Introduction

Caesar A. Montevecchio and Gerard F. Powers

Mining is essential to life as we know it. Power plants, solar arrays, cell phones, computers, buildings, cars, and an infinite number of other items depend on mining. Yet mining is also a factor in many of the world's most intractable conflicts, intimately linked to violence, human rights abuses, environmental degradation, unsustainable development practices, and poor governance. Whether mining is a force for good or ill depends on many factors: the material mined, end uses and users, policies and practices of mining companies, the quality of governance, the role of affected communities, socio-economic-cultural contexts, and mining's place in broader development plans. As many authors in this book point out, there is no one-size-fits-all ethical approach to mining.

The relevance of mining to Catholic peacebuilding has been evident as the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN),¹ a network of two dozen church institutions, universities, development agencies, and peace organizations, has accompanied the church in the Philippines, Colombia, and the Great Lakes Region of Africa. As this book details, the taxonomy of Catholic engagement on mining is varied. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Rigobert Minani claims mining is “a structural cause of conflict,” the church has led efforts to promote transparency in the mining industry, including working with an international coalition in support of the Dodd-Frank legislation and playing an official role in reviewing dozens of government mining contracts. Other examples include the Philippines, where the church opposed President Rodrigo Duterte's 2021 decision to lift a moratorium on mining contracts in key areas, and El Salvador, where the church played a key role in that country becoming the first nation to ban metal mining in 2017. In Colombia, church engagement primarily involves pastoral accompaniment and advocacy on behalf of local communities impacted by mines, and facilitating dialogue among communities, government, and corporations. And in Peru, Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente—Puno takes legal action to protect the human rights of rural and indigenous communities.

Reflecting this diversity of Catholic action on mining, this book argues for an integrated approach to mining that has three dimensions. First, to be

conceptually adequate, it must marry a Catholic theology and ethics of peace, justice, human rights, development, and ecology; all are connected, none alone is sufficient. Second, it needs to connect ethics and theological reflection with church practice on mining, which would strengthen both. Third, church engagement on mining should integrate local, national, and international dimensions (vertical integration), as well as diverse types of engagement by different sectors within the Catholic community (horizontal integration).

An integrated approach to Catholic peacebuilding and mining

The need for an integrated approach to mining is clear. From a global perspective, Katherine Marshall points out that mining is a factor in each of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals, from ending poverty and ensuring clean water to promoting food security and peace. This interconnectedness is evident in Colombia. The government, supported by key international actors, is counting on a dramatic expansion of mining—much of it in politically-unstable and environmentally-sensitive areas of the Amazon formerly controlled by rebels from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—to promote economic development and help deliver a peace dividend after the 2016 peace accord. Sandra Polonía-Reyes and Héctor Fabio Henao point out some of the difficulties in doing so. They conclude that, while there is “no linear relation between conflict and mining, ... mining intersects and interacts with violent conflict in numerous regions” of the country. In some cases, armed groups rely on mining to fund violent activity; in others, government or private security forces use violence against those opposing a mine; in still others, a mine might generate conflict within a community among those who see the mine as essential for development and those who are concerned about its negative impacts on the environment or indigenous rights. Despite the connection between mining and conflict, the fact that the 2016 accord, the world’s most comprehensive, did not address mining was “a missed opportunity to connect integral peace, ecology, and development.”

This book addresses this first dimension of integration by answering Pope Francis’ (2019) call for the Catholic community to examine mining through the lens of his teaching on integral ecology, integral human development, and integral peace in *Laudato Si’*. Considerable scholarly work has been done on *Laudato Si’*, as well as Catholic perspectives on integral human development (see Cichos et al. 2021; Carozza and Sedmak 2020; Ilo 2014), ecology (see DiLeo 2017; Scheid 2016), corporate social responsibility and business ethics (see Finn 2021; Rebman 2020), and peacebuilding (see Hawksley 2020; Schreiter 2010), in general. But relatively little has been done to relate these topics to each other and to apply them, in an integrated way, to mining, in particular.²

