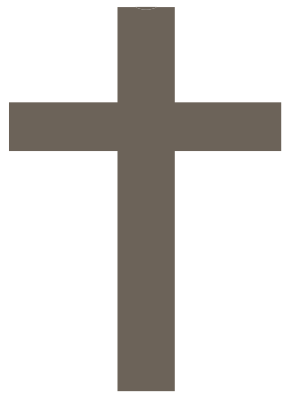


Corporate attempt to capture the churches by the mining sector

Frei Rodrigo de Castro Amédée Pénet, ofm



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General considerations

This is a brief reflection from a territory, where the reality of mining reveals that living is a permanent risk. The crimes for rupturing the mining tailings dams, in particular those of the company Vale and BHP Billinton (Samarco), in Mariana-MG (2015), and Vale, in Brumadinho-MG (2019), caused 20 and 272 deaths respectively; the destruction of two rivers and great environmental impacts; and unmasked mining as a perverse business, generating wealth for a few, with the support of the state powers. The lives of the affected populations are still on hold. These crimes, more than an exception, reveal some characteristics of the current mining model.

Since September 2013, there has been a clear movement of transnational companies from the mining sector towards the summits of several churches. As can be seen in the documentation of this sector, the aim is to establish a relationship between the mining companies and the churches through what the companies call “dialogue”. For this “dialogue”, initially, the big transnational corporations in the mining sector requested meetings called “Days of Reflection” from the Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches.

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1. A process of approximation

The first “Day of Reflection” initiative was held at the Vatican on September 7, 2013. In response to the request of the mining companies, the then **Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace** called a meeting that brought together 19 representatives of the mining sector (presidents and CEOs¹) and 15 other people representing church groups and an NGO, Oxfam America².

The second activity of this “Day of Reflection” was jointly called by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the President of the Methodist Conference, in 2014, and was held in London at Lambeth Palace. Participants included church leaders, CEOs of mining companies, academics and NGO representatives. On this occasion, perspectives and reflections were shared on the mining sector and its impacts on society and the environment³.

The third activity, in the context of the “Day of Reflection”, which coincided with the second meeting with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, with the theme “Creating a new future, re-imagining the future of mining”, took place on September 19, 2015. At that meeting, it

¹ Chief Executive Officers, in Portuguese “Diretores Executivos”.

² Available at: http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2013/09/09/pope_hopes_day_of_reflection_on_mining_ethics_will_benefit_industry/en1-726839

³ Available at: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/latest-news/news-archive-2017/sins-our-eyes-archbishop-joins-ecumenical-patriarch-fight-18>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/ecumenical-day-of-reflection-on-mining/>

was agreed that there was enough trust to build something more formal, planned and long-term. “The main actions included: i) establishing a common vision, ii) establishing more defined outcomes, iii) combining global dialogue with local action, iv) developing a more formal structure”.⁴

Simultaneously, since 2014, as a result of this process of rapprochement, the mining sector has organized several guided visits to extraction sites, involving participants from various churches and companies. There were 18 visits to mines in 7 countries in 2014, 2015 and 2017.⁵ It is clear that, from 2016 onwards, this process of rapprochement directed its focus towards the formalization of activities at a global level.

From this path of the “Days of Reflection”, in addition to the guided tours of the mining companies to the mining sites, a joint project proposal also emerged, called “**Mining in Partnership**” and an articulation

⁴ Available at: http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2015/09/30/cardinal_turkson_hosts_conference_on_mining_operations/en-1175743

⁵ MFRI's record of mining visits: July/September 2014 - 1. Australia, Golden Grove (MMG); 2. Ghana, Ahafo (Newmont) and Iduapriem (Anglo Gold Ashanti); 3. South Africa, Kolomela (Anglo American Kumba) and Richards Bay Minerals (Rio Tinto); 4. Chile, Los Bronces and the Chagres Smelter (Anglo American); 5. Brazil, Barro Alto (Anglo American); 6. South Africa, Mafube Colliery (Anglo American) and Batho-pele Platinum Mine (Anglo American Platinum). July 2015 - 1. South Africa, Venetia (De Beers/Anglo American); 2. Ghana, Ahafo (Newmont); 3. Peru, Antapaccay (Glencore); 4. Peru, Las Bambas (MMG); 5. Peru, Yanacocha/Minas Conga (Newmont); 6. Peru, Quellaveco (Anglo American) February/2017 1. Colombia, Cerréjon (Cerréjon) and Calenturitas (Prodeco/Glencore).

2. Behind this “dialogue” initiative

of church leaders and executive directors of mining companies, called “Mining and Faith Reflections Initiative” (MFRI).

On May 2 and 3, 2019, another “Days of Reflection” activity was held at the now Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Integral Development, in the Vatican. This time, together with the Anglican and Methodist Churches. It was a two-day meeting. On the first day, there was a meeting with “representatives from various Catholic agencies and Episcopal commissions to share their experiences, concerns, expectations, ideas and suggestions that help improve the business and its relationship with the communities”.⁶ On the second day, about 30 executives from the mining and related services industry joined the first day’s group.

In 2012, a diverse group of world leaders gathered at a conference promoted by Kellogg Innovation Network (KIN) Catalyst⁷ in Brazil in Belo Horizonte (MG). Representatives from companies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations and the government participated in this event. On this occasion, the group discussed the urgency of changes in mining companies and what a “Mining Company of the Future” should look like.

Mark Cutifani (CEO of Anglo American), Ray Offenheiser (president of Oxfam America) and Peter Bryant (Senior Fellow of Kellogg Innovation Network) presided over the discussions. Representatives from entities such as Vale, AngloGold Ashanti, The Ford Foundation, Harvard University, Global Indigenous Solutions and others were also present.

These entities identified a set of priorities that they believe could help change the mining sector. The consensus was that mining needs change and a proactive approach to design its own destiny⁸.

⁶ Cf. invitation link at: <http://www.falachico.org/2019/05/pa-pa-francisco-recebe-fotos-de-todos-os.html>

⁷ The Kellogg Innovation Network (KIN) established at Kellogg School of Management is a platform for ongoing collaboration among faculty, corporate innovation leaders, non-profit organizations and government. Founded in 2003, KIN facilitates strategic and management dialogue to promote innovation-driven growth and create long-term value. Available at: <http://www.dpimining.org/about-us/our-journey/>

⁸ Available at: http://www.dpimining.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/KIN_Catalyst_SP0814_singles.pdf

In the analysis of the sector, presented at this conference, it was stated that mining companies face a complexity of problems. They mentioned some of the problems they face, such as spiraling costs, government intervention, deepening of mining pit, lower ore levels, and declining productivity. The participating organizations made clear that communities do not trust mining, and that this creates additional uncertainties for their businesses. They felt that it was more difficult for the sector to find and start a mine and that, combined with this, there would be an unfavorable capital environment and difficult commodity prices, which amplifies the problems of the companies.

In the publication “Reinventing Mining: Creating Sustainable Value” we read:

One of the early outcomes of the KIN Catalyst work has been to spark an important dialog between the industry and faith-based organizations. This process began in Sept 2013 at the Vatican where more than twenty CEOs and Chairpersons were hosted by Cardinal Peter Turkson, the President of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, for a Day of Reflection. This was followed by a similar session in October 2014 hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the head of the Methodist Church. The initiative has inspired a new conversation and a new way of thinking about mining as a catalyst for broader social and community development.⁹

⁹ Reinventing Mining: Creating Sustainable Value - Introducing the Development Partner Framework, page. 1. Available at: http://www.kinglobal.org/uploads/5/2/1/6/52161657/pb_kin_dpf_final_12_4_5mb.pdf

Behind the proposal of the so-called “dialogue” with the churches is a strategy of the corporations. In the documents where they present this strategy, one reads:

The industry has made solid strides in the way it interacts with communities and the way it tackles myriad societal and environmental issues. Indeed, its responses are now among the more sophisticated of any heavy industrial sector. It is, for example, the only business sector whose peak industry association has a clear commitment to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples. However, despite significant investment, good intent and a myriad of initiatives, the industry, as one mining CEO remarked, ‘is simply missing the mark.’

