

**SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

**SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PAN-AMAZONIAN REGION**

**EMBARGO FINO A  
CONCLUSIONE DELL'INCONTRO PER  
LA DIFFUSIONE DEL DOCUMENTO  
FINALE**

**AMAZONIA:  
NEW WAYS FOR THE CHURCH AND  
FOR AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

Unofficial working translation of the original  
document in Spanish

Vatican

26 October 2019

## INTRODUCTION

1. "And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also he said, "Write this: for these words are trustworthy and true!" (Rev 21:5)

After a long synodal journey of listening to the People of God in the Church of the Amazon, inaugurated by Pope Francis during his visit to the Amazon, January 19, 2018, the Synod was held in Rome in a fraternal meeting of 21 days in October 2019. The climate was one of open, free and respectful exchange between bishops, pastors in the Amazon, missionaries, lay people and representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon. We were witnesses participating in an ecclesial event marked by the urgency of the theme that calls for opening new paths for the Church in the territory. Serious work was shared in an atmosphere marked by the conviction of listening to the voice of the Spirit.

The Synod was held in a fraternal and prayerful atmosphere. Several times the interventions were accompanied by applause, songs and all with deep contemplative silences. Outside the synodal hall, there was a notable presence of people from the Amazonian world who organized acts of support in different activities, processions, such as the opening with songs and dances accompanying the Holy Father, from Peter's tomb to the synodal hall. The Via Crucis of the martyrs of the Amazon had a major impact upon those involved as well as a massive presence of the international media.

2. All participants have expressed a keen awareness of the dramatic situation of destruction affecting the Amazon. This results in the disappearance of the territory and its inhabitants, especially indigenous peoples. The Amazon rainforest is a "biological heart" for the increasingly threatened earth. It is a rampant race to death. It is scientifically proven that the disappearance of the Amazon biome will have a catastrophic impact on the planet as a whole!
3. The synodal journey of the People of God in the preparatory stage involved the whole Church in the territory, the Bishops, missionaries, members of the Churches of other Christian communities, lay people, and many representatives of indigenous peoples, around the consultation document that inspired the *Instrumentum Laboris*. It emphasizes the importance of listening to the voice of the Amazon, moved by the major breath of the Holy Spirit in the cry of the wounded earth and its inhabitants. The active participation of more than 87,000 people, from different cities and cultures, as well as numerous groups from other ecclesial sectors and the contributions of academics, and civil society organizations in the specific central themes, were recorded.
4. The celebration of the Synod managed to highlight the integration of the voice of the Amazon with the voice and feelings of participating pastors. It was a new experience of listening to discern the voice of the Spirit who leads the Church to new paths of presence, evangelization and intercultural dialogue in the Amazon. The claim, which arose in the preparatory process, that the Church was an ally of the Amazon, was strongly affirmed. The celebration ends with great joy and hope of embracing and practicing the new paradigm of integral ecology, the care of the "common home" and the defence of the Amazon.

## CHAPTER I

### AMAZON: FROM LISTENING TO INTEGRAL CONVERSION

*"Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as a crystal,  
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1)*

5. "Christ points to the Amazon" (Paul VI, attrib.). He frees everyone from sin and bestows on them the dignity of the sons and daughters of God. Listening to the Amazon, in the spirit of a disciple and in the light of the Word of God and of Tradition, leads us to a profound conversion of our plans and structures to Christ and his Gospel.

#### THE VOICE AND SONG OF THE AMAZON AS A MESSAGE OF LIFE

6. In the Amazon, life is inserted, linked and integrated to the territory, which, as a vital and nourishing physical space, forms the basis, support, and limits of life. The Amazon, also called Panamazonia, is a vast territory with an estimated population of 33,600,000 inhabitants, of whom between 2 and 2.5 million are indigenous. This area, made up of the Amazon River basin and all its tributaries, spreads over 9 countries: Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. The Amazon region is essential for the distribution of rainfall in the South American area and contributes to the great movements of air around the planet; it is currently the second most vulnerable area in the world in relation to climate change due to direct human activity.
7. The water and land of this region nourish and sustain the nature, life and cultures of hundreds of communities, indigenous, Afro-descendant, mestizo, settlers, river-dwellers and urban dwellers. Water, the source of life, has a rich symbolic meaning. In the Amazon region, the water cycle is the great connection. It connects ecosystems, cultures and the development of the territory.
8. The Amazon region is a multi-ethnic and multicultural reality. The different peoples know how to adapt to the territory. Within each culture, they built and rebuilt their worldview, their signs and meanings, and the vision of their future. In indigenous cultures and peoples, ancient practices and mythical explanations coexist with modern technologies and challenges. The faces that inhabit the Amazon are very varied. In addition to the native peoples, there is a great mixture born with the encounters and misunderstandings of different peoples.
9. As the Amazonian indigenous peoples seek life in abundance this takes the form of what they call 'good living', and is fully realized in the Beatitudes. It is a matter of living in harmony with oneself, with nature, with human beings and with the supreme being, since there is intercommunication within the whole cosmos, where there are neither exclusions nor those who exclude, and where we can forge a project of full life for all. Such an understanding of life is characterized by the connectedness and harmony of relationships between water, territory and nature, community life and culture, God and various spiritual forces. For them, 'good living' means understanding the centrality of the transcendent relational character of human beings and of creation, and implies 'good acting' too. This integral way is expressed in their own way of organizing; that starts from the family and the community, and that embraces a responsible use of all the goods of creation. Indigenous



peoples aspire to better living conditions, especially in health and education. They want to enjoy the sustainable development that they themselves choose and shape and that maintains harmony with their traditional ways of life, in a dialogue between their ancestral wisdom and technology and the new ones acquired.

#### THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND THE CRY OF THE POOR

10. But the Amazon today is a wounded and deformed beauty, a place of suffering and violence. Attacks on nature have consequences for the lives of peoples. This single socio-environmental crisis was reflected in the pre-synodal consultations that pointed to the following threats to life: appropriation and privatization of natural goods, such as water itself; predatory hunting and fishing; unsustainable mega-projects (hydroelectric and forest concessions, massive logging, monocultures, roads, waterways, railways, and mining and oil projects); pollution caused by the extractive industry and city garbage dumps; and, above all, climate change. These are real threats with serious social consequences: environmental diseases, drug trafficking, illegal armed groups, alcoholism, violence against women, sexual exploitation, human trafficking and smuggling, organ traffic, sex tourism, the loss of original culture and identity (language, spiritual practices and customs), criminalization and assassination of leaders and defenders of the territory. Behind all this are dominant economic and political interests, with the complicity of some governors and some indigenous authorities. The victims are the most vulnerable: children, youth, women and our sister, mother earth.
11. The scientific community, for its part, warns of the risks of deforestation, which to date is close to almost 17% of the whole Amazon forest, and threatens the survival of the entire ecosystem, endangering biodiversity and changing the cycle of water vital for the survival of the tropical forest. In addition, the Amazon also plays a critical role as a buffer against climate change and provides invaluable and fundamental life support systems related to air, water, soils, forests and biomass. At the same time, experts remind us that by using science and advanced technologies for an innovative bio economy of standing forests and flowing rivers, it is possible to help save the rainforest, protect the ecosystems of the Amazon and its indigenous and traditional peoples, and at the same time provide sustainable economic activities.
12. One phenomenon to address is migration. In the Amazon Region, there are three simultaneous migratory flows. First, the traditional mobility of indigenous groups in their territories, now separated by national and international borders. Secondly, the forced displacement of indigenous peoples, peasants and river dwellers expelled from their territories, whose final destination tends to be the poorest and worst urbanized areas of the cities. Thirdly, forced inter-regional migration, for example the phenomenon of refugees forced to leave their countries (among others, Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba) who must cross the Amazon as a migratory corridor.
13. The displacement of indigenous groups expelled from their territories or attracted by the false glow of urban culture represents a specific feature of migratory movements in the Amazon. The cases in which the mobility of these groups takes place in territories of traditional indigenous mobility across by national and international borders, require cross-border pastoral care capable of understanding these people's right to free movement. Human mobility in the Amazon reveals the face of Jesus Christ poor and hungry (cf. *Mt* 25:35), expelled and homeless (cf. *Lk* 3:1-3), and also in the feminization of migration which makes thousands of women vulnerable to human trafficking, one of the worst forms of violence

against women and one of the most perverse violations of human rights. Trafficking in persons linked to migration requires permanent network of pastoral work.