Several chapters of this book take up the theoretical challenges of integrating these different dimensions of Catholic teaching. Others address more practical challenges, such as the need to develop the business, technical, legal, and financial sophistication on mining necessary for the church to be credible and effective. Three church responses to these challenges are common: mining is not a church issue, mining is good because it creates jobs, or the local community should decide. The first reflects a narrow ecclesiological response: the church is not competent to address mining because it lacks the secular expertise. The second focuses narrowly on just one aspect of integral development. The third prioritizes process over substance, and the local common good, often without adequate consideration of the national and global common good. Each response is legitimate, but the claim of this book is that they are ultimately inadequate because they fail to take the integral approach called for by Catholic social teaching.

A second dimension of integration involves practical theology, connecting theology and ethics to church practices. Practical theology, according to Robert Schreiter (2010, 366), “is an ongoing practice of reflection and action that keeps theory and informed practice in constant conversation with each other.” The Catholic community is deeply engaged on mining in many places³ but, unfortunately, this aspect of lived Catholicism has gone largely unexamined by and is not deeply grounded in Catholic theology and ethics.⁴ Theological and ethical reflection must catch up to Catholic praxis, learn from it, and help develop new frameworks and ideas to strengthen and support it, consistent with *Laudato Si*’s integral approach. By putting scholars and church actors in conversation with each other, this book is a modest attempt to fill this gap.

A third dimension of integration—horizontal and vertical—relates to why a book would focus specifically on Catholic approaches to mining. Mining is simultaneously radically local, in how intimately operations are connected to specific places, and massively global, in how the industry is part of complex transnational economic networks and is dominated by relatively few multi-national companies. The Catholic Church is one of the few institutions in the world with the scope, scale, and sophistication needed to match the scope, scale, and sophistication of mining industries. It has a rich tradition of reflection on peace, development, human rights, and ecology necessary to address the many dimensions of mining. It has an institutional capacity to address a range of problems from the local to the global levels, and across national divides.⁵ And its people power includes respected moral leaders at all levels as well as the capacity to catalyze a large network of grassroots actors.

This book highlights the distinct contributions that the Catholic Church, as a transnational institution, can make, as well as the challenges the church faces in using its capacity for horizontal and vertical integration. While the church is doctrinally hierarchical, it operates in a highly decentralized way.

It is not surprising, therefore, that much Catholic action is similar to that in Colombia: a mine-by-mine approach in which each case is addressed (or not) at the local level, often relying on some form of free, prior, and informed consent as a framework for pastoral engagement. In some countries, as is discussed in the chapters on the DRC, the Philippines, and El Salvador, the church does not engage only at the local level but has developed national policies on mining. While regional and continental episcopal conferences have occasionally addressed mining issues, in the past decade, the church has recognized the need for more focused regional responses, developing new initiatives to facilitate coordination of church actors in two of the world's most sensitive areas, the Amazon and Congo Basin. At the global level, the Holy See has convened consultations with church actors as well as with the top executives of the world's largest mining companies. The work being done at these different levels and transnationally is impressive. But, as this book underscores, the challenge of translating the capacity for an integrated approach into actual collaboration among these diverse church actors at different levels is daunting.

The structure of this book

The book is divided into two primary sections, with one lead chapter. Any reflection on ethics in Catholic tradition is moored in sacred Scripture. The first chapter by Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, provides a scriptural foundation for an ethics of mining and peace. Cardinal Turkson examines the way mining is present in texts about God's covenant with Israel, in the wisdom tradition as reflected in the Book of Job, and in the perfection of the covenant in Christ. Situating mining in these contexts offers a challenge to the mining industry to recognize the ethical values associated with the kingdom of God and provides a foundation for incorporating mining into areas of theological ethics, like ecology, human rights, and peace.