Mining faces unique challenges because of its need to be where the ore bodies are; the fact that it develops non-renewable resources; the reliance on cooperation and support from the host communities; and the high level of dependence on governments with respect to licensing, fiscal regimes, energy, infrastructure and other enablers. These factors leave mining companies overly vulnerable to community and government interventions.¹⁰

It is clear that the strategy of the companies is to seek ways to continue their ventures, in an economically unfavorable situation and in an environment that is adverse to their business, with the opposition of the communities affected by the socio-

¹⁰ Reinventing Mining: Creating Sustainable Value - Introducing the Development Partner Framework, page. 8. Available at: http://www.kinglobal.org/uploads/5/2/1/6/52161657/pb_kin_dpf_final_12_4_5mb.pdf

environmental violations caused by mining activities.

3. Mining companies' strategy

What is considered from a lot of information on official websites of mining companies and publications in this sector on the subject, is that corporations want to create a new narrative. This new narrative is being developed by the mining sector, with the aim of presenting mining as a more socially and environmentally responsible activity. The history of this process is born from the following vision:

The idea for first KIN Catalyst grew out of conversation at KIN Global 2011 between Anglo American's Mark Cutifani and KIN Senior Fellow Peter Bryant. Mining was in trouble on a variety of fronts. A chronic lack of investment in innovation had led to reduced productivity, higher costs and subpar returns on capital. At the same time, a legacy environmental, health and safety issues had cost the industry its social license to operate in many communities.¹¹

During this period, the challenge for mining companies was to maintain their business in a context of changing growth and interruption in the process of acceleration of the sector, with increasing social tensions.

¹¹ Available at: <http://www.kinglobal.org/catalyst-overview.html>

These dynamics, according to them, demanded as a response the reformulation of the business environment and the rethinking of where and how to compete. To this end, it became essential to develop a kind of new social pact for the mining business. The strategy was to involve organizations and individuals from within and outside the mining sector, such as church organizations, academia, communities, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, governments, investors, mining companies, workers (see illustration 1).

It is noted that the so-called “Mining Company of the Future” needs less tension between companies and communities. The growing resistance and struggles of those affected, their communities, organizations and movements are reactions to the impacts of mining companies and human rights violations in various parts of the world. These reactions demonstrate dissatisfaction with mining companies. This, according to this analysis, has affected the licensing processes, causing delays, from the perspective of the companies, which have resulted in great economic losses for the mining companies.

The mining sector sees the conflicts between communities and companies within a business perspective. Problems and delays in processes, such as licensing, mean additional costs. A research report on “Costs of Community-Industry Conflict in the Extractive Sector”, conducted in 2014 by the “Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative” (CSRI) of the Harvard



*The Kellogg Innovation Network developed a model for the Mining Company of the Future that incorporates all stakeholders in a mining operation**

Kennedy School and the Center for Social Responsibility in Mining (CSRMI) of the Sustainable Minerals Institute at the University of Queensland in Australia, revealed that the costs of community-industry conflict in the extractive sector translate into huge losses for companies: *between \$3-5 billion, will suffer costs of around \$20 million per week from delayed production in terms of Net Present Value (NPV), largely due to loss of sales.*

For example, at a Latin American mine, a nine-month delay during construction in 2010 resulted in \$750 million in additional

Loss of productivity in the form of temporary project costs. Conflict in the community in delays in operations was the most frequent cost one country led to shutdowns and downtime, mentioned by all interviewees. A major world-class mining project, with capital expenditures per year. In another case, community conflict

* Available at: http://me.smenet.org/docs/Publications/ME/Issue/026_029.MIN1.pdf



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that paralyzed some command lines brought an entire operation to a halt, at a cost of \$750,000 per day. A seven-day blockade of a power project's supply route to a Middle Eastern country that halted operations cost \$20,000 per day.

In at least one case, such costs were included in the "construction costs" in the project budget, which included a 50% margin to cover delays due to community conflicts¹².

In the following illustration, it is striking

¹² Davis, Rachel and Daniel M. Franks. 2014. "Costs of Company-Community Conflict in the Extractive Sector." Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative Report No. 66. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School.

* Available at: <http://www.ceecthefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/20140212b-Development-Partner-Framework.pdf>

4. How the strategy of mining corporations advances in the religious context

As described above, during this process of “Days of Reflection” of representatives of mining companies with church leaders, two proposals emerged. The first took place after the meeting in London, which launched a joint project called “Mining in Partnership”. The second was the articulation of church leaders and executive directors of mining companies, called the “Mining and Faith Reflections Initiative” (MFRI).

Some extracts from the “Mining in Partnership” project show very well the intention of these corporations and how far they intend to go, as well as the risks that this type of “dialogue” entails, in terms of co-optation. In summary, this project is defined as an “Agenda of Empowerment”, the result of the “Days of Reflection” in the Vatican (October 2013) and in the Lambeth Palace (October 2014). It offers the following definition:

*Mining Partnership: An Empowerment Agenda aims to assist theological seminaries and similar institutions around the world better to equip pastors and church leaders to serve communities affected by mining projects.*¹³

The objectives, called “benefits” of the project, are described for both the mining

¹³ Available at https://www.jp-pic-jp.org/newsletter/2015/may/files/Mining_in_Partnership_Website_Invitation.pdf

companies and the churches:

Benefits for mining companies include:

- *More effective recognition of faith groups as important stakeholders in partnerships with local communities.*
- *More effective listening to the needs and concerns of faith groups as intrinsic to community development activities.*
- *Faith group leaders better informed about mining and ‘best!practices’ in the industry, and thereby able to communicate with the companies.*
- *Improved potential for ‘deep reach’ into local communities to better understand what’s important locally, and why, and what hinders local development.*

Benefits for churches (and potentially other faith groups) include

- *Resources to think theologically, ethically and liturgically about mining in the locality and internationally*
- *Toolkit and training materials to assist theological seminaries better to equip pastors and other church leaders to serve communities affected by mining projects.*
- *Network of interested parties for mutual support and guidance.*
- *Resources to think theologically, ethically and liturgically about growing small, sustainable businesses that will survive after the mine has closed.*

At the end of the document analyzed, we read:

Mining in Partnership: An Empowerment Agenda is committed to a holistic understanding of the Christian Gospel. The churches' experience of God is a whole-life experience. Proclamation of the gospel of Christ includes concerns about survival, nourishment, education, justice and truth. May God's Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven!

We will present some criticisms of this project “Mining in Partnership” in the next item of this text.

If we consider “Mining in Partnership” as the “Empowerment Agenda” within the churches, the “Mining and Faith” initiative (MFRI) seems to us to be its immediate evolution.

MFRI held a meeting of church leaders and mining company CEOs in May 2017 in Barcelona, Spain. On the document¹⁴ from this meeting is commented:

The Mining and Faith Reflections Initiative (MFRI) aims to enable and support a dialogue and relationship between the churches and mining companies. The MFRI consists of high-level dialogues between mining executives and church leaders (Days of Reflection), supported by mine site visits for church participants. The MFRI began when some mining companies approached church leaders to begin a dialogue. Church leaders subsequently organised events

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.harrywinter.org/Documents/MFRI%20May%20meeting%20Reading%20Pack%20120517%20FINAL.pdf>

which enabled participants to discuss how mining can best contribute to the Common Good.

MFRI's objectives are described as follows:

The Mining and Faith Reflections Initiative begins with an acknowledgement of our common humanity. The churches have heard the calls from communities around the world for mining companies to work for the common good. The churches have also heard from some mining companies that mining activity should be of better and wider benefit to society and the environment.