14. The life of the Amazonian communities not yet affected by the influence of Western civilization is reflected in their belief and rites regarding the spirits of the divinity, named in innumerable ways, active with and in the territory, with and in relation to nature (LS 16, 91, 117, 138, 240). Let us recognize that, for thousands of years, they have taken care of their land, their waters and their forests, and have managed to preserve them until today so that humanity might enjoy and benefit from the free gifts of God's creation. The new paths of evangelization must be built in dialogue with these fundamental wisdoms making themselves manifest as seeds of the Word.

#### THE CHURCH IN THE AMAZON REGION

15. The Church in her process of listening to the cry of the territory and the cry of the peoples must remember the path taken. Evangelization in Latin America was a gift of Providence that calls everyone to salvation in Christ. Despite military, political and cultural colonization, and beyond the greed and ambition of the colonizers, there were many missionaries who gave their lives to transmit the Gospel. The inspired sense of mission not only inspired the formation of Christian communities, but also legislation such as the Laws of the Indies, which protected the dignity of indigenous people against the abuses of their peoples and territories. Such abuses wounded the communities and obscured the message of the Good News. The proclamation of Christ often took place under the sway of the powers that exploited the resources and oppressed the local populations. In the present moment, the Church has the historic opportunity to distance itself from the new colonizing powers by listening to the Amazonian peoples and transparently exercising its prophetic activity. In addition, the socio-environmental crisis opens up new opportunities to present Christ with all his power to liberate and humanise.
16. One of the most glorious pages of the Amazon has been written by the martyrs. The participation of the followers of Jesus in his passion, death and glorious resurrection has accompanied the life of the Church to this day, especially in the moments and places in which, for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus, Christians live in the midst of acute contradictions, such as those who fight courageously for integral ecology in the Amazon. This Synod recognizes with admiration those who struggle, at great risk of their own lives, to defend the existence of this territory.

#### CALLED TO INTEGRAL CONVERSION

17. Listening to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and of the peoples of the Amazon with whom we walk, calls us to a true and integral conversion, to a simple and modest style of life, all nourished by a mystical spirituality in the style of St. Francis of Assisi, an example of integral conversion lived with Christian happiness and joy (cf. LS 20-12). A prayerful reading of God's Word will help us to deepen and discover the groans of the Spirit and encourage us in our commitment to care for the "common house".
18. As a Church of missionary disciples, we implore the grace of that conversion which "implies letting flow all the consequences of the encounter with Jesus Christ in the relationships with the world that surrounds them" (LS 21); a personal and communal conversion which commits us to relate harmoniously with God's work of creation, which is our "common home"; a conversion which promotes new structures in harmony with the care

of creation; a pastoral conversion based on synodality, which recognizes the interaction of all that is created. Such conversion will lead us to be an outgoing Church that will enter the heart of all the Amazonian peoples

19. Thus, the only conversion to the living Gospel which is Jesus Christ, can only unfold in interconnected dimensions to motivate our going out to the existential, social and geographical peripheries of the Amazon. These dimensions are pastoral, cultural, ecological and synodal, and these are developed in the next four chapters.



## CHAPTER II

### NEW WAYS OF PASTORAL CONVERSION

*"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5).*

20. An outgoing missionary Church requires a pastoral conversion of us. For the Amazon this path also means "navigating" on our rivers, our lakes, among our people. In the Amazon, water unites us, it does not separate us. Our pastoral conversion will be Samaritan, in dialogue, accompanying people with the real faces of indigenous people, peasants, Afro-descendants and migrants, young people, city dwellers. All this requires a spirituality of listening and proclamation. This is how we will walk and navigate in this chapter.

#### THE CHURCH ON ITS MISSIONARY PATH

21. By nature the Church is missionary and has its origin in the "original love of God" (AG 2). The missionary dynamism that springs from God's love radiates, expands, overflows and spreads throughout the universe. "We are inserted by baptism into the dynamic of love through the encounter with Jesus which gives life a new horizon to life" (DAP 12). This overflow impels the Church to pastoral conversion and transforms us into living communities working in the service of evangelization in teams and networks. The mission thus understood is not something optional, an activity of the Church among others, but its very nature. The Church is mission! "Missionary action is the paradigm of the whole work of the Church" (EG 15). Being a missionary disciple is more than just doing tasks or making things. It is in the order of being. "In this way Jesus pointed out to us, his disciples, that our mission in the world cannot be static, but is *itinerant*. The Christian is itinerant." (Francis, Angelus, 30/06/2019).

#### a. A Church, Samaritan, Merciful, in Solidarity

22. We want to be a Church in the Amazon which is Samaritan, incarnated in the way in which the Son of God became incarnate: "He took our infirmities and bore our sorrows" (Mt 8:17b). He made himself poor in order to enrich us with his poverty (2 Cor 8:9). Through the Spirit, he exhorts the missionary disciples of today to go out to meet everyone, especially the indigenous peoples, the poor, those excluded from society those who are others. We also desire a Church like Magdalen who feels loved and reconciled and who announces with joyful conviction Christ crucified and risen. A Marian Church that brings forth children of faith and brings them up with affection and patience, who also learns from the riches of other peoples. We want to be a servant, kerygmatic, educating, inculturated Church in the midst of the peoples we serve.

#### b. A Church in ecumenical, interreligious and cultural dialogue

23. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious reality of the Amazon demands an open attitude of dialogue, also recognizing the multiplicity of interlocutors: the indigenous peoples, the river dwellers, peasants and afro-descendants, the other Christian Churches and religious denominations, organizations of civil society, popular social movements, the State, finally all people of good will who try to defend life, the integrity of creation, peace, the common good.

24. In the Amazon, "relations between Catholics and Pentecostals, charismatics and evangelicals are not easy. The sudden appearance of new communities, linked to the personality of some preachers, strongly contrasts with the ecclesiological principles and experience of the historical Churches and can conceal the danger of being carried away by the emotional waves of the moment and of enclosing the experience of faith in protected and reassuring environments. The fact that more than a few Catholic faithful are attracted to these communities is a source of friction, but can become, for our part, a matter of personal examination and pastoral renewal." (Pope Francis, 28.9.2018). Ecumenical, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue must be assumed as indispensable in evangelization in the Amazon (cf. *DAp* 227). The Amazon is a mixture of faiths, mostly Christian. In this reality, real ways of communion are opened to us: "He is aware that to do so, expressions of good feelings are not enough. Concrete gestures are required to penetrate souls and move consciences, encouraging everyone to that interior conversion which is the basis for all progress on the road of ecumenism." (Benedict XVI, Message to Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel, 20/04/2005). The centrality of the Word of God in the life of our communities is a factor of union and dialogue. Around the Word there can be so many common actions: translations of the Bible into the local languages, joint editions as a whole, dissemination and distribution of the Bible, and meetings between Catholic theologians and theologians of different confessions.
25. In the Amazon, interreligious dialogue takes place especially with indigenous religions and Afro-descendant cults. These traditions deserve to be known, understood in their own expressions and in their relationship with the forest and mother earth. Together with them, Christians, based on their faith in the Word of God, can enter into dialogue with them, sharing their lives, their concerns, their struggles, their experiences of God, to deepen each other's faith and acting together in defence of our "common home". In order to do this, the churches of the Amazon need to develop initiatives of encounter, study and dialogue with the followers of these religions. Sincere and respectful dialogue is a bridge towards building up 'good living'. In the exchange of gifts, the Spirit leads more and more towards truth and the good (cf. *EG* 250).