The first section is about mining and lived religion. It begins with a framing essay by Katherine Marshall on the role of a diverse set of religious actors in advocacy and action on mining. As a corrective to the fact that religious actors do not have an accepted place in mining debates, she calls for "a well-conceived, collaborative, multireligious engagement" on ethical challenges associated with mining. Her chapter is followed by essays on Catholic engagement on mining in specific countries. With support from CPN, Caritas Colombia developed a database to track diocesan-level mining engagement in the country. Based on that data, Sandra Polanía-Reyes and Msgr. Héctor Fabio Henao propose a pastoral framework for expanded and more coordinated engagement by the church at the local, national, and international levels, especially for the sake of supporting Colombia's 2016 peace agreement. Rigobert Minani, SJ, then addresses the DRC and some of the most systematic Catholic efforts anywhere to address mining and conflict.

He focuses especially on the church's efforts to promote transparency and good governance, and to use the church's growing expertise on mining and Catholic social teaching to help reveal the limits of the promises of the extractive industry. Karl M. Gaspar, CSsR, traces the way mining gradually became a focal point of the peacebuilding work of Catholic leaders in the Philippines and explains how mining remains closely associated with violations against indigenous peoples and continuing violence, especially in the southern region of Mindanao. In Peru, the organization Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente—Puno (DHUMA) does extensive legal work to defend indigenous communities against mining. José Bayardo Chata Pacoricona outlines some of the major legislative and legal challenges DHUMA has faced. Finally, Andrés McKinley, who worked closely with Catholic leaders in El Salvador on the world's first national ban on metal mining, explains how the country's water crisis motivated El Salvador's people and Catholic leadership to mobilize for the ban.

The second section considers these and other cases in light of broader themes in Catholic theology and ethics. Tobias Winright, analogizing to the just war tradition, proposes an ethics of extraction that includes a just mining theory with three categories: *jus ad extractionem*, *jus in extractionem*, and *jus post extractionem*. Anna Floerke Scheid and Daniel P. Scheid undertake a constructive project to craft a moral framework to support mining and peace. They do so by combining the idea of integral ecology with the principles and practices of just peace theory, yielding a model of "ecological just peace."

In the following chapters, Douglass Cassel, Clemens Sedmak, Albino Barrera, OP, and Elias O. Opongo, SJ, give insights on mining in light of dialogue between Catholic and secular ideas on human rights, development, and governance. Cassel suggests that international human rights and Catholic social teaching on mining are complementary. International law provides the Catholic ethical vision with a practical vehicle for change, while the Catholic vision offers an ethical horizon that goes beyond legal norms and can drive more substantial change. Sedmak examines how the theological underpinnings of integral human development contrast with typical models of development in the mining sector in that peace and human flourishing are more important goals than economic growth. This means that the animating goal of profit maximization that typically drives mining must be restrained. In a similar vein, Barrera passes mining through the filter of development ethics and argues that the inherent limitations of the market prevent it from being sufficient to regulate the problems of injustice and conflict that can arise from mining. Finally, Opongo, citing the role of corruption and weak government regulation in mining-related conflicts in Africa, proposes that the Catholic community do more to leverage its strengths to promote good governance.

The remaining chapters from Vincent J. Miller, Raymond Offenheiser, and William N. Holden and Caesar A. Montevecchio consider the

globalized context of mining and the fraught dynamics between the Global North and Global South. Miller argues that the problems with mining are a network problem more than a failure of moral will. While Catholics are united in Christ, church networks of communion are no match for mining market networks. Therefore, he recommends a “synodal ecclesial communications network” to deepen relationships among Catholic consumers and Catholics impacted by mining. Offenheiser builds on his experience engaging mining industry leaders and urges Catholic actors to take a nuanced approach that acknowledges progress the mining industry has made in addressing ethical issues in recent years. The Catholic community needs to better understand the industry’s operations, priorities, and concerns in order to engage it successfully and bring about even more structural improvement for peace and the common good. Hardrock mining for metals and minerals is often forgotten in analyses of climate change and mining, but Holden and Monteverchio present four ways in which the interfaces of climate change and hardrock mining impact justice and peace: by contributing to climate injustice; by entrenching an “extractivist” model of economic development; by engendering violence against environmental and human rights activists; and through increased demand for uranium for nuclear power which increases risks of nuclear proliferation.