Those involved in the Initiative share a vision for mining to serve the common good better, by enabling those engaged and affected by its activities to lead lives that are fulfilled, just, and reflect human dignity and respect. They do so with regard for both current and future generations.

According to the document, the Reflections on Mining and Faith Initiative is proposed:

- *enable and support a dialogue and relationship between churches and mining companies;*
- *be a catalyst for meaningful conversations in ways to encourage openness, honesty and the sharing of different perspectives on mining;*
- *encourage genuine and sustainable change in mining and its contribution to outcomes, building on successful work and noting that mining needs to keep pace with social and environmental challenges;*
- *incorporate perspectives from church leaders, church organisations and church*

5. A critique of the mining companies' strategy

investors, mining executives and companies, industry associations, communities and development NGOs;

- *encourage an increased knowledge of mining and its impacts and contributions to the common good, through global dialogues and local site visits;*
- *act as a catalyst to bring together local faith and mine leaders.*

It is clear from this document that on the part of the mining companies there is a strategy to create an agenda for the churches, advancing both in the religious and spiritual fields, as well as in the field of church relations with the affected communities, in a process of co-opting them for the interests of the mining sector.

After the first meeting of mining corporations with the then Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (CPJP) and, more recently, the “Days of Reflection” with the *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, concerns and worries arose from the communities affected by mining, the organizations and the movements fighting in defense of territories mined or subject to the advance of mining.

In 2015, at the request of the “*Churches and Mining Network*”¹⁵, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace held a meeting with representatives of those affected by mining in Rome from July 17-19, with the title: “**United with God, we hear a cry**”. About thirty representatives of communities affected by mining activities and pastoral agents from 18 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe attended this meeting: Chile, Peru, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, United States, Canada, Switzerland, Italy, Mozambique, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, India and the Philippines.

¹⁵ “The Network of Churches and Mining is an ecumenical space, formed by Christian communities, pastoral teams, religious congregations, theological reflection groups, laity, bishops and pastors who seek to respond to the challenges of impacts and violations of social and environmental rights caused by mining activities in the territories where we live and work. About 70 organizations from the Americas belong to the network. Available at: <http://iglesiasymine-ria.org/quienes-somos/#9d0032154ad513d82>

Pope Francis' message for this meeting was very significant. In it, the Pope clearly expressed how the reality imposed by the corporations is very different from the narrative that the mining sector puts into dialogue.

You come from different situations and in various ways you experience the repercussions of mining activities, whether they are conducted by large industrial companies, small enterprises or informal operators. You have chosen to gather in Rome on this day of reflection that recalls a passage from the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (cf. nn. 187-190), to echo the cry of the many people, families and communities who suffer directly and indirectly as a result of the consequences, too often negative, of mining activities. A cry for the lands lost; a cry for the extraction of riches from the soil which paradoxically has not produced wealth for the local populations, who remain poor; a cry of pain in reaction to violence, threats and corruption; a cry of indignation and for help for the violations of human rights, blatantly or discreetly trampled with regard to the health of populations, working conditions, and at times the slavery and human trafficking which feed the tragic phenomenon of prostitution; a cry of sadness and impotence for the pollution of the water, air and land; a cry of incomprehension for the lack of inclusive and supportive processes from civil, local and national authorities, which have the fundamental duty to promote the common good.¹⁶

¹⁶ Available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150717_messaggio-attivita-minerarie.html

“...to echo the cry of the many people, families and communities who suffer directly and indirectly as a result of the consequences, too often negative, of mining activities. A cry for the lands lost; a cry for the extraction of riches from the soil which paradoxically has not produced wealth for the local populations, who remain poor...”

(Papa Francisco)

Pope Francis also states that the mining sector needs a radical paradigm shift¹⁷.

With this meeting, the CPJP had the “intention to give more visibility to the situations of violence and intimidation, illegality and corruption, pollution and human rights violations related to mining, by calling on political leaders, governments,

¹⁷ Available at: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/07/17/pope_francis_says_mining_sector_needs_radical_paradigm_shift/1159107

*businessmen, investors and intergovernmental bodies to listen to the cry of the oppressed and the cry of the earth, and to act with diligence and responsibility in the service of the common good, justice and human dignity”.*¹⁸

Cardinal Peter KA Turkson, president of the CPJP present at the meeting, recognized how tense and delicate the situation of those affected by mining is, and highlighted the risks they took to attend a meeting that would report on the impacts and human rights violations caused by mining. At that time, the Cardinal denounced the situation suffered by some of the participants in that meeting: *“some people attending the meeting were pressured and intimidated in the last few days, for example, after applying for a passport”*. He also said that the CPJP *“received testimonies of threats, violence and murders, reprisals”*.

This meeting resulted in an **“Open letter from the communities affected by mining, received in Rome by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace”**¹⁹. The participants in the meeting expressed their concern about the dialogue of the mining sector with the Church:

We also express our concern about the strategy of rapprochement of the large mining corporations to the institutional Church, highlighting the contradictions between the speeches made in Rome by these multinationals and their local practices, which in most cases continue to violate human rights in the territories.

Participants suggested that the CPJP work

¹⁸ Available at: <http://www.falachico.org/2015/07/conselho-pontificio-de-justica-e-paz-e.html>

¹⁹ Available at: <http://www.falachico.org/2015/07/carta-abetadados-atingidos-pela.html>

to overcome the impunity of corporations and companies in cases of human rights violations.

We suggest that the CPJP, in its meeting with the businessmen of large mining companies, confirm in a convincing manner the request of many peoples and organizations of the world: to advance in the definition of the Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, currently under construction in the United Nations.

We believe that the most appropriate way to manage conflicts between communities claiming their right to territory and companies' projects, with the endorsement of the states, is through total respect for human rights and existing laws and treaties, as well as the definition of new coherent regulatory, political, legal and economic instruments, both at the national and international level (LS 177); “the local population should have a special place at the table; they are concerned about their own future and that of their children, and can consider goals transcending immediate economic interest.” (LS 183). Communities have the right to say “no” to mining.

In this letter, the participants in the meeting **“United with God, we hear a cry”** clearly assume a basic principle also in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (LS): in dialogue, especially when there are conflicts and violations of human rights, the protagonists must be those affected, who live in the territories involved.

As for the **“Mining in Partnership”** project, cited above, a statement issued by the Churches and Mining Network, under the title **“The Church is not for sale”**,

“...the most important dialogue that the bishops and pastors should have is not with businesses, but with all members of the churches, in order to define common positions on these issues. Furthermore, we recommend dialogue with communities, supporting their demands and concrete denunciations”.

denounced this project as a form of co-optation.

In January 2016, the Churches and Mining Network issued an “Open Letter to the Bishops and Pastors of Latin America.”²⁰ The report expresses concern about the increase in “violence and criminalization of people and entire communities that are in a critical position with respect to mining in Latin America”. In this same letter, the strategy of the mining companies is strongly criticized, because they are incapable of demonstrating that their activities are sustainable; they seek

²⁰ Available at: http://www.falachico.org/2016/01/carta-aber-ta-da-rede-igrejas-e_15.html

the support of entities that have credibility with the people. *The Churches and Mining Network* denounced the visits organized and guided by the mining companies in some of their companies. According to the Network, the interest of these companies is to seek legitimacy through a “symbolic approach and alliance with the churches”.

The text of this open letter suggests that each church “should not maintain “neutral” positions in the face of the conflicts generated by mining. Recognizing “the immense dignity of the poor” (LS 158), the Church must continue to take up the cry of those affected and stand with them and with Creation”. He stated that there were no changes after the conversations (Days of Reflection) in Rome and Canterbury and expresses concern “about the possibility of new meetings of the Church with executives of the largest mining companies, at the continental or regional level”. At the end of the letter, it is indicated what would be the most important and urgent dialogue:

In our opinion, the most important dialogue that the bishops and pastors should have is not with businesses, but with all members of the churches, in order to define common positions on these issues. Furthermore, we recommend dialogue with communities, supporting their demands and concrete denunciations. In this way, the Churches contribute to the empowerment of the communities, so that they themselves are the ones who dialogue with the states and the companies.

