

# Awakening to a New Consciousness

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

**Mercy's Theological Reflection Process**



**Session Five | Participant'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:

## FIRST CONTENT

**READ-** Read [Overview of Session Five: Deep Transformation](#). This overview will provide insight into what this stage of our theological reflection process means. As we may want to move to specific answers, this reminds us that the transformation we are reaching is not about one decision or one action; it is a way of understanding that will impact individual, communal, and corporate decision making within Mercy that will continue to develop. We may be tempted to act big, be bold and make a significant change. But we invite you to spend some additional time with your journal responding to the following questions:

- 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 other marginalized communities and Earth?

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.

## SECOND CONTENT

**READ-** Read the [Case Studies](#) presented as preparatory materials. These transformative examples are presented to show where communities have responded when their decisions and actions are centered in the experiences of the people, communities and Earth most impacted by extractives. These are not intended to serve as an exhaustive list, but the categories presented offer structure to explore the paths that may be taken depending on the situation. They are all different examples, but as you read, pay attention to the similarities and the common themes.

Read these stories with the same curiosity and engagement that you have used for all the stories and witness accounts throughout this process. 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, spend some time in prayer and writing in your journal on the following questions:

- 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.
- To what do you find yourself drawn in these illustrative examples within the categories? Does that surprise you? Would you have been drawn to the same example at the beginning of this process?
- 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?

## THIRD CONTENT

**REFLECT-** In this final session, our focus is on pulling together what we have learned, what has stirred in each of us and how that will shape us moving forward. It is impossible to focus on the questions of moving forward without taking time to review your own notes and journal entries throughout the process. Give yourself prayerful space and time to recall the individual reflection you have done and how you have learned and grown in the conversations in your small group. In addition to writing or reflecting freely on these, please complete the exercises described below:

1. **Free Reflection Time:** As you have moved through this theological reflection process, what has stirred in you? Were you pulled to act in some way? If so, what level of action (personal or systemic) did you find yourself moving readily toward, and why did you move toward that level? What kinds of connections did you make on the systemic level?

2. **Creative Expression of your journey:** Return now to the voices you heard, the voices of those struggling with the effects of extractivism. Recall the voices of the indigenous communities and of communities of color most impacted by extractivism. Recall the voices that rose from Earth, the rivers, the trees, and the creatures also impacted by extractivism. We invite you to:

2.1. Write a **letter to Earth, or to persons or communities most impacted by extractives or to some living creature or plant**. What would you say? Where do you stand in relation to the voice you have chosen? What does this voice say to you about the impact of extractivism?

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

In addition to sharing these with your small group as part of session five, you are invited to send them to Maggie Conley at [extractivism@sistersofmercy.org](mailto:extractivism@sistersofmercy.org).

3. **Complete the [Reflection Questions](#)** developed by the Extractives Education Coordinating Committee (described in the ILT Report video). A series of questions have been developed by the coordinating committee that are specifically designed to solicit input for the Extractives 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. When you have completed these questions, we ask you to share your individual responses through [this survey](#).

## FINAL CONTENT

**WRITE-** Your journey throughout this process has been both individual and communal. You have put in the time and effort to learn and to prepare for group meetings and through those small group conversations, you have engaged, challenged and deepened your collective understanding. As this session marks the final session where you will gather, please take a moment to write an intention of gratitude or an expression of hope for the people with whom you have traveled on this journey. You will be invited to share this intention as part of the small group session, so please have it available at meeting time.

## TO GO DEEPER

[Mercy Investment Service - 2021 Accountability Report](#)- This Accountability Report described more explicitly some of the work of Mercy Investment Services with regards to Impact Investing and Shareholder Advocacy.

[Robin Kimmerer, Reciprocity](#) (52 minutes)- From the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, asks and begins to answer the questions: *What does the Earth ask of us? What is the relationship of story, science, justice and language?*