

## **Reflection of Sister Sandra Margarita Sierra Flores CND after her speaking tour: Experience of Visitation in Canada**



What I lived during my time in Canada has truly been an experience of Visitation-Pentecost. What I hold dearest in my heart are the expressions of solidarity from those who came to my presentations, as well as their support and even pain and indignation as they learned of the disturbing consequences that Canadian mining companies inflict on our Central American people. Far from being true economic development, they leave us with a legacy of illness, contamination, and more poverty--not to mention the social conflicts they create in the affected communities.

Many times during my personal reflection, I have thought that this struggle of the people to defend their threatened lives is a David and Goliath story. These visitations with the sisters, associates and those who work for justice in Canada, especially those with Development and Peace, have given me hope and light for the journey. Their expressions of concern have reminded me of the Good Samaritan who risked his own personal security to care for the poor man who was robbed and left to die in the street. Like the Good Samaritan, those who came to the presentations were able to identify concrete actions and initiatives they might take. These included:

- examining the ethical nature of their pension fund investments in Canadian mining companies
- pressuring the government to establish an independent and public Ombudsperson's office which would investigate complaints and make recommendations to ensure that Canadian mining companies would respect human and environmental rights.

I am grateful that the sisters of Visitation Province gave me the opportunity to speak in the name of so many people who are not able to do this. Even though there is still a great challenge before us, these meetings are the beginning of a chain of solidarity, of justice and of liberation for us. For the Canadian people, who live such a different reality from us, it means going against the current to learn to use their wealth and financial resources so that there is a better distribution of goods that the Creator has given us all. This meeting, as much for me as for them, has been an invitation to "stop, look and contemplate" with the eyes of Faith; to be more sensitive to the cry of the crucified who, each day, are more numerous in the world; and to impel us Christians to follow Jesus Christ incarnate in the reality of injustice and oppression. It is to hear the echo of Jesus' words: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Mt. 25:40)