6. Thinking about mining from the perspective of Integral Ecology and Integral Justice

Mining is a form of capital extraction by expropriation that depends on the exploitation of common goods (natural resources) and, at the same time, occupies territories, affects and expels people, communities and populations. Pope Francis (2015), in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, says that everything is “interconnected”, “interrelated”, that there is a relationship between “nature and the society which lives in it” (LS 139).

Starting with Francis of Assisi, the Pope speaks of “integral ecology”, and tells us that St. Francis “shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (LS 10). He also affirms: “Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human” (LS 11). Integral ecology “entails reflection and debate about the conditions required for the life and survival of society, and the honesty needed to question certain models of development, production and consumption”, avoiding “fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of bits of information” (LS 138).

Integral ecology implies reviewing the place of the human being in the world and his relations with reality

(LS 15), overcoming an incorrect way of interpreting the Scriptures: “nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures” (LS 67). The narratives in the “symbolic language” of creation, in the book of Genesis, “suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.” (LS 66). There is no room for a “tyrannical anthropocentrism” (LS 68), because “other living beings have a value of their own in God’s eyes” (LS 69). It is no longer worth saying that “other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish.” (LS 69). The value of “being” is superimposed with the value of “being useful” (LS 69). The extreme injustice against the brother, in the story of Cain and Abel, is a break with God and with the earth: “When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered.” (LS 70).

Therefore, justice presupposes integrality. The hegemonic development model, capitalism, is marked by profound inequalities. Its reproduction is imposed through the technical-economic paradigm,

which leads to obsessive consumerism. Those who suffer first from the impacts of this model are those who did not decide for it. *“The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming” (LS 51).* Therefore, the inequality in power and in the experience of the impacts is evident. Social equity and a healthy environment, the exercise of environmental justice, are necessary. The struggle for environmental justice brings to light the unjust appropriation of the environment as the basis of the social, ecological and cultural problems of the planet, which keeps billions of people in poverty. The impacts of this model affect the excluded, the different species and their ecosystems. *“The export of raw materials to satisfy markets in the industrialized north has caused harm locally, as for example in mercury pollution in gold mining or sulphur dioxide pollution in copper mining” (LS 51).* Comprehensive, social and environmental justice overcomes the manipulation of the concept of sustainability and affirms the rights of nature.

There is no longer room for camouflage, when analyzing the injustices, the inequalities and the failure of our care for nature.

Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behavior patterns, and the ways it grasps reality[...] We are faced not with two separate crises, one

environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature. [...] Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live (LS139).

Therefore, from the point of view of Integral Ecology and Integral Justice, it is unrealistic to believe that the formal act of sitting at the table and exchanging ideas with corporate representatives is a dialogue. Far from the affected territories, far from the conflicts, the environmental impacts, the human rights violations and far from the dynamics and the paths that the affected people, the groups and movements that accompany them are building, there is a risk of participating in a trap.

The objective of extraction is to obtain the greatest immediate economic and financial benefit; natural systems undergo profound changes in an accelerated and intense manner, with often permanent and irreversible impacts that compromise the quality of natural life and present and future generations; these impacts vary in intensity according to the types and rates of extraction, as well as the location, method, type of extraction activity and waste generated. For all these reasons, it is essential to understand the issue of mining from the territories directly and indirectly affected.

7. How to relate to mining companies

Starting from Integral Ecology, which Simplifies, as we have reflected above, Integral Justice, we can find some bases on which the churches can establish a relationship with the mining companies.

In this sense, we suggest what Pope Francis (2013) emphasizes in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (GS) when it comes to the question of the common good and social peace (GS 217-237). Pope Francis establishes four principles: “Time is greater than space”; “Unity prevails over conflict”; “Realities are more important than ideas”; “The whole is greater than the part”.

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others. Nor does true peace act as a pretext for justifying a social structure which silences or appeases the poor, so that the more affluent can placidly support their lifestyle while others have to make do as they can. Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges.

When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised. (EG 218)

“Time is greater than space”

While critical awareness and questions about extractive activities are increasing in various parts of the planet, mining companies are proposing a dialogue at the summit level. Organized resistance processes are delaying or interrupting investments and ventures. In many countries, the pressures against predatory and plundering extractivism are accumulating in the territories, popular organizations, the struggles of indigenous peoples and traditional communities are growing, strengthening cultures and ways of life.

When a mining company controls a territory, the land becomes a space of use, mining title, merchandise. In Brazilian legislation, for example, from the perspective of mining, the population in a territory is classified as “superficiary” (*superficiário* in Portuguese) and mining activities have priority over everything and everyone

in the territories. Mining activities are qualified, in the legislation, as being of public utility. At the same time, in order to carry out their business, the companies seek to get rid of the “superficiary”. Mining dominates the land, water and environment, causing negative impacts and violating human rights. This logic and mechanics of the hegemony of mining activity, in relation to everything and everyone in the territories, reveals that the care of the Common Home is not separated from the question of the models and systems that we want to organize so that the Home is Common, for everything and everyone.

The encyclical *Laudato Si'* is clear in recognizing the legitimacy and the need for pressure from the population and its organizations (LS 38, 179, 181). The Pope quotes the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and states that: “*The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces*” (LS 190). Empowering local populations in the territories against human rights violations

“The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces”
(Laudato SI)

and crimes against Mother Earth is one way of caring for the Common Home.

In stating that “**time is greater than space**,” Pope Francis tells us that we must seek historical processes of transformation and never abandon the long-term vision in exchange for arrangements of spaces of power. It is necessary to give strength to the path that generates processes, which bring about profound transformations, even at the risk of losing.

One of the faults which we occasionally observe in sociopolitical activity is that spaces and power are preferred to time and processes. Giving priority to space means madly attempting to keep everything together in the present, trying to possess all the spaces of power and of self-assertion; it is to crystallize processes and presume to hold them back. Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces. Time governs spaces, illumines them and makes them links in a constantly expanding chain, with no possibility of return. What we need, then, is to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events. Without anxiety, but with clear convictions and tenacity. (EG 223)

Sometimes I wonder if there are people in today's world who are really concerned about generating processes of people-building, as opposed to obtaining immediate results which yield easy, quick short-term political gains, but do not enhance human fullness. (EG 224)

Resistances and struggles occur in the territories, with the people, and there are many. In the relationship of churches with the issue of mining, there is another more organic, more urgent and necessary dialogue, which is the strengthening of local churches, which live in mining territories, involved with the peoples in their processes of negotiation, resistance, struggle and search for alternatives. Together with people and their organizations, prophetically, it is up to the churches, and many do, to strengthen the processes that are occurring and encourage them to happen, where awakening is still necessary.

b “Unity prevails over conflict”

In every country in the world where there are large-scale mining projects, there are conflicts, communities facing mining companies and governments. For Pope Francis, the conflict cannot be ignored, masked or mystified, but must be assumed. *“Conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. It has to be faced”* (GS 226), without, however, being *“trapped”* or stopped in the *“conflictual conjuncture”*, so as not to lose perspective, horizons, fragmentation of reality or *“the profound unity of reality”*.

When conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go their way as if nothing happened; they wash their hands of it and get on with

their lives. Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings, project onto institutions their own confusion and dissatisfaction and thus make unity impossible. But there is also a third way, and it is the best way to deal with conflict. It is the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process. “Blessed are the peacemakers!” (Mt 5:9). (EG227).

