you learn of transformative responses? What do they have in common?

After reflecting on these examples, participants will spend some time in prayer and write in their journals about the following questions. ***These will serve as a portion of the small group discussion:***

- a. What other examples do you know from your own experience and work that fit with these examples? Write down enough of the “story” so that you might share with your small group.
- b. To what do you find yourself drawn in these examples within the categories? Does that surprise you? Would you have been drawn to the same example at the beginning of this process?
- c. What might be missing from these examples, not as an example but a category of response? For instance, did you hear something in previous videos in the process or read something in the examples from other communities?

**3. REFLECT-** In this final session, the focus is on pulling together what we have learned, what has stirred in each participant and how that will shape us moving forward. To prepare, each participant should take time to review their own notes and journal entries. They should spend time to understand their own individual reflection and how they have learned and grown in the conversations in your small group. All will have completed the following:

**a. Free Reflection Time:** Participants will have considered the following questions: What has stirred in you? How did it change your thinking or actions, even unintentionally? Were you pulled to act in some way? How are you understanding connections on the systemic level?

**b. Creative Expression:** Participants are encouraged to create something that illustrates the connection that they have made or deepened between people, communities and Earth. If participants have not completed this prior to the session, it can be presented as a way to stay engaged following the session:

***a. A letter to Earth, or to persons or communities most impacted by extractives or to some living creature or plant.***

***b. An artistic expression- written (poem, free verse), oral or graphic (painting, sculpture)*** that illustrates how you have come to understand the integral relationship among people, communities and the Earth in a new or enhanced way through this process.

- i. In addition to sharing these with their small groups as part of session five, participants are asked to send them to Maggie Conley, [extractivism@sistersofmercy.org](mailto:extractivism@sistersofmercy.org).

**c. Complete the [Reflection Questions](#)** developed by the Extractives Education Coordinating Committee. Questions have been developed

by the Coordinating Committee that are specifically designed to solicit input for the Chapter Call to Respond. Individual feedback, as well as feedback from each small group, will be essential to guide additional steps and share understanding of the impact of this process on participants and Mercy as a whole. Participants are asked to submit individual responses through [survey monkey](#).

- c. **WRITE-** Participants are asked to write an intention of gratitude or an expression of hope for the people with whom they have traveled on this journey. This will be incorporated into the small group session, so it should be available at meeting time.

## LARGE GROUP SESSION OVERVIEW

1. [Prayer](#)
2. Video of Reactions to Process so far
3. Discussion of following points (shared for context for facilitators to understand what is being discussed not for action):
  - a. Gratitude for participation and acknowledgement of final session
  - b. Reference to:
    - i. *ILT Report on Extractives Call to Respond* shared previously in Mercy Now and sent directly to members, associates and companions
    - ii. Water Defenders Webinar
  - c. Final session builds on all that we have learned and how we have grown.
  - d. Defining Transformation:  
Transformation is not focused on a “one-time event of clarity and action” but a tug to always dig deeper. It is just as important to advocate for transformation at the systemic level as to commit to transformation at the personal level. This is not a new insight for Mercy, but one we seek to keep in focus.
  - e. Importance of culling information (individual and group) from the reflection questions as they will feed into Mercy’s path from here.

## SESSION FIVE - FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

In this session, you will facilitate the movement to Transformation, as well as moving engagement in this process to a close. Individual consideration and moving through the Theological Reflection process will continue, but our shared gathering and learning will be completed for now. The participants will have spent time considering how they have grown during the process and understanding a transformative response. There is not a lot of additional content required in preparation; the time should have been spent reviewing and reflecting on previous content and asking questions leading to response that is systemic and centered in the experience of people, communities and Earth most impacted. This session will be no more than 90 minutes long.

Building on the contemplative dynamic of Session Four, participants will be asked to share their individual reflections to get to a collective response and reflection. For the first time, each small group will need to take responsibility for bringing a collective output to the Coordinating Committee to ensure that input is received from all participants. In addition, each group will allow for some time at the end of the session to ritualize the closing of their time together.

As usual, this session will occur on Zoom and start with a large group gathering. The large group gathering will last approximately 20 minutes and will consist of the following:

- Welcome
- [Prayer](#)
- Expression of gratitude
- Participant reflection
- Content/overview of transformation
- An invitation to move into smaller assigned groups

Participants will not return to the large group. As the facilitator, you will conclude the session when it is complete, no longer than 90 minutes.

## Key points to this conversation:

As the facilitator, you are called to be attentive, so that all participants can actively participate and continue to recalibrate the conversation to be centered in the experiences of people, communities and Earth. In this session, consider how to use case studies and reflection questions to encourage participants to move toward an understanding of individual, communal and corporate response. We are moving from **reflecting** to **transformation** and understanding what is ours, as Mercy, to do—individually, as a community and corporately.

Facilitators should know that some participants may be entering this session with an impression that there is ONE answer or one path toward a transformative response. The materials are intended to broaden that perspective and encourage participants to continue to reframe their responses as the discussion transpires.

After the participants move into their smaller assigned groups, you will guide your group through the content outlined below. You will gauge the group's energy and decide when it is ready to wrap up the session, between 60 and 90 minutes. An overview of the facilitated part of this session consists of the following:

- Check-in from participants
- Discussion of content
  - Case Studies Review
  - Reflection
    - Creative responses
    - Individual reflection questions
- Developing a collective response
- Ritual of ending small group session

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The following hyperlinks and explanations in the guide below will help you navigate any materials for this session. Facilitators may, of course, use their own approach to the guide.