In the book’s conclusion, Laurie Johnston identifies some strengths in the Catholic approach to mining and peace as well as some challenges and areas of needed growth: a focus on right relationships, but a need to improve the church’s institutional transparency; cooperation with robust partnership networks, but a need to better include women’s experiences and leadership; a focus on a big-picture common good, but a need to accept difficult tradeoffs; a capacity for prophetic criticism, but a need to balance it with practical cooperation; and consideration of the long-term, but a need to re-think aspects of Catholic social thought that reflect lingering anthropocentrism.

Aspirations of the book

This book is part of a wider effort by CPN to address issues of mining and peace. Prior to embarking on this book, CPN convened three colloquia for scholars and practitioners to explore the state of the question and the need for a project on mining. An additional colloquium was held for authors of this book. To complement these colloquia, CPN convened a three-year interest group on mining and peace under the auspices of the Catholic Theological Society of America. As noted, CPN also collaborated with Caritas Colombia on an extensive database on Catholic engagement on extractives. In addition to these efforts to improve understanding of the issue, CPN has served on the conflict resources and peacebuilding working group of Caritas Internationalis and has participated in several of the Holy See’s meetings with mining executives and Catholic actors mentioned above.

Given that this book arises out of CPN's wider efforts to connect scholars and church actors engaging mining, it has two main audiences: scholars and practitioners. Theologians, especially social ethicists, are a primary audience but this book will also be of interest to social scientists focusing on religion, specialists in business ethics and human rights law, and scholars in development, environmental, and peace studies. Scholars can find in this book grist for the research mill, grist harvested from insights and reflection on the lived experience of Catholic peacebuilders who have been laboring in the field. Practitioners should also find this book helpful. It offers lessons from Catholics addressing mining and conflict around the world. It can also provide a theoretical edifice to support and strengthen ethical analysis, advocacy, and other forms of engagement on mining, and can indicate ways in which ecology, human rights, development, and peace can be woven together and better incorporated into the thinking and practice of the worldwide Catholic community.

R. Scott Appleby (2010, 19) has observed that "It is not enough ... for Catholics to expect secular experts to understand the theology of Catholic peacebuilding. Catholics must provide translation services." We recognize that Catholics engaging in peacebuilding, around mining and otherwise, are always doing so in concert with a range of religious and secular actors from varied backgrounds and value commitments. Those coalitions are essential for effective engagement on mining. This book offers some of that needed bridging by which other religious actors, scholars, policy-makers, corporate executives, and social activists can better understand and perhaps appreciate the value of a Catholic peacebuilding approach to mining. That includes a deep well of ethical reflection and a vocabulary and framework for analyzing and critiquing injustice, malfeasance, and violence; dedication to an integral approach that tries to hold in balance all the various dimensions of the problems associated with mining; spiritual and pastoral resources that can offer distinctive forms of support for reconciliation, conflict transformation, social cohesion, and solidarity; rootedness in and commitment to impacted local communities; and a transnational institutional network that can dialogue and advocate in ways commensurate with the global dimensions of mining. At the same time, it reinforces the need for the Catholic community to understand, appreciate, and collaborate with other religious and secular scholars and practitioners in developing approaches to mining that are more just, peaceful, and sustainable.

Notes

- 1 See <http://cpn.nd.edu>.
- 2 For example, Peppard and Vicini (2015) and Opongo (2018) are two works that address extractive industries and natural resources from a Catholic ethical perspective, but only minimally cover mining specifically.