In 2014, the Churches and Mining Network was created, which is *“an ecumenical space, composed of Christian communities, pastoral teams, religious congregations, theological reflection groups, lay people, bishops and pastors,”* with the objective of trying to *“respond to the challenges of the impacts and violations of social and environmental rights caused by mining activities in the territories where”* its members live and work.

In March 2017, El Salvador became the first country in the world to ban metal mining. This was the result of the efforts and struggles of local citizen activists, diverse communities, indigenous peoples, social movements, with the effective participation of the Salvadoran Catholic Bishops’ Conference. Also in March 2017, in Brazil, the **National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB)** created a **“Working Group on Mining”**, *“with the objective of deepening the debates on mining in Brazil, to provide a technical basis for the pastoral positioning of the entity”*.

In March 2018, the **Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM)** presented a Pastoral Letter on Integral Ecology:

“Missionary Disciples Guardians of the Common House: Discernment in the Light of the Encyclical Laudato Si’”. Paragraph 10 of the text of this Letter informs us that it *“addresses the great challenges that Integral Ecology presents to our continent; we will stop particularly to analyze the impact of extractive activities in our Common Home, especially those related to mining”*.

In September 2019, the CNBB elevated the Mining Working Group to **“Special Commission for Integral Ecology and Mining”**.

A historic victory for communities in Chile was the closure of the Pascua Lama Project by Canadian company Barrick Gold. On the morning of September 17, the First Environmental Tribunal in Antofagasta, Chile, ruled that Barrick Gold’s controversial Pascua Lama project is *“definitively and completely closed”*. This decision ended a long process of more than 20 years of struggle. The company was acquired by the Environmental Superintendence, for non-compliance with its Environmental Rating Resolution (ERC). The company’s exploration activities have left lasting impacts on the glaciers and rivers, which are the main source of fresh water for the valley. These impacts had been anticipated by communities in the valley even before work began.

These are some examples that show us how, in recent years, the churches in Latin America are assuming, from the conflict, the construction of processes of unity and transformation.

The Pope also affirms in *Evangelii Gaudium* that the principle of **“unity is greater than conflict”** is *“indispensable to the building of friendship in society”* (EG 228) and that it is inspired by the concept of *“reconciled diversity”* (EG 230).

In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis refers to this principle, in chapter V, when he speaks of *“Lines of approach and action”*; in point 4, when he speaks of *“Politics and economy in dialogue for human fulfillment”*, he says:

Politics and the economy tend to blame each other when it comes to poverty and environmental degradation. It is to be hoped that they can acknowledge their own mistakes and find forms of interaction directed to the common good. While some are concerned only with financial gain, and others with holding on to or increasing their power, what we are left with are conflicts or spurious agreements where the last thing either party is concerned about is caring for the environment and protecting those who are most vulnerable. Here too, we see how true it is that “unity is greater than conflict” (LS 198).

“Realities are more important than ideas”

It is necessary to overcome a certain abstract conceptualization of dialogue, which naturalizes the principles, while reality contradicts them.

The mining companies, which are the cause of the conflicts and interested parties, are looking for dialogue at distant “tables”, like those of the so-called “**Days of Reflection**”, with people and organizations that are not in the territories and that do not have an explicit delegation to represent them. The relationship between mining and conflict cannot be treated, or even overcome, with abstract idealism. It is urgent to avoid the manipulation of reality through technical language, the seduction of power or the play of intentions, even if the dialogues are based on universally recognized Christian ethical principles and values, since in reality they are denied by the daily practice of the mining companies.

There also exists a constant tension between ideas and realities. Realities simply are, whereas ideas are worked out. There has to be continuous dialogue between the two, lest ideas become detached from realities. It is dangerous to dwell in the realm of words alone, of images and rhetoric. So a third principle comes into play: realities are greater than ideas. This calls for rejecting the various means of masking reality: angelic forms of purity,

dictatorships of relativism, empty rhetoric, objectives more ideal than real, brands of ahistorical fundamentalism, ethical systems bereft of kindness, intellectual discourse bereft of wisdom. (EG231)

Both in and around the areas of extraction, as well as in more distant areas, due to the demand for infrastructure (highways, railroads, pipelines, power plants, dams, ports, etc.), there is the destruction of social fabric through the collapse of livelihoods and community ties, the suppression of social relations and interactions with the environment, the theft of nature, the eradication of communities and the forced displacement of people. The same mining companies that seek a “dialogue” establish control over territories and impose areas of sacrifice.

What calls us to action are realities illuminated by reason. Formal nominalism has to give way to harmonious objectivity. Otherwise, the truth is manipulated, cosmetics take the place of real care for our bodies. We have politicians – and even religious leaders – who wonder why people do not understand and follow them, since their proposals are so clear and logical. Perhaps it is because they are stuck in the realm of pure ideas and end up reducing politics or faith to rhetoric. Others have left simplicity behind and have imported a rationality foreign to most people. (EG 232).

Often, the mining sector does not take into account the populations of the territories where its projects are implemented. In Latin America and the Caribbean there is a corporate capture of states by mining

companies. States remain at the service of extractive industries and mining companies. In Peru, for example, there are more than 112 agreements signed between mining companies and the Peruvian National Police (PNP). The *“Report: Agreements between the National Police and Extractive Companies in Peru. Analysis of the relations that allow human rights violations and break the principles of the democratic rule of law”*, the result of an investigation carried out by Earth Rights International (ERI), the Legal Defense Institute (IDL) and the National Human Rights Coordinator (CNDDHH), states that: *“In Peru, for more than 20 years, there has been a legal framework authorizing the PNP to enter into agreements with private companies for police purposes to provide their services as private security agents in the installations and areas of influence of extractive projects, in exchange for economic consideration”*. These commercial agreements with the police directly influence police actions in social protests. They take place in areas with a high degree of conflict and consist of *“payment to the police, transportation, supply of clothes, food and, above all, a percentage of money that goes to the police itself, the police institution”*.²¹ This is a true privatization of the police.

d “The whole is greater than the part”

To separate mining from the whole is to get lost in a part of the problem. A more global planetary vision is needed, from the perspective of Integral Ecology and Integral Justice. It is necessary to consider the system of life of the Planet and the fact that mining is inserted in the capitalist model of accumulation, production and consumption, as well as in its interactions with the social, political, cultural and economic systems. Mining is a sector of the so-called predatory extractivism.

It is an economic, political, social and cultural model, where capitalist accumulation is produced through the large-scale appropriation of common goods, transforming them into merchandise and provoking a process of violence and expulsion that destroys peoples, cultures, territories and biodiversity.

In geopolitical terms, the understanding of the extractive mining economy is fundamental in the debate on the process of contemporary capitalist accumulation and the search for alternatives. The intensification of the exploitation of the “common goods” (natural resources) by mining, intensive agriculture, large-scale fishing, logging, oil and gas is the result of a political choice in relation to a country’s raw materials. This choice deepens and

²¹ Available at: <https://www.idl.org.pe/portfolio/convenios-entre-la-policia-nacional-y-las-empresas-extractivas-en-el-peru/>

creates new economic, political and environmental asymmetries between the global South and North. In recent decades, Latin America, Africa and Asia have been marked by the boom and post-boom of extractive commodities.

The common goods, which capital insists on calling “natural resources,” are the goods of humanity and of nature itself. Transforming the common goods into private wealth is a model of management and governance of the whole (commons goods) for the benefit of a part (transnational corporations; in this case, mining and the financial system).

The strategic plans on raw materials of countries in the European Union, the United States, Canada and China are mainly concerned with ensuring the supply of natural resources to the internal market and thus safeguarding the competitiveness of these local economies. Their trade and investment programs seek to review existing commitments, regulate relations through free trade agreements, and reduce the policy space of global governments in the South. It is a diplomacy to guarantee access to the natural resources of these regions.