#### **MISSIONARY CHURCH THAT SERVES AND ACCOMPANIES THE PEOPLES OF THE AMAZON**

26. This Synod wants to be a strong call to all the baptized of the Amazon to be missionary disciples. To be sent on mission is inherent in baptism and is for all the baptized. In this way we all receive the same dignity as sons and daughters of God, and no one can be excluded from Jesus' mission to his disciples. "Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (*Mk* 16:15). That is why we believe it is necessary to generate a greater missionary impulse among native vocations; the Amazon must also be evangelized by its own people.
- a. A Church with an indigenous, peasant and afro descendant face**
27. It is urgent for the Church to reach out pastorally, to the indigenous people in a specific way. We start from plural realities and diverse cultures to define, elaborate and adopt pastoral actions that allow us to develop a proposal of evangelization among the indigenous communities, placing ourselves within a pastoral framework for indigenous people and their territory. The pastoral care of indigenous peoples has its own specificity. The colonisations motivated by extractivism throughout history, with the different migratory currents, put them in a situation of great vulnerability. In this context, as a Church, it is still necessary to create or maintain a preferential option for indigenous peoples, by virtue of which diocesan



indigenous pastoral organizations must be established and consolidated with renewed missionary activity, listening in dialogue, incarnate and permanently present. The preferential option for indigenous peoples, with their cultures, identities and histories, requires us to aspire to an indigenous Church with its own priests and ministers always united and in full communion with the Catholic Church.

28. Recognizing the importance of the attention that the Church is called to give in the Amazon to the phenomenon of urbanization and to the problems and perspectives related to it, it is also necessary to address the rural world as a whole and in particular to rural pastoral ministry. From the pastoral point of view, the Church must respond to the countryside being depopulated, with all its consequences (loss of identity, prevailing secularism, exploitation of rural work, family disintegration, etc.).

#### **b. A Church with a migrant face**

29. Given its growing volume, the phenomenon of migration has now become an unprecedented political, social and ecclesial challenge (cf. *DA*, 517, a). Faced with this, many ecclesial communities have received migrants with great generosity, remembering that "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (*Mt* 25:35). The forced displacement of indigenous, peasant, Afro-descendant and riverside families, pressured to abandon or suffocated by the lack of opportunities, demands a joint pastoral response in the urban slums. Accordingly missionary teams will be needed to accompany them, coordinating with parishes and other ecclesial and extra ecclesial institutions offering welcome, and inculturated liturgies in the languages of migrants; promoting spaces for cultural exchanges, favouring integration in the community and in the city, and this work encouraging them to take the initiative.

#### **c. A Church with the face of youth**

30. Among the different faces of the Amazonian realities, that of young people throughout the whole territory stands out. They are young people with indigenous faces and identities, Afro-descendants, river dwellers, rural producers, migrants, refugees, and others. Young residents of rural and urban areas, who daily dream and seek better living conditions, with the deep desire to have a full life. Young students and workers with a strong presence and participation in various social and ecclesial areas. Among Amazonian youth, are found sad realities such as poverty, violence, disease, child prostitution, sexual exploitation, drug use and trafficking, early pregnancy, unemployment, depression, human trafficking, new forms of slavery, organ trafficking, difficulties in accessing education, health and social assistance. Unfortunately, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in suicide among young people, as well as a growing juvenile prison population and increasing crimes against young people, especially Afro-descendants and slum dwellers in the peripheries. Living in the great territory of the Amazon, they have the same dreams and desires as other young people in this world: to be considered, respected, have opportunities for study, work, and a future of hope. But they are living through an intense crisis of values, or in transition to other ways of grasping reality, where ethical values are changing, even for indigenous youth. The task of the Church is to accompany them and help face any situation that destroys their identity or damages their self-esteem.
31. Young people are also intensely present in the migratory contexts of the territory. The reality of young people in urban centres deserves special attention. More and more cities are receiving all the ethnic groups, peoples and problems of the Amazon. The rural Amazon is depopulating; cities face enormous problems of juvenile delinquency, lack of work, ethnic struggles and social injustices. Here, in particular, the Church is called to be a prophetic

presence among young people, offering them adequate accompaniment and appropriate education.

32. Joining the youth of the Amazon facing their reality, the Church proclaims the Good News of Jesus to young people, discernment and vocational accompaniment, a place where local culture and identity are appreciated, youth leadership, the promotion of their rights will offer them creative, innovative and differentiated spaces of evangelization: a renewed and courageous youth ministry, a pastoral ministry always in process, centred on Jesus Christ and his project, integral and in dialogue, committed to the youth realities existing in the territory. Indigenous youth have enormous potential and actively participate in their communities and organizations by contributing as leaders and animators, in defence of rights, especially in the territory, in health and education. On the other hand, they are the main victims of insecurity over indigenous lands and the absence of appropriate public policies of quality. Alcohol and drugs often spread to indigenous communities, seriously harming young people and preventing them from living freely to build their dreams and participate actively in their community.
33. The protagonism of the young appears clearly in the documents of the Synod for Youth (160, 46), in the papal exhortation *Christus Vivit* (170) and in the Encyclical *Laudato Si* (209). The young people want to be protagonists and the Amazon Church wants to offer them their space, accompany them in listening, recognizing young people as a theological topic, as "prophets of hope." Such a committed to dialogue, ecologically sensitive and attentive to the "common house". A Church welcomes young people, and walks with them, especially in the peripheries. With all this, three urgencies arise: to promote new forms of evangelization through social media (Francis, *Christus Vivit* 86); to help young indigenous people achieve a healthy interculturality; and to help them face the crisis of anti-values that destroy their self-esteem and make them lose their identity.

#### **d. A Church that travels new paths in urban pastoral ministry**

34. Humanity's strong tendency to concentrate in cities and to migrate from smaller to larger ones also occurs in the Amazon. The accelerated growth of the Amazon metropolises means the growth of urban slums. At the same time, lifestyles, forms of living together, languages and values shaped by the metropolises are increasingly being transmitted to and implanted in the indigenous communities and the rest of the rural world. The family in the city is a place of synthesis between traditional and modern culture. However, families often suffer from poverty, poor housing, lack of work, increased use of drugs and alcohol, discrimination and youth suicide. Furthermore, in family life there is a lack of dialogue between generations, and traditions and language are lost. Families also face new health problems, which require adequate maternity education. Today's rapid changes affect the Amazon family. Thus, we find new family formats: single-parent families under the responsibility of women, an increase in separated families, civil unions and reunited families, a decrease in institutional marriages. The city is an explosion of life, because "God lives in the city" (DAP 514). In it there are anxieties and searches for the meaning of life, conflicts, but also solidarity, fraternity, the desire for goodness, truth and justice" (cf. EG 71-75). To evangelize the city or urban culture means "also affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation." (EN 19).