1. The facilitator invites the small group participants to introduce new participants and to check in.
  - a. **Facilitator:** (If there are any new participants in the group, *invite them to share their names, where they live and what has drawn them here.*)
  - b. **Facilitator:** *Let's begin with a check-in.*
    - i. *Using no more than one brief sentence, describe what you have continued to sit with since we last gathered in February, perhaps a feeling, an insight, a thought or action.*
    - ii. *Share how you might answer the questions that you heard from other participants in the video.*
    - iii. *How does it feel to be moving toward deep transformation and action? At what level are you feeling most confident in making suggestions and discussing?*
  - c. *Now we are going to move into the content for this session.*

## FIRST CONTENT: UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMATION

(recommended 10 minutes)

The facilitator will remind the participants of certain insights from the preparatory reading for this session.

**Facilitator:** Recall these lines from the preparatory material: “As we move toward our final session together, we remind ourselves that the process of SEEING, JUDGING and ACTING is a cyclical process, not a linear one. We seek to learn more as we circle back and work through the learning process again and again. Transformation is not focused on a “one-time event of clarity and action but a tug to always dig deeper.”

**Facilitator:** For the next \_\_\_ minutes, we will enter a quiet reflection on what we learned from the voices of those struggling with the effects of extractivism ... what we learned from the voices that rose from Earth. Be prepared to discuss a learning or insight that stayed with you. How are these voices calling us to shift our perceptions?

## SECOND CONTENT: CASE STUDIES

(recommended 12-15 minutes)

**Facilitator:** In the case studies read in advance of the session, we learned not just of specific stories and examples but also the different categories of transformative responses that have been carried out with a centering in the experience of people, communities and Earth most impacted by extractivism. In addition to the case studies, we have the stories previously seen, read and heard

*throughout this process. Let us spend the next short period of time sharing with one another what we learned from these case studies that are informing our own thoughts.*

- Was there an example missing from the case studies that you would like to bring into the conversation today?*
- Which example and category spoke to you most? Why? How do you see it influencing your thoughts on what an appropriate individual, communal and corporate response would be?*
- Where are the commonalities between these case studies? What does that say to Mercy?*

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** This part of the conversation could take a long time and get into a level of detail that is not necessary. Facilitators should be aware of that and be prepared to redirect or bring the conversation back up to a level that will identify themes and possibilities, not specific action. Your role as facilitator will be to continue to recenter the process of reflection in the experience.

## **THIRD CONTENT: REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS** (recommended 45 minutes)

**Facilitator:** *As you completed your individual reflection, each of you considered where your individual development has taken place and then moved to consideration of what that means for Mercy going forward. You framed your answers taking in specific consideration of the Mercy Lens and the focus of this Theological Reflection Process to center decision making in the experience of people, community, and Earth. We know that Mercy has expressed a commitment to prioritize decision-making in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Communities and Earth and in our individual reflection, and now we consider how our responses reflect that prioritization.*

*During this time together, we will share some of our individual responses to the reflection questions with the intention of moving to a collective response for our group. This does not mean that we need unanimous support for what we want to put forward but that there is consensus around key points to share from our collective wisdom. Each of us as individuals has the opportunity to share our personal responses to all of the reflection questions. Those, along with our group's input, will be considered by the Extractives Coordinating Committee moving forward.*



Facilitators may ask a group member to record the group's response and submit it to [this survey](#) or you may do it yourself. If you do not reach a complete articulation of your submission prior to the end of the session, you may use email to get final approval from group members and submit the information. Maggie Conley will distribute email addresses FOLLOWING the session to ensure the most accurate attendance.

*Here is what will frame our conversation:*

- *What questions must we continue to ask- of ourselves as individuals, of Mercy as a community and of Mercy as a corporate voice?*
- *What do we want to prioritize in our decision-making regarding extractives?*
- *In what ways can Mercy concretely show the prioritization of the BIPOC communities in our decision making, specifically regarding extractives?*
- *As we conclude our theological process on extractivism and move toward our next conversations, what further conversations do we want to have? For Sisters, this could include pre-Chapter processes.*

**Facilitator:** *As a reminder, we recently saw the ILT Report on Extractives Call to Respond shared in Mercy Now and sent directly to members, associates and companions. This may be helpful in considering what is already in progress and what is under consideration. If your group has not viewed this video, it might be helpful to share any relevant highlights that you noted while watching.*

## **WRAP UP** (recommended 7-10 minutes)

With at least seven minutes left in your session, please take the time to ritualize the ending of your time together as a group. You have challenged, learned, grown and struggled together, and this is your opportunity to acknowledge sharing this journey and to bring closure to your time.

**Facilitator:** *We have come together once a month since September. We come from different places - both geographically and in our understanding of the work of extractivism. What brought us together was our collective commitment to the Critical Concerns and to the mission of Sisters of Mercy of the Americas no matter where we sit in our day-to-day lives. We have taken our responsibility to be present and be prepared seriously, and we have grown and deepened our understanding because of our own work and because of how we have accompanied one another on this journey. We are grateful for each time our perspective was widened, turned or recentered because of the thoughts of another.*

*I invite each of you to share an intention of gratitude, hope or challenge that will mark the end of our time together and place more structure to our path forward.*

Each member is asked to share the intention they wrote in preparation for the session.

**Facilitator:** *Closing- We will carry these intentions with us as we move forward. But, more importantly, we will carry the stories and the reality of the people (pause), the communities (pause) and Earth (pause) most impacted by extractive industries. We are part of the Earth and part of these communities and must always remain attentive to the cry of the Earth and the cry of those who have been made poor. Amen*

If there is time, please encourage group members to share their creative expressions with the group.

**IDENTIFYING WHAT HAS EMERGED**— The facilitator will remind members to submit individual responses, send creative expressions to Maggie, [extractivism@sistersofmercy.org](mailto:extractivism@sistersofmercy.org), and to finalize the group response if needed.