These strategic plans on raw materials, focused on safeguarding the supply of resources to the industry of a few countries, constitute an **architecture of impunity**, centered on corporate power. Multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) reinforce corporate rights over responsibilities.

In the case of Africa, for example, to get an idea of this architecture of impunity in favor of transnational corporations, we can highlight the struggles of communities, mining workers and their movements to resist environmental impacts and human rights violations. We will mention three struggles, one that took place in Marikana, South Africa, another in Marange, Zimbabwe and a third in Moatize, Mozambique; of these, the first two ended in massacres.

Marikana: The extractive sector in post-apartheid South Africa continues to opt for labour exploitation and environmental degradation. In the mines, subway work is carried out under unhealthy conditions. Communities affected by mining continue to be excluded from the richness of the land resources on which they live. The Marikana massacre is an example of corporate impunity, government and corporate collusion, and the ruthless ways in which the mining sector is managed to maximize profits.

Lonmin Plc is a mining company listed on the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges. It is dedicated to the prospecting, extraction, refining and marketing of metals from the platinum group, of which it is one of the largest primary producers in the world. On August 16, 2012, 34 mining workers of the transnational corporation Lonmin participated in a strike for better wages and were shot dead by members of



#REMEMBER MARIKANA

Today we remember those killed at the Marikana Massacre and we stand in Solidarity with the widows of Marikana as they continue the struggle for justice.



the South African Police Service (SAPS). This happened in Marikana, a town near Rustenburg in the North West Province of South Africa. Another 79 miners were injured and 259 arrested.

More than twenty years after the overthrow of apartheid, this massacre revealed many of the contradictions of the “non-racial” neoliberal architecture introduced by Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC). Growing inequality and accumulation driven by a new black ruling class through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) politics; the long-

standing complicity of the so-called “tripartite alliance” between the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)²²

²² At the time of the massacre, Cyril Ramaphosa was vice president of South Africa, which had built the country's largest union - the National Union of Miners (NUM) and which had also been president of COSATU, when he was wanted by the strikers, the COSATU base, he denied support. Cyril is now president of South Africa, after the departure of president Jacob Zuma. He has become a symbol of black capitalism in South Africa. Ramaphosa is involved in controversial deals with the mining sector, including his joint venture with mining company Glencore and allegations that he illegally benefited from coal deals with Eskom, denied by him, during which Glencore came under the public spotlight by Tony Blair in the Middle East; and his employment on Lonmin's board of directors while taking an active stance during the Marikana Massacre.

and the South African Communist Party (SACP) in re-launching the neo-liberal agenda; leverage, by international extractive capital, in partnership with the leaders of the new BEE elite and the powers of the state: all this ensures that the fruits of the extractive economy remain in the hands of corporations and a small (now multiracial) minority. The Marikana massacre is one of the tragic examples of corporate impunity and ruthless ways to maximize profits in the extractive sector.

M*arange*: In Zimbabwe, the extraction policy has been imposed by blood. On October 27, 2008, some 1,300 families from Marange, in the eastern part of the country, who were working in artisanal mining activities in the diamond fields, began to be brutally expelled by the

forces of the Zimbabwean National Army, the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) and the Military Police, in an action called **Operation No Return**. The objective, according to the government, was to “clean” the area, for the entry of Chinese capital. This operation resulted in the massacre of miners and residents of local villages. Hundreds of people fled their traditional homes to take refuge in the cities. More than 214 miners were shot dead in a space of 5 weeks; the exact number of deaths was never known.

According to international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, women have reported suffering rape and highly degrading treatment by the police. They were forced, for example, to completely undress, so that male officers would insert



their fingers into their genitals, allegedly looking for hidden diamonds. The traditional leaders were left helpless, as their authority was overruled by the state.

The main objective of Operation No Return was to destroy the resistance of the artisanal miners who lived there, considered illegal by the authorities, in order to protect the exploration interests of Anjin Investments and Jinan Mining, subsidiaries of the Chinese company Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company (AFECC). Today, however, the government of Zimbabwe itself, through the Zimbabwe Consolidate Company²³, controls around 50% of the sector in the region. Zimbabwe's national legislation places the command over all mining activity in the hands of the President, while the concept of private property does not exist for communities.

In 2009, after the government took over the diamond fields, a Chinese-owned settlement was built in Arda Transau, a government farm about 40 km north of Marange. More than 4,000 families from

²³ A few years after the discovery of diamonds in Marange, the government began licensing a small number of joint venture companies to operate in the area. The government's participation was usually carried out by the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC). ZMDC's participation in the companies is in most cases owned by a private company called "Marange Resources", which is owned exclusively by ZMDC. The military controlled a 30% stake in the joint venture with the Chinese government owned corporation, Anhui Foreign Economic Construction (Group) Co Ltd (Afec), but the mining company's operations remained largely unclear. Anjin is a joint venture between Afec, a large construction company that, according to sources, is linked to the military industrial complex in China, and Matt Bronze Enterprises, formed by the Ministry of Defense and the Zimbabwean Defense Forces through Glass Finish Investments (Pvt) Ltd.

Marange were forcibly displaced by this settlement. These families still live in this place, with a poor structure in terms of health, education and transportation. They were families of the agricultural life, who today do not have enough surface to develop agriculture.

In 2009, this diamond area was estimated at 70,000 hectares. However, the area rich in diamond deposits exceeds 120,000 hectares and more is still being explored, suggesting that there will be more forced relocation of the local population in order to make way for mining. The mined diamonds are traded in Antwerp, Belgium and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, two of the world's major gemstone markets. The trade in these diamonds finances political repression.

Moatize: In Mozambique, in 2004, Vale S.A. obtained permission from the Mozambican government to explore for coal. In 2007, it received an extraction concession for 35 years, in an area of 25,000 hectares, in the district of Moatize, province of Tete. According to Human Rights Watch, the Vale mining plant in Moatize and its expansion led to the relocation of 1,365 families living in the villages of Chipanga, Bagamoyo, Mithete, and Malabwe. These families were resettled, or received other forms of compensation. Vale used a strategy to divide and control, dividing people into "rural" and "semi-urban" families. A number of 717 families, considered rural by Vale, were resettled in the city of Cateme, located 40 km from the town of Moatize.



Another 288 families were considered “semi-urban” and went to a neighborhood. Finally, a group of 308 families did not agree to adjust to the categorization made by Vale and, therefore, it was recorded that they had chosen to receive “assisted remuneration” (they did not go to either place). The families suffered significant impacts on their livelihoods, community ties and enjoyment of a range of economic and social rights, including the ability to obtain adequate food and water, and access to work and health care²⁴.

In **Brazil**, for example, with the state reinforcing its role as a development enabler, the federal government has been

²⁴ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH - “WHAT IS A HOUSE WITHOUT FOOD? - The Boom of Mining in Mozambique and the Resettlement - MAY 2013. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/mozambique0513port_ForUpload_0.pdf

discussing within the executive branch a proposal for a new regulatory framework for the mining sector since 2009. In 2013, under strong lobbying by the mining business community, the government presented Bill 5807/13 to the National Congress, with the aim of a comprehensive legal reform on the mining sector. With a deadline of 90 days for its approval, the reaction of civil society was quick, denouncing the government’s maneuver to prevent public debate and guarantee the interests of both the companies and themselves. This reaction, which involved movements of those affected by mining, unions, NGOs, churches and sectors of academia, led to the creation of the National Committee in Defense of the Territories against Mining. The pressure from civil society ended up overturning the urgent regime, for approval in

Congress. In 2017, after the 2016 coup, the federal government changed the strategy and fragmented the discussion in the House of Representatives, presenting three Provisional Measures²⁵. In 2018, the president sanctioned two decrees, which updated the Mining Code and brought new rules for the Financial Compensation for the Exploitation of Mineral Resources (Cfem).