35. It is necessary to defend the right of all people to the city. The so-called right to the city is defined as the equitable enjoyment of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy and social justice. However, it will also be necessary to influence public policies

and promote initiatives that improve the quality of life in rural areas, thus preventing the uncontrolled displacement to the cities.

36. Basic Christian communities have been and are a gift of God to the local Churches of the Amazon. It is true that, over time, some of them have stagnated, weakened or even disappeared. However the great majority remain and persevere and are the pastoral foundation of many parishes. Today the great dangers to base communities come mainly from secularism, individualism, the lack of a social dimension and the absence of missionary activity. Therefore, pastors should encourage each and every one of the faithful to missionary discipleship. The base community must participate in public policy shaping which seeks to revitalize culture, coexistence, leisure and celebration. We must fight so that the slums, the "favelas" and "villas miseria" have their fundamental rights guaranteed; water, energy, housing and promoting the good citizenship of integral ecological. To institute the ministry of welcome in the urban communities of the Amazon for fraternal solidarity with migrants, refugees, homeless people and people who have left the rural areas.
37. The reality of indigenous people in urban centres deserves special attention, as they are the most exposed to the enormous problems of juvenile delinquency, lack of work, ethnic struggles and social injustices. It is one of the biggest challenges today: more and more cities are the destination of all the ethnic groups and peoples of the Amazon. It is necessary to develop an indigenous urban pastoral approach that addresses this specific reality.

#### **e. A spirituality of listening and proclamation**

38. Pastoral action is based on a spirituality based on listening to the word of God and to the cry of his people, in order then to be able to announce the good news with a prophetic spirit. We recognize that the Church which hears the voice of the Spirit in the cry of the Amazon can make its own the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of everyone, but especially of the poorest (cf. *GS* 1), who are God's beloved sons and daughters. We discovered that the mighty waters of the Spirit, similar to those of the Amazon River, which periodically overflow, lead us to this overflowing life that God offers us to share in the announcement.

#### **NEW PATHS FOR PASTORAL CONVERSION**

39. The itinerant missionary teams in the Amazon, weaving and building community along the way, help to strengthen the Church's synodality. They bring together various charisms, institutions and congregations, lay people, men and women religious, priests. Doing together what cannot be done alone. The missionaries who leave their headquarters and go around spending time visiting community by community and celebrating sacraments give rise to what is called the "visiting ministry". It is a pastoral method that responds to the current conditions and possibilities of our churches. Thanks to these methods, and by the action of the Holy Spirit, these communities have also developed rich forms of ministry, and thus is a motive for thanksgiving.
40. We propose an itinerant network that brings together the various efforts of the teams that accompany and energize the life and faith of the communities in the Amazon. The paths of political advocacy for the transformation of reality must be discerned with both pastors and laity. With a view to moving from pastoral visits to a more permanent presence, religious congregations and/or their provinces in the rest of the world, who are not yet involved in such missions, are invited to establish at least one missionary initiative in one of the countries of the Amazon.



### CHAPTER III

#### NEW PATHS OF CULTURAL CONVERSION

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." (Jn 1:14).*

41. Latin America HAS an immense biodiversity and a great cultural diversity. Here the Amazon is a land of forest and water, of moors and wetlands, of savannahs and mountain ranges, but above all a land of innumerable peoples, many of them inhabiting their territories for thousands of years, people of ancient perfume who continue to scent the continent against all despair. Our conversion must also be cultural, to become the other, to learn from the other. To be present, to respect and recognize its values, to live and practice inculturation and interculturality in our proclamation of the Good News. Expressing and living our faith in the Amazon is an always evolving challenge. Our faith is incarnated not only in pastoral work but also in concrete actions for others, in health care, in education, in solidarity with and support for the most vulnerable. All this is what we would like to share in this section.

#### THE FACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE AMAZONIAN VILLAGES

42. In the territories of the Amazon there is a pluri-cultural reality that demands use of expressions that allows us to identify and link all the groups and to reflect identities that are recognized, respected and promoted much in the Church as in society, that finds in the Amazonian peoples a valid interlocutor for dialogue and encounter. Puebla speaks of the faces that inhabit Latin America and notes that, in the native peoples, there is a mestiza that has grown and continues to grow in the encounter and misunderstandings between different cultures that are part of the continent. This face, also of the Church in the Amazon, is incarnated in its territory, evangelizes and opens ways for peoples to feel accompanied in different processes of evangelical life. There is a renewed missionary sense in the inhabitants of the same villages, carrying out the prophetic and Samaritan mission of the Church which must be strengthened by openness to dialogue with other cultures. Only an inserted and inculturated missionary Church will promote the emergence of particular autochthonous churches, with an Amazonian face and heart, rooted in the cultures and traditions proper to the peoples, united in the same faith in Christ and diverse in their way of living, expressing and celebrating it.

#### a. The cultural values of the Amazonian peoples

43. In the people of the Amazon we find teachings for life. The original peoples and those who arrived later and forged their identity in coexistence, bring cultural values in which we discover the seeds of the Word. In the jungle, not only is the vegetation intertwined between one species and another the peoples also interrelate among themselves in a network of alliances that enriches all. The jungle lives from interrelations and interdependencies and this happens in all areas of life. Thanks to this, the fragile equilibrium of the endured centuries.
44. The thinking of indigenous peoples offers an integrated vision of reality, capable of understanding the multiple connections existing between all creation. This contrasts with the dominant current of Western thought that tends to fragment in order to understand reality, but fails to articulate again the set of relations between the various fields of knowledge. The

traditional management of what nature offers is expressed what we now call sustainable management. We also find other values in native peoples such as reciprocity, solidarity, a sense of community, equality, the family, its social organization and a sense of service.

**b. Church present and ally of the peoples in their territories**

45. The greed for land is at the root of the conflicts that lead to ethnocide, as well as the murder and criminalization of social movements and their leaders. The demarcation and protection of land is an obligation of national States and their respective governments. However, a good part of the indigenous territories are unprotected and those already demarcated are being invaded by extractive fronts such as mining and deforestation, by large infrastructure projects, illicit crops and by large estates that promote monoculture and extensive cattle ranching.
46. In this way, the Church commits itself to be an ally of the Amazonian peoples to denounce the attacks against the life of the indigenous communities, the projects that affect the environment, the lack of demarcation of their territories, as well as the economic model of predatory and occupied development. The presence of the Church among the indigenous and traditional communities needs the awareness that the defence of the land is also the defence of life.
47. The lives of indigenous, mestizo, riverside, peasant, afro-descendant peoples and traditional communities are threatened by destruction, environmental exploitation and the systematic violation of their territorial rights. The rights to self-determination, demarcation of territories must be upheld prior, free and informed consultation. These peoples have "social, cultural and economic conditions which distinguish them from other sectors of the national community and which are governed wholly or partly by their own customs or traditions or by special legislation" (ILO Conv. 169, art. 1, 1a). For the Church, the defence of life, community, land and the rights of indigenous peoples is an evangelical principle, in defence of human dignity: "I came that men might have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10b).
48. The Church promotes the integral salvation of the human person, it values the culture of the indigenous peoples, speaking of their vital needs, accompanying their struggles for their rights. Our pastoral service constitutes a service for the full life of indigenous peoples, which moves us to announce the Good News of the Kingdom of God and to denounce situations of sin, structures of death, violence and injustice, promoting intercultural, interreligious and ecumenical dialogue (cf. DAp 95).
49. A specific chapter requires Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation (PIAV) or Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI). In the Amazon there are about 130 villages or segments of villages that do not maintain systematic or permanent contacts with the surrounding society. Systematic abuses and violations of the past provoked their migration to more inaccessible places, seeking protection, seeking to preserve their autonomy and choosing to limit or avoid their relations with third parties. Today they continue to have their lives threatened by the invasion of their territories from different fronts, their declining populations, leave them exposed to ethnic cleansing and disappearance. In his January 2018 meeting with Indigenous Peoples in Puerto Maldonado, Pope Francis reminds us: "You are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable (...) Continue to defend these most vulnerable brothers. Their presence reminds us that we cannot dispose of common goods at the pace of consumer greed." (Fr. PM). An option for the defence of the PIAV/PIACI does not exempt the local Churches from pastoral responsibility for them.
50. This responsibility must manifest itself in specific actions for the defence of their rights, in advocacy actions for States to assume responsibility to defend of their rights through the legal and inviolable guarantee for their territories they traditionally occupy. This means