- 3 International Catholic organizations working on mining include the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission of the USG-UISG (<https://www.jpicroma.org/>), CIDSE (<https://www.cidse.org/>), and the Mining Working Group (<https://miningwg.com/>). Regional and national examples include Iglesias y Minería in South America (<http://iglesiasymineria.org/>), REBAC in Africa (<https://rebaccongobassin.org/>), CEPAS in the DRC (<https://www.cepas.online/>), and Alyansa Tigil Mina in the Philippines (<https://www.alyansatigilmina.net/>).
- 4 William P. George (2019) develops innovative theological ethics for mining and examines many different cases. But conflict and peace are not central concerns of his study, nor does he consider the roles and capacities of diverse church actors. Rigobert Minani (2017) examines injustices around mining but does not incorporate Catholic social teaching.
- 5 Though it is not exactly a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), evaluating the Catholic Church as a transnational institution contributes to a need for additional research on the role of NGOs in mining since the church often functions like one and works closely with many Catholic and secular NGOs. According to Deonandan and Tatham (2016), there is a need for a better critical understanding of the contributions that NGOs can make, and in the Catholic context, the principle of subsidiarity could be a valuable tool for mitigating problems of cooptation that they note can often arise as NGOs work with local communities on mining (280–81).

References

- Appleby, R. Scott. 2010. "Peacebuilding and Catholicism." In *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, edited by Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers, 3–22. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Carozza, Paolo G., and Clemens Sedmak, eds. 2020. *The Practice of Human Development and Dignity*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Cichos, Katarzyna, Jarosław Sobkowiak, Radosław Zenderowski, Ryszard F. Sadowski, Beata Zbarachewicz, and Stanisław Dzieñoński, eds. 2021. *Sustainable Development Goals and the Catholic Church: Catholic Social Teaching and the UN's Agenda 2030*. London: Routledge. 10.4324/9781003053620.
- Deonandan, Kalowatie, and Rebecca Tatham. 2016. "The Role of Women and Non-Governmental Organisations in the Resistance to the New Extraction in Latin America: The Unexplored Dimensions." In *Mining in Latin America: Critical Approaches to Extraction*, edited by Kalowatie Deonandan and Michael L. Dougherty, 273–283. London: Routledge. 10.4324/9781315686226.
- DiLeo, Daniel, ed. 2017. *All Creation is Connected: Voices in Response to Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic.
- Finn, Daniel K., ed. 2021. *Business Ethics and Catholic Social Thought*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. 10.2307/j.ctv1k03fz4.
- Francis. 2019. "Address to Participants at the Meeting Promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on the Mining Industry." May 3, 2019. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/may/documents/papa-francesco_20190503_incontro-industria-mineraria.html.
- George, William P. 2019. *Mining Morality: Prospecting for Ethics in a Wounded World*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Hawksley, Theodora. 2020. *Peacebuilding and Catholic Social Teaching*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

- Ilo, Stan Chu. 2014. *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.
- Minani, Rigobert, ed. 2017. *Unmet Promises of Extractive Industries in Africa: Corporate Social Responsibility: Case Study of Kitwe (Zambia) and Katanga (DRC)*. Nairobi: Paulines Africa.
- Opongo, Elias, ed. 2018. *Extractive Industries in Africa: Addressing Conflicts and Integrating Sustainable Development*. Nairobi: Paulines Africa.
- Peppard, Christiana Z., and Andrea Vicini, eds. 2015. *Just Sustainability: Technology, Ecology, and Resource Extraction*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Rebman, Robert. 2020. "Corporate Responsibility, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Common Good: Reporting, Accountability, and Stakeholder Action." *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 17, no. 2: 99–117. 10.5840/jcathsoc20201718.
- Scheid, Daniel P. 2016. *The Cosmic Common Good: Religious Grounds for Ecological Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press. 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199359431.001.0001.
- Schreiter, Robert J. 2010. "A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation." In *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, edited by Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers, 366–397. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.