To face this debate, the more than 100 entities of the National Committee for the Defense of the Territories against Mining, since 2013, have prepared 7 consensus, which continue to guide the processes of struggle and dialogue in relation to the government and the mining sector²⁶:

- 1 - *Guarantee democracy and transparency in the formulation and implementation of Brazilian mining policy;*
- 2 - *Guarantee the right to consultation, consent and veto of local communities affected by mining activities;*
- 3 - *Respect extraction rates and rhythms;*
- 4 - *Delimit and respect areas free from mining*²⁷;
- 5 - *Control environmental damage and ensure*

²⁵ The MP 789/2017 (sanctioned in the form of the law 13.540/2017) altered the collection of the royalties of the mineral extraction, the MP 790/2017 (not approved) made procedural modifications in the Decree Law 227/1967, and the MP 791/2017 (sanctioned in the form of the law 13.575/2017) created the National Agency of Mining (ANM).

²⁶ Available at: <http://emdefesadosterritorios.org/enfrentamento-ao-codigo-da-mineracao/>

²⁷ Over time, the fight for areas free from mining has evolved into the notion of territories free from mining. This clearly appears, in 2019, at the National Seminar "Different Ways of Saying No: experiences of prohibition, resistance and restriction to mining", held in Muriaé, in the State of Minas Gerais, which brought together communities, organizations and movements from 15 Brazilian states. Available at: <https://cpisp.org.br/cartamuriae/>

plans to close mines with resource contingency;
6 - *Respect and protect workers' rights;*
7 - *Ensure that mining on indigenous lands complies with ILO Convention 169 and is subject to the approval of the Indigenous Peoples' Statute.*

All over the world, mining processes are changing and seriously destroying livelihoods and the environment. The mining and metals industry accounts for more than 20% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It is estimated that this industry consumes about 10-20% of fossil fuels. This occurs in the use of machinery and processes for mineral exploitation, with particular intensity during the refining and mineral processing.

In all three cases mentioned above, not only mining companies must be held accountable, but also the political architecture of the states, as well as their clients, investors and extractive diplomacy. It is also essential to consider responsibilities beyond the extractive states. The states that host these corporations are also responsible for what happens in the mined territories. However, the international legal system favors the impunity of transnational corporations for the human rights violations they commit; clear mechanisms are also needed on how to hold countries which hosts corporations accountable as well. At best, diplomacy reinforces a weak, voluntary and ineffective approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and leaves affected individuals and communities without legitimate use of justice for corporate abuses.

The inadequacy of existing international mechanisms, such as the Guiding Principles on Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises, which were promoted by the United Nations (UN), along with other voluntary standards, is evident. These mechanisms do not have a positive impact on the protection of human rights. On the contrary, they end up strengthening the architecture of impunity and corporate power, ignoring the sovereignty of peoples and democratic principles. In the struggle for a binding mechanism, the role of the Holy See has been extremely positive. In July 2015, the Vatican actively articulated, with the diplomatic delegation of Ecuador, the adoption of a United Nations resolution at the Human Rights Council to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group on a Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, which requires that transnational corporations comply with and respect human rights norms.

In saying that the whole is greater than the part, Pope Francis reminds us that, in the tension between the global and the local vision, we cannot stop at the local, because it is the common good that must prevail. This, however, does not mean that we should not “sink our roots into the fertile soil and history of our own place” (EG 235).

The whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts. There is no need, then, to be overly obsessed with limited and particular questions. We constantly have

to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting. We need to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God. We can work on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective. Nor do people who wholeheartedly enter into the life of a community need to lose their individualism or hide their identity; instead, they receive new impulses to personal growth. The global need not stifle, nor the particular prove barren. (EG 235)

Francisco affirms, from a political perspective, the interconnection between the diversity of realities and the need to seek systemic solutions, avoiding reductionism. He uses the images of the sphere and the polyhedron. Two metaphors to talk about the relationship between the “whole” and its “parts”.

Here our model is not the sphere, which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the centre, and there are no differences between them. Instead, it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness. Pastoral and political activity alike seek to gather in this polyhedron the best of each. There is a place for the poor and their culture, their aspirations and their potential. Even people who can be considered dubious on account of their errors have something to offer which must not be overlooked. It is the convergence of peoples who, within the universal order, maintain their own individuality; it is the sum total of persons within a society which pursues the common good, which truly has a place for everyone. (EG 236)

In the same week that the encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* is launched, a reference to the metaphors of the sphere and the polyhedron appears in the “Video Message of Pope Francis for the Third Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church”²⁸. The event was held from 21 to 24 November 2013 in Verona, Italy. As he deepens the title of that Festival, “*Less Inequality, More Difference*”, Francisco comments:

“Less inequality, more difference” is a theme that emphasizes the manifold richness of individuals as an expression of their personal talents, and that stands at a distance from homologation, which kills and paradoxically increases inequality. I would like to translate the theme into an image: the sphere and the polyhedron. Take the sphere to represent homologation, as a kind of globalization: it is smooth, without facets, and equal to itself in all its parts. The polyhedron has a form similar to the sphere, but it is multifaceted. I like to imagine humanity as a polyhedron, in which the multiple forms, in expressing themselves, constitute the elements that compose the one human family in a plurality. And this is true globalization. The other globalization — that of the sphere — is an homologation.

The real dialogue does not consist in a homologation, as if it were an administrative act of recognition of authority. It is not the search for an abstract and theoretical truth, nor a game of intentions where the Church is placed in the center, equidistant from all other actors. True dialogue is only

²⁸ Available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pt/messages/pont-messages/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131121_videomessaggio-festival-dottrina-sociale.html

possible by diving into the soil of history, diverse and plural, a metaphor for the polyhedron. The dialogue is affirmed in the differences, in the search for justice and against the inequalities, it is anchored in the preferential option for the poor and makes it its mystique.

God’s heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself “became poor” (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. [...]

For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor “his first mercy”. This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have “this mind... which was in Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness” [...]

Our commitment does not consist exclusively in activities or programmes of promotion and assistance; what the Holy Spirit mobilizes is not an unruly activism, but above all an attentiveness which considers the other “in a certain sense as one with ourselves”. This loving attentiveness is the beginning of a true concern for their person which inspires me effectively to seek their good. This entails appreciating the poor in their goodness, in their experience of life, in their culture, and in their ways of living the faith [...]

Since this Exhortation is addressed to members of the Catholic Church, I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care. [...]

[...] none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice: "Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbour, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone". I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call. (EG 197 - 201)

"These vulnerable communities have a lot to teach us. "For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values ..." Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for [...] mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture." (Laudato SI)

8. Dialogue requires change and ecological conversion

On May 3, 2019, Pope Francis adopted a comprehensive and complete approach, going to the roots of the issue, as he addressed the audience with representatives of the mining sector, participants in the meeting promoted by the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development. He asked, “What does it concretely imply” in reference to the title of the meeting, “Mining for the Common Good”, and said, “Allow me to articulate a few reflections in this regard which could assist you in your dialogue”.

First of all, mining, like all economic activities, should be at the service of the entire human community. As Pope Paul VI wrote: “God intended the Earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. ... created goods should flow fairly to all”. It is an essential pillar of the Church’s social teaching. In this perspective, the involvement of local communities is important in every phase of mining projects. “A consensus should always be reached between the different stakeholders, who can offer a variety of approaches, solutions and alternatives. The local population should have a special place at the table; they are concerned about their own future and that of their children, and can consider goals transcending immediate economic interest.” (Laudato Si 183).

In the light of the upcoming Synod on the Amazon, I would like to stress that “it is essential to show special care for indigenous

communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed” (ibid, 146). These vulnerable communities have a lot to teach us. “For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values ... Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for [...] mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture.” (ibid.). I urge everyone to respect the fundamental human rights and voice of the persons in these beautiful yet fragile communities.