adopting precautionary measures in regions where there are only signs of their presence, that are not officially confirmed and establishing bilateral cooperation mechanisms between States, when these groups occupy transboundary spaces. Respect for their self-determination and for their free choice about the type of relationships they want to establish with other groups must be guaranteed at all times. This will require that all the people of God, and especially the populations that border the territories of the PIAV/PIACI, be made aware of respect for these peoples and the importance of the inviolability of their territories. As Saint John Paul II said in Cuiabá, in 1991 "The Church, dear Indian brothers and sisters, has been and will always be at your side to defend the dignity of human beings, their right to have their own peaceful life, respecting the values of their traditions, customs and cultures.

## **PATHWAYS TO AN INCULTURATED CHURCH**

51. Christ in his incarnation left aside his prerogative of God and became man in a concrete culture in order to identify himself with all humanity. Inculturation is the incarnation of the Gospel in indigenous cultures ("what is not assumed is not redeemed", Saint Irenaeus, cf. Puebla 400) and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church. In this process the peoples are protagonists and accompanied by their agents and shepherds.

### **a. The experience of faith expressed in popular piety and inculturated catechesis**

52. Popular piety is an important means that links many peoples of the Amazon with their spiritual experiences, their cultural roots and their community integration. They are manifestations with which the people express their faith, through images, symbols, traditions, rites and other sacramentals. Pilgrimages, processions and patron celebrations must be appreciated, accompanied, promoted and sometimes purified, since they are privileged moments of evangelization which must lead to an encounter with Christ. Marian devotions are deeply rooted in the Amazon and throughout Latin America.
53. The confraternities linked to popular piety have not been clericalised. The laity assume a leading role that is difficult to achieve in other ecclesial spheres, with the participation of brothers and sisters who exercise services, direct prayers, blessings, traditional sacred songs, animate novenas, organize processions, promote patron saint festivities, etc. It is necessary "to give an appropriate catechesis and to accompany the faith already present in popular religiosity. A concrete way could be to offer a process of Christian.... initiation that leads us to become more and more like Jesus Christ, provoking the progressive appropriation of his attitudes" (*DAp* 300).

### **b. The mystery of faith reflected in an inculturated theology**

54. Indigenous theology, the Amazonian face of theology and popular piety are already riches of the indigenous world, its culture and spirituality. When the missionary and pastoral agent brings the word of the Gospel of Jesus, he identifies himself with the culture, the encounter takes place from which is born the witness, the service, the proclamation and the learning of languages. The indigenous world with its myths, narrative, rites, songs, dance and spiritual expressions enrich the intercultural encounter. Puebla already recognizes that "cultures are not empty ground, devoid of authentic values. The evangelization of the Church is not a process of destruction, but of consolidation and strengthening of these values; a contribution to the growth of the "seeds of the Word" (*DP* 40, cf. *GS* 57) present in various cultures.



## **PATHS FOR AN INTERCULTURAL CHURCH**

### **a. Respect for the cultures and rights of peoples**

55. We are all invited to approach the Amazon peoples on an equal footing, respecting their history, their cultures, their style of 'good living' (*PF* 06.10.19). Colonialism is the imposition of some people's ways of life on others, whether economically, culturally or religiously. We reject a colonial style of evangelization. Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus implies recognizing the seeds of the Word already present in cultures. The evangelization that we propose today for the Amazon is the inculturated proclamation that generates processes of interculturality, processes that promote the life of the Church with an Amazon identity and face.

### **b. Promoting intercultural dialogue in a global world**

56. In the evangelizing task of the Church, which should not be confused with proselytism, we must include clear processes of inculturation of our missionary methods and plans. Specifically, the Church's research and pastoral centres, in alliance with the indigenous peoples, should study, compile and systematize the traditions of the Amazon's ethnic groups in order to favour an educational effort that starts from their identity and culture, helps in the promotion and defence of their rights, preserves and disseminates their value in the Latin American cultural scenario.
57. Educational actions today are challenged by the need for inculturation. It is a challenge to look for appropriate methodologies and contents for to the peoples for whom we want to exercise the ministry of teaching. For this, it is important to know their languages, their beliefs and aspirations, their needs and hopes, as well as develop together educational processes that have the cultural identity of Amazon communities in both their form and their content, insisting on formation in integral ecology as crosscutting it all.

### **c. Challenges to health, education and communication**

58. The Church assumes, as an important task, to promote preventive health education and to offer health care in places which state assistance does not reach. It is necessary to favour initiatives of integration that benefit the health of Amazons people. It is also important to promote the socialization of ancestral knowledge in the field of traditional medicine specific to each culture.
59. Among the complexities of the Amazon territory, we highlight the fragility of education, especially among indigenous peoples. Although education is a human right, the quality of education is deficient and dropouts are very frequent, especially among girls. Education evangelizes, promotes social transformation, and empowers people with a healthy critical sense. "A good school education at an early age plants seeds that can produce effects over a lifetime" (*LS* 213). It is our task to promote an education for solidarity that springs from the awareness of a common origin and a future shared by all (cf. *LS* 202). Governments should be required to implement public, intercultural and bilingual education.
60. Our increasingly globalized and complex world has developed an unprecedented network of information. However, the instantaneous flow of information does not lead to better communication or connection between peoples. In the Amazon, we want to promote a communicative culture that favours dialogue, the culture of encounter, and the care of our "common home". Motivated by integral ecology, we wish to strengthen the already existing sources of communication in the region, in order to urgently promote integral ecological

conversion. To this end, we must collaborate in the training of local communicators, especially indigenous ones. They are not only privileged interlocutors for evangelization and human promotion in the territory, but they also help us to spread the culture of 'good living' and care for creation.

61. In order to develop the various connections with the whole Amazon and improve its communication, the Church wants to create an All-Amazon Church communication network, to include the various media used by particular churches and other church bodies. Their contribution can resonate with and help in the ecological conversion of the Church and the planet. REPAM can collaborate in advising and supporting training programs, monitoring and strengthening of communication throughout the Amazonian region.

#### **NEW PATHS FOR CULTURAL CONVERSION**

62. In this sense, we propose the creation of a bilingual education network for schools the Amazon (similar to Fe y Alegría) that develops educational proposals that respond to the needs of the communities, respecting, appreciating, and integrating cultural and linguistic identity.
63. We want to favour and support the educational experiences of bilingual intercultural education that already exist in the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the Amazon and involve Catholic universities to work and network.
64. We will look for new forms of conventional and unconventional education, such as distance learning, according to the needs of places, times and people.



## CHAPTER IV NEW WAYS OF ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

*"I came that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10).*

65. Our planet is a gift from God, but we also know that we are facing the urgency to act on an unprecedented socio-environmental crisis. We need ecological conversion to respond properly. Therefore, as the Church in the Amazon confronting the ever greater aggression against our biome threatened with disappearance with tremendous consequences for our planet, we set out inspired by the proposal of integral ecology. We recognize the human damages in our territory, we want to learn from our brothers and sisters of the original peoples, in a dialogue of wisdom, the challenge of giving new answers and looking for models of just and solidary development. We want to take care of our "common home" in the Amazon and here we propose new ways to do so.

