



LITURGICAL REFLECTION – 2013 Education Campaign

This text can be adjusted to reflect your own style and the place and time in which you are speaking. The brackets give you specific places to add your own details. This text is approximately five minutes long.

Good morning (*afternoon/evening*). My name is (*your name*) and I am a member of (*name of parish*) and a member of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. As many of you know, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Canada. We were founded in 1967 by our bishops to act on the Gospel imperative to work for justice and peace in the world.

With your generous contribution during *Share Lent (Share Life)* we have been able to support the efforts of courageous people who are struggling to bring about better futures for their communities in the Global South. DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE seeks to deepen this support for our partners by also taking responsible action at home. Over the past few years, we have been hearing more and more from our partners about the difficulties experienced by communities due to the extraction of natural resources from their countries by foreign corporations.

Last May, the Catholic bishops of Madagascar said in a public statement that: “The abundance of our riches in natural resources contrasts sharply with the poverty of the majority of our population. We will have oil and we already have all sorts of minerals and precious stones, but this potential is not transformed inside our country. Rather than creating jobs and improving the quality of life of the citizens of Madagascar, it is being pillaged by multinationals with the complicity of our leaders.”

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE has collected testimonials from communities in Honduras, Madagascar, Peru and the Philippines, who have all asked that we tell you their stories. They want you to know that the profits earned from mining are not leading to long-term development for their communities. In fact, in many instances, people are experiencing serious social problems and injustices such as displacement of their homes, erosion of their agricultural land, deforestation, pollution of their water sources, violence, conflict and corruption of local officials.



Canada is a big player in the world when it comes to mining and we, as Canadians, have a particular responsibility to hold companies and our government to account for the impact of this industry on the lives of people who may not always have the opportunity to represent their own interests.

Many of you may remember that between 2006 and 2009, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE collected half a million signatures asking for more accountable mining companies, including our call to establish an independent ombudsman mechanism with the power to act on complaints. Instead of establishing an ombudsman, the government responded by creating the Office of the Extractive Sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Counsellor as a way to address complaints from affected communities. However, this mechanism has not been effective because it is voluntary in nature. The problems associated with resource extraction are not going away. Because the mandate of the CSR counsellor will expire in October 2014, we think it's time to return to our original demand for an effective ombudsman as a means for people affected by Canadian mining operations to seek remedy when their rights have been violated.

In this renewed campaign, **A Voice for Justice**, we are not alone. We are joining our voice with environmental and human rights NGOs, faith-based organizations, labour unions, and researchers across Canada as part of the Canadian Network for Corporate Accountability.

The members of DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE are listening to the voices of impoverished people living in resource-rich regions, and we want to support their aspirations for healthy, life-sustaining futures.

Please make some time today to listen to the stories of those who are experiencing the negative impacts of mining. Have a look at the campaign Action Sheet and sign our Action Card calling for the establishment of a REAL legislated, extractive sector ombudsman mechanism. These cards will be sent to our elected Members of Parliament, providing a means for us, as Canadian citizens, to make our own voices heard.

As we pray together today, as we listen to the word of God and reflect on its meaning in our lives, let us open our minds and hearts to the voices of those who may not be with us in person, but who are with us in spirit, as part of our human family, and part of the body of Christ. Let us remember that *The Lord hears the Cry of the poor* (Psalm 34:17) and resolve to listen carefully and to respond to those cries with faith and with hope as one body in Christ.