Secondly, mining should be at the service of the human person and not vice versa. As Pope Benedict wrote: “In development programs, the principle of the centrality of the human person, as the subject primarily responsible for development, must be preserved.” Each and every person is precious before God’s eyes and his or her fundamental human rights are sacred and inalienable, irrespective of one’s social or economic status. Attention for the safety and wellbeing of the people involved in mining operations as well as the respect for fundamental human rights of the members of local communities and those who champion their causes are indeed non-negotiable principles. Mere corporate social responsibility

is not sufficient. We need to ensure that mining activities lead to the integral human development of each and every person and of the entire community.

Thirdly, we need to encourage the implementation of a circular economy, all the more in the sphere of mining activities. I find the observation that my brother bishops of Latin America made in their recent pastoral letter regarding extractive activities very pertinent. They wrote: "By 'extractivism' we understand an unbridled tendency of the economic system to convert the goods of nature into capital. The action of 'extracting' the greatest amount of materials in the shortest possible time, converting them into raw materials and inputs that industry will use, that will then be transformed into products and services that others will market, society will consume and then nature itself will receive in the form of polluting waste - that is the consumerist loop that is being generated at ever greater speed and ever greater risk."²⁹

For the Pope, the integral solutions point to the need for another lifestyle (LS 203 - 208), which surpasses the techno-scientific paradigm: an "ecological conversion".

For *Laudato Si'*, changing one's lifestyle is part of ecological conversion; not being obsessed with consumption translates into quality of life, joy and peace. "Christian spirituality proposes an alternative way of understanding quality of life, promoting a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, capable of generating deep joyment without being obsessed with consumption". (LS 222). The

²⁹ Available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/may/documents/papa-francesco_20190503_incontro-industria-mineraria.html

Pope speaks of free and conscious sobriety, simplicity and happiness, of limits to our needs and of healthy health (LS 222-224). "The poverty and austerity of Saint Francis were no mere veneer of asceticism, but something much more radical: a refusal to turn reality into an object simply to be used and controlled" (LS 11).

Ecological conversion implies "a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness" (LS 220): 1. gratitude and gratuitousness: the world is a gift received from the love of the Father; 2. loving awareness: to form universal communion with other beings; 3. not look at the world from without but from within; 4. to grow, to develop creativity and enthusiasm to resolve the problems of the world; 5. to assume oneself with serious responsibility stemming from our faith.

9 What can be concluded about this “dialogue” with the Churches

The Pastoral Letter of CELAM on Integral Ecology, “Disciples Missionaries Guardians of the Common House: Discernment in the Light of the Encyclical *Laudato Si*” (DMGCC), when it speaks of the “responsibility of the companies”, recognizes and welcomes the testimonies coming from the local churches and warns of the strategies of the mining companies:

We want to warn you about the existence of initiatives to reflect on mining and faith, and proposals of carrying out mining operations “in alliance”, in which extractivist companies purport that sectors of the Church are supporters of their megaprojects, in exchange for infrastructure, money, benefits.
(Obispos del CELAM)

We have heard numerous testimonies from our priests and pastoral agents that companies – transnational and national, private and state – often do not comply with internationally recognized socio-cultural and environmental standards. There are complaints of corrupt practices, of causing discord among communities adjacent to extractive projects, of intimidation and even serious violations of human rights in pursuit of the company’s goals, at any human, social or environmental cost. We observe that what often prevails is “the only criterion of action is the maximum benefit in production” and not human beings, their just needs or the common good. (DMGCC 53)

We want to warn you about the existence of initiatives to reflect on mining and faith, and proposals of carrying out mining operations “in alliance”, in which extractivist companies purport that sectors of the Church are supporters of their megaprojects, in exchange for infrastructure, money, benefits, etc. Fittingly, this pastoral letter provides tools for the communities to discern each particular case, without manipulating the principles of faith and the criteria of the Social Doctrine of the Church, but always keeping in mind the common good for the weaker, the abandoned and the mistreated of society, among whom is our “burdened and laid waste” Mother Earth. (LS2) (DMGCC 54)

“The cries and voices of the communities must be heard and taken on by the churches. The companies’ plan to dictate an agenda for the churches, including with regard to theological, biblical, liturgical and pastoral aspects, is more than cooperation: it is misappropriation”

There is no room for naivety or insensitivity in the face of the clamor that rises from the territories where the mining companies operate. Under the mask of the term “dialogue”, the mining companies want to maintain or recover their domination and hegemony in the territories, in the face of the defeats, which have been happening in various parts of the world. It is clear from the KIN Catalyst documents that the mining companies recognize the difficulties they face in relation to the opposition and resistance of the communities. This reality, caused by the reaction of those affected and sectors of society, directly hinders the interests of mining companies in the licensing processes. Behind these

oppositions, there are organizations that have been working for years at mining sites, fighting and resisting together with the affected communities.

It is particularly difficult to believe that the strategy of mining corporations that approach churches is really a proposal for honest dialogue. How can we imagine that real dialogue is possible when it is proposed by those who represent companies that, in some cases, commit crimes? How can we accept that real dialogue can be held far from the affected communities, their popular organizations and social movements that struggle in the territories, due to the impacts and violations committed by mining companies? How can the presidents and CEOs of companies and leaders of organizations that represent the sector talk about dialogue in the face of great asymmetry?

The power of corporations is enormous, often greater than that of states, and they hide all information about their actions and impacts. In most cases, the activity of mining companies extracts and accumulates wealth at the expense of human rights violations, enormous environmental impacts, criminal negligence and pressure on governments to relax legislation in their favour. What about visits by church representatives to mining sites organised and guided by the companies themselves, ignoring local resistance and isolating the main actors?

It is at least naive and disrespectful for people from outside the context to enter

into a complex reality of conflict without knowing and ignoring the actors, facts, agendas of the affected communities and movements involved, but insisting on defining this as a posture of dialogue. The churches and religious groups are not represented only by their leaders, as the corporations want to make understood, but they are present in a capillary way in the diverse territories and communities.

As for the churches, it is necessary to insist on an ecclesiology based on the ministry of communion, as an expression of the faith of the communities, animated by the power of the Holy Spirit. Communion is an exercise of co-responsibility, which is expressed in the protagonism of all; otherwise, clericalism and the centralization of power persist, since communion only takes place through participation. Dialogue is a profound and demanding position, which must take history, local reality, subjectivity and the search for communion seriously. The Churches must create a structure that allows them to listen to and live in communion with the communities. The cries and voices of the communities must be heard and taken on by the churches. The companies' plan to dictate an agenda for the churches, including with regard to theological, biblical, liturgical and pastoral aspects, is more than cooperation: it is misappropriation.

Building a Church path with the affected communities, organizations and movements is the great challenge. This is because dialogue and negotiation are not automatic and out of context realities. It is

necessary to give space to local churches, religious groups and communities to build their paths. Centralizing the relationship between churches and mining companies at the top of these organizations, at this time, runs the risk of undermining local roads and weakening the participatory proposals that emerge from the territories. It is necessary to support the construction of a more plural and participatory vision in the churches.

Communities are in conflict with mining and it is imperative that churches walk with them. In general, whether in the struggles to find alternatives and transitions, or in the political construction to safeguard the dignity of people and the environment, there is a search for dialogue and negotiations in the territories. Therefore, different strategies, actions and positions of strength are born in the territories and expand. It is necessary to respect the existing demands and agendas of the affected communities. To do this, it is not enough to create a model, an international dialogue table, much less believe that we will find in market mechanisms the paths towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

... it should always be kept in mind that "environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits. The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces". Once more, we need to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply

by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals. Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention. Moreover, biodiversity is considered at most a deposit of economic resources available for exploitation, with no serious thought for the real value of things, their significance for persons and cultures, or the concerns and needs of the poor (LS 190).