### TOWARDS AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY BASED ON THE ENCYCLICAL *LAUDATO SI'*.

#### a. Threats against the Amazon biome and its peoples

66. God has given us the earth as a gift and as a task, to care for it and to answer for it; we do not own it. *Integral ecology* has its foundation in the fact that "everything in the world is connected" (LS 16). For this reason ecology and social justice are intrinsically united (cf. LS 137). With integral ecology a new paradigm of justice emerges, since "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, which must integrate justice into discussions about the environment, to hear both *the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*" (LS 49). Integral ecology thus connects the exercise of care for nature with the exercise of justice for the most impoverished and disadvantaged on earth, who are God's preferred choice in revealed history.
67. It is urgent to face the unlimited exploitation of our "common home" and its inhabitants. One of the main causes of destruction in the Amazon is predatory extractivism that responds to the logic of greed, typical of the dominant technocratic paradigm (LS 101). Faced with the pressing situation of the planet and the Amazon, integral ecology is not one more path that the Church can choose for the future in this territory, it is the only possible path, because there is no other viable route for saving the region. The depredation of the territory is accompanied by the shedding of innocent blood and the criminalization of the defenders of the Amazon.
68. The Church is part of an international solidarity that must favour and recognize the central role of the Amazon biome for the equilibrium of the planet's climate. The Church encourages the international community to provide new economic resources for its protection and for the promotion of a model of just and solidary development, with the protagonism and direct participation of local communities and native peoples in all phases from the planning to the implementation, thereby also strengthening the tools already developed by the framework convention on climate change.
69. It is scandalous that leaders and even whole communities are being criminalized merely for claiming their own rights. In all Amazon countries there are laws that recognize human rights, especially those of indigenous peoples. In recent years, the region has undergone complex transformations, where the human rights of communities have been impacted by



norms, public policies and practices favouring the expansion of areas of extracting natural resources and developing of infrastructural mega-projects, which exert pressure on ancestral and indigenous territories. This is accompanied, according to the same report, by grave and widespread impunity throughout regarding human rights violations and obstacles to obtaining justice (IACHR/OAS Report, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Panamazonia, 5, and 188. Sept. 2019).

70. For Christians, the interest and concern for the promotion and respect of human rights, both individual and collective, is not optional. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God the Creator and their dignity is inviolable. That is why the defence and promotion of human rights is not merely a political duty or a social task, but also and above all a requirement of faith. We may not be able to modify immediately the destructive model of extractivist development, but we do need to know and make clear where we stand, whose side we are on, what perspective we assume, how the political and ethical dimension of our word of faith and life are transmitted? For this reason: a) we denounce the violation of human rights and extractive destruction; b) we make our own and support campaigns to disinvest in extractive companies responsible for the socio-ecological damage of the Amazon, starting with our own Church institutions themselves and also in alliance with other churches; c) we call for a radical energy transition and the search for alternatives: "Civilization requires energy, but the use of energy must not destroy civilization!" (Pope Francis, *Address to the participants in the conference "Energy Transition and Care of the Common Home"*, 9 June 2018). We propose to design and develop training programs on the care of our "common home", for pastoral agents and other faithful, open to the whole community, in "an effort to make the population aware" (LS 214).

#### **b. The challenge of new models of fair, solidary and sustainable development**

71. We note that human intervention has lost its "friendly" character and assumed a voracious and predatory attitude that tends to squeeze reality to the exhaustion of all available natural resources. "The technocratic paradigm tends to dominate the economy and politics" (LS 109). This seriously damages life, and to counteract it we must seek alternative economic models, more sustainable, friendly to nature, with solid spiritual support. For this reason, together with the Amazon peoples, we ask States to stop considering the Amazon as an inexhaustible pantry or warehouse (cf. Fr PM). We would like them to develop investment policies that have, as a condition for any intervention, compliance with high social and environmental standards and the fundamental principle of the preservation of the Amazon. For this, it is necessary that organized indigenous peoples and other Amazon communities participate as well as different scientific institutions that are already proposing models of benefitting from keeping the forest standing. The new paradigm of sustainable development must be socially inclusive, combining scientific and traditional knowledge to empower traditional and indigenous communities, mostly women, and make these technologies serve the well-being and protection of forests.
72. It is then a question of discussing the real value that any economic or extractive activity offers, that is to say, the value that it contributes and returns to the land and to society, considering the wealth that it extracts from them and the socio-ecological consequences. Many extractive activities, such as large-scale mining, particularly illegal mining, substantially diminish the value of the Amazon life. Indeed, they uproot the lives of peoples and the common goods of the earth, concentrating economic and political power in the hands of a few. Worse still, many of these destructive projects are carried out in the name of progress, and are supported - or permitted - by local, national and foreign governments.
73. Together with the Amazon's peoples (cf. LS 183) and their horizon of 'good living', we are called to an individual and communal ecological conversion that safeguards an integral



ecology and a model of development in which commercial criteria are not above environmental and human rights criteria. We want to support a culture of peace and respect - not violence and violation - and a person-centered economy that also cares for nature. Therefore, we propose to generate alternatives of integral ecological development from the cosmovisions that are built with the communities, restoring the ancestral wisdom. We support projects that propose a solidary and sustainable economy, circular and ecological, both locally and internationally, at the level of research and in the field of action, in the formal and informal sectors. Along these lines, it would be useful to support and promote initiatives and cooperatives of bio-production, forest reserves and sustainable consumption. The future of the Amazon is in the hands of us all, but it depends mainly on our immediately abandoning the current model that is destroying the forest, not bringing well-being and endangering this immense natural treasure and its guardians.

## **A CHURCH THAT CARES FOR OUR "COMMON HOME" IN THE AMAZON**

### **a. The socio-environmental dimension of evangelization**

74. It is incumbent upon all of us to be guardians of God's work. The protagonists of the care, protection and defence of the rights of peoples and the rights of nature in this region are the Amazon communities themselves. They are the agents of their own destiny, of their own mission. In this scenario, the role of the Church is to be an ally. They have clearly stated that they want the Church to accompany them, to walk with them, and not to impose on them a particular way of being, a specific form of development that has little to do with their cultures, traditions and spiritualities. They know how to take care of the Amazon, how to love and protect it; what they need is for the Church to support them.
75. The role of the Church is to strengthen that capacity for support and participation. In this way we promote a formation that takes the ethical and spiritual quality of people's life into account from an integral vision. The Church must give priority attention to communities affected by socio-environmental damage. Continuing with the Latin American Church tradition: figures such as San José de Anchieta, Bartolomé de las Casas, the Paraguayan martyrs who died in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) Roque González, San Alfonso Rodríguez and San Juan del Castillo, among others, taught us that the defence of the first peoples of this continent is intrinsically linked to faith in Jesus Christ and his good news. Today we must form pastoral agents and ordained ministers who show socio-environmental care. We want a Church that sails up river and makes her about way through the Amazon, promoting a lifestyle in harmony with the territory, and at the same time, with the 'good living' of those who live there.
76. The Church recognizes the wisdom of the Amazon peoples about biodiversity, a traditional wisdom that is a living process always underway. The theft of this knowledge is biopiracy, a form of violence against these populations. The Church must help them to preserve and maintain this knowledge and the innovations and practices of the local populations, respecting the sovereignty of countries and their laws regulating access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. As far as possible, it should help these populations to ensure that the benefits of using this knowledge, innovations and practices are shared in a model of sustainable and inclusive development.
77. There is an urgent need to develop energy policies that drastically reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other gases related to climate change. New clean energies will help promote health. All companies should establish ways of monitoring their supply chains to ensure that the products they buy, create or sell are produced in a socially and

environmentally sustainable manner. Furthermore, "access to safe drinking water is a basic, fundamental and universal human right, because it determines the survival of people, and is therefore a condition for the exercise of other human rights". (LS 30). This right is recognized by the United Nations (2010). We need to work together so that the fundamental right of access to clean water is respected throughout the territory.

78. The Church chooses to defend life, the land and the native Amazon cultures. This includes accompanying the Amazon peoples in the registration, processing and dissemination of data and information about their territories and their legal status. We want to prioritize advocacy and accompaniment to achieve land demarcation, especially that of the PIACI (Spanish-speaking America) or PIAV (Portuguese-speaking America). We encourage States to comply with their constitutional obligations on these issues, including the right of access to water.
79. Catholic Social Teaching, which has dealt with the ecological issue for a long time, is today enriched with a more comprehensive view of the relationship between the Amazon peoples and their territories, always in dialogue with their ancestral knowledge and wisdom. For example, recognizing the way in which indigenous peoples relate to and protect their territories is an indispensable measure for our conversion to an integral ecology. In this light we want to create ministries for the care of our "common home" in the Amazon, whose function is to take care of the territory and its waters together with the indigenous communities, and a ministry of welcome for those who are displaced from their territories towards the cities.

#### **b. A poor Church with and for the poor from the vulnerable peripheries**

80. We reaffirm our commitment to defend life seamlessly from conception to natural death and the dignity of each and every person. The Church has been and is at the side of the indigenous communities to safeguard the right to have their own tranquil life, respecting the values of their traditions, customs and cultures, the preservation of rivers and forests which are sacred spaces, sources of life and wisdom. We support the efforts of so many who courageously defend life in all its forms and stages. Our pastoral service constitutes a service to the full life of indigenous peoples and this obliges us to proclaim Jesus Christ and the Good News of the Kingdom of God, to curb situations of sin, structures of death, violence and injustice internal and external, and to promote intercultural, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue.

### **NEW PATHS FOR PROMOTING INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

#### **a. Prophetic questioning and a message of hope for the whole Church and for the whole world**

81. The defence of the life of the Amazon and its peoples requires a deep personal, social and structural conversion. The Church is included in this call to unlearn, learn and relearn, in order to overcome any tendency toward colonizing models that have caused harm in the past. In this sense it is important for us to be aware of the power of neo-colonialism which is present in our daily decisions and the predominant model of development that is expressed in the growing model of monocrop agriculture, our forms of transport and the illusions of consumerism that we live in society and that have direct and indirect implications in the Amazon. Faced with this and taking a global point of view, and also listening to the voices of our sister churches, we want to embrace a spirituality of integral ecology, in order to promote the care of creation. To achieve this, we must be a much more participatory and inclusive community of missionary disciples.



82. We propose to define ecological sins of commission or omission against God, against one's neighbour, the community and the environment. They are sins against future generations and are manifest in acts and habits of pollution and destruction of the harmony of the environment, transgressions against the principles of interdependence and the ripping of networks of solidarity among creatures (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 340-344) and against the virtue of justice. We also propose to create special ministries for the care of our "common home" and the promotion of integral ecology at the parish level and in each ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Their functions include, among others, the care of the territory and of the waters, as well as the promotion of the encyclical *Laudato si'*, taking up its pastoral, educational and advocacy program in Chapters V and VI at all levels and structures of the Church.
83. As a way of repaying the ecological debt that countries have with the Amazon, we propose the creation of a world fund to cover part of the budgets of the communities present in the Amazon which promote their integral and self-sustaining development and to also protect them from the predatory compulsion to extract their natural resources by national and multinational companies.
84. To adopt responsible habits that respect and value the peoples of the Amazon, their traditions and wisdom, protecting the earth and changing our culture of excessive consumption, the production of solid waste, stimulating reuse and recycling. We must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and the use of plastics changes our eating habits (excess consumption of meat and fish/seafood) and adopt a more modest lifestyle. Actively engage in the planting of trees, seek sustainable alternatives in agriculture, energy and transportation, that respect the rights of nature and of people. Promote education in integral ecology at all levels; promote new economic models and initiatives that promote a sustainable quality of life.

#### **b. An Amazon Socio-Pastoral Office**

85. To create a pastoral socio-environmental and pastoral office to support the struggle in the defence of life. To carry out a diagnosis of the territory and its socio-environmental conflicts in each local and regional Church, in order to be able to take position, to make decisions and defend the rights of the most vulnerable. The Office would work in alliance with CELAM, CLAR, Caritas, REPAM, national Episcopates, local Churches, Catholic Universities, CIDH, other non-ecclesial actors on the continent and representatives of indigenous peoples. We also ask that in the Dicastery for promoting Integral Human Development set up an Amazon office to relate with this Office and other local Amazon institutions.



## CHAPTER V

### NEW WAYS OF SYNODAL CONVERSION

*"I in them, and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one" (Jn 17:23).*

86. To walk together the Church needs a Synodal conversion, synodality of the People of God under the guidance of the Spirit in the Amazon. Going towards this horizon of communion and participation we seek new ecclesial paths, especially in the area of ministry and sacramental life of the Church with an Amazonian face. Consecrated life, the laity and especially women, will always be the real protagonists who call us to this conversion.

#### MISSIONARY SYNODALITY IN THE AMAZON CHURCH

##### a. The missionary synodality of all the People of God under the guidance of the Spirit

87. "Synod" is an ancient word venerated by Tradition; it indicates the way that the members of God's people walk together; it refers to the Lord Jesus, who presents himself as "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6), and to the fact that Christians, the followers of Jesus, were called "the disciples of the way" (Acts 9:2); to be synodal is to join together in "the way of the Lord" (Acts 18:25). Synodality is the way of being of the early Church (cf. Acts 15) and it must be ours. "The parts of the body are many, but the body is one; however many the parts may be, they all form one body. So also Christ" (1 Cor 12:12). Synodality also characterizes the Church of Vatican II, understood as the People of God, equality sharing different ministries, charisms and services. It "indicates the specific way of living and acting (*modus vivendi et operandi*) of the Church, the People of God, who express and become "communion", on the same journey gathered in assembly and in the active participation of all its members in proclaiming the Gospel" (...) in the "co-responsibility and participation of all the people of God in the life and mission of the Church" (CTI, Synodality..., n. 6-7).
88. To walk together, the Church today needs a conversion to the synodal experience. It needs to strengthen a culture of dialogue, reciprocal listening, spiritual discernment, consensus and communion in order to find areas and ways of joint decision making and response to pastoral challenges. In this way, co-responsibility in the life of the Church will be fostered in a spirit of service. We need to go forward to make proposals and take on responsibilities to overcome clericalism and arbitrary impositions. Synodality is a constitutive dimension of the Church. We cannot be Church without recognizing a real practice of the *sensus fidei* of all the People of God.

##### b. Spirituality of synodal communion under the guidance of the Spirit

89. The Church lives in communion with the Body of Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The so-called "Apostolic Council of Jerusalem" (cf. Acts 15; Gal 2:1-10) is a synodal event in which the Apostolic Church, at a decisive moment on her journey, lives out her vocation in the light of the presence of the Risen Lord to do mission. This event became the paradigmatic figure of the Synods of the Church and its synodal vocation. The decision taken by the Apostles, joined by the whole community of Jerusalem, was the work of the Holy Spirit who guides the way of the Church, ensuring her fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Acts 15:28). The whole assembly has received the decision and made it its own (Acts 15:22); then the community of Antioch did

the same (Acts 15:30-31). To be truly "synodal" is to advance in harmony under the impulse of the life-giving Spirit.

90. The Church in the Amazon is called to walk in the practice of discernment, which is at the centre of synodal processes and events. It is a question of determining and following as the Church, through the theological interpretation of the signs of the times, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the path to follow in the service of God's plan. Community discernment makes it possible to discover a call that God makes clear in each particular historical situation. This Assembly is a time of grace for reciprocal listening, sincere dialogue and community discernment for the common good of the People of God in the Amazon Region, and then, to implement decisions, to continue walking under the impulse of the Holy Spirit in small communities, parishes, dioceses, vicariates, the "prelacias", of the whole region.

### c. Towards a synodal style of living and working in the Amazon region

91. With evangelical daring, we wish to implement new ways for the life of the Church and its service to an integral ecology in the Amazon. Synodality marks a style of living in communion and participation in local churches that are characterized by respect for the dignity and equality of all the baptized, with the gifts, charisms, and ministries, the joy of gathering in assemblies to discern together the voice of the Spirit. This Synod gives us the opportunity to reflect on how to structure the local churches in each region and country, and to move forward in a synodal conversion that points to common paths in evangelization. The logic of the incarnation teaches that God, in Christ, is linked to human beings who belong to "cultures proper to peoples" (AG 9) and the Church, the People of God present among peoples, has the beauty of a pluriform face rooted in many different cultures (EG 116). This happens in the life and mission of the local churches located in each "great socio-cultural territory" (GA 22).
92. A Church with an Amazonian face needs its communities to be infused with a synodal spirit, supported by organizational structures of this dynamic, as authentic organisms of "communion". The forms of the exercise of synodality are varied, they should be decentralized at the various levels (diocesan, regional, national, universal), respectful and attentive to local processes, without weakening the bond with the other sister Churches and with the universal Church. They establish a synchrony between communion and participation, between co-responsibility and the ministries of all, paying special attention to the effective participation of the laity in discernment and decision making, strengthening the participation of women.

## NEW WAYS FOR ECCLESIAL MINISTERIALITY

### a. Church ministry and new ministries

93. The renewal of the Second Vatican Council places the laity at the heart of the People of God, in a total ministerial Church, which in the sacrament of baptism the basis of the identity and mission of every Christian. "These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world." (LG 31). From this threefold relationship, with Christ, the Church and the world, is born the vocation and mission of the laity. The Church in the Amazon, in view of a society of justice and solidarity in the care of our "common home", wants to make the laity privileged actors.



Their action has been and is vital, whether in the coordination of ecclesial communities, in the exercise of ministries, as well as in the prophetic commitment in a world inclusive of all, which has in its martyrs a witness that challenges us.

94. As an expression of the co-responsibility of all the baptized in the Church and of the exercise of the *sensus fidei* of all the People of God, the assemblies and pastoral councils in all ecclesial spheres, as well as the coordination teams of the different pastoral services and the ministries entrusted to the laity came into being. We recognize the need to strengthen and broaden the spaces for the participation of the laity, whether in consultation or decision-making, in the life and mission of the Church.
95. Although mission in the world is the task of every baptized person, the Second Vatican Council emphasized the mission of the laity: "the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one." (GS 39). It is urgent for the Church in the Amazon to promote and confer ministries for men and women in an equitable manner. The fabric of the local church in the Amazon, is guaranteed by small ecclesial missionary communities that cultivate faith, listen to the Word and celebrate together the life of the people. It is the Church of baptized men and women that we must consolidate by promoting ministries and, above all, an awareness of baptismal dignity.
96. In addition, the Bishop may entrust, for a specific period of time, in the absence of priests, the exercise of pastoral care of the communities to a person not invested with the priestly character, who is a member of the community. Personalisms should be avoided and therefore it will be a rotating position. The Bishop may constitute this ministry on behalf of the Christian community with an official mandate through a ritual act so that the person responsible for the community is also recognized at the civil and local levels. The priest, with the power and faculty of the parish priest, is always responsible for the community.

#### **b. Consecrated life**

97. The Gospel text - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to announce the Good News to the poor" (Lk 4:18) - expresses a conviction that animates the mission of consecrated life in the Amazon, sent to proclaim the Good News to the indigenous peoples, especially the most vulnerable and distant, through a dialogue and proclamation that creates a profound knowledge of spirituality. Consecrated life with inter-congregational and inter-institutional experiences can remain in communities, where no one wants to be and with whom no one wants to be, learning and respecting indigenous culture and languages in order to reach the heart of peoples.
98. The mission, which at the same time contributes to edifying and consolidating the Church, strengthens and renews the consecrated life and calls it to a better expression of its original inspiration. In this way their witness will be prophetic and a source of new religious vocations. We propose a consecrated life with an Amazonian identity, strengthening indigenous vocations. We support the insertion and itinerancy of consecrated persons, for the most impoverished and excluded. The formation processes must include an intercultural approach, inculturation and dialogues between Amazonian spiritualities and worldviews.

#### **c. A special time for woman**

99. The Church in the Amazon wants to "create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church." (EG 103). "Let us not reduce the commitment of women in

the Church, but rather promote their active participation in the ecclesial community. If the Church loses women in their full and real dimension, the Church will be exposed to sterility" (Pope Francis, *Meeting with the Brazilian Episcopate*, Rio de Janeiro, July 27, 2013).

100. The Magisterium of the Church since the Second Vatican Council has highlighted the central place that women occupy within the Church: "The hour has come, the hour in which the vocation of women is fulfilled in fullness, the hour in which women acquire in the world an influence, a weight, a power never reached until now. Therefore, at this moment when humanity is undergoing such a profound mutation, women filled with the spirit of the Gospel can help so much that humanity does not decline" (Paul VI, 1965; *AAS* 58, 1966, 13-14).
101. The ancestral wisdom of the peoples affirms that mother earth has a feminine face. In the indigenous and western world, women are those who work in multiple facets, in the instruction of children, in the transmission of faith and the Gospel, they are a witness and responsible commitment in human promotion, so that the voice of women can be heard, they are consulted and participate in decision-making and, in this way, can contribute with their sensitivity to ecclesial synodality. We value "the role of women, recognizing their fundamental role in the formation and continuity of cultures, in spirituality, in communities and families. It is necessary for the Church to assume with greater strength their leadership within the Church, and for the Church to recognize and promote it by strengthening their participation in the pastoral councils of parishes and dioceses, or even in instances of government.
102. Faced with the reality suffered by women who are victims of physical, moral and religious violence, including feminicide, the Church commits to defence of their rights and recognises them as protagonists and guardians of creation and of our "common home". We recognize the ministry that Jesus reserved for women. It is necessary to promote the formation of women in biblical theology, systematic theology, canon law, valuing their presence in organizations and leadership within and outside the ecclesial environment. We want to strengthen family ties, especially for migrant women. We secure your place in leadership and formation. In the new contexts of evangelization and pastoral ministry in the Amazon, where the majority of Catholic communities are led by women, we ask for the institution of ministry for "woman leadership of the community" be created and recognized within the service of the changing demands of evangelization and community care.
103. In the many consultations carried out in the Amazon, the fundamental role of religious and lay women in the Church of the Amazon and its communities was recognized and emphasized, given the multiple services they provide. In a large number of these consultations, the permanent diaconate for women was requested. For this reason the theme was important during the Synod. Already in 2016, Pope Francis had created a "Study Commission on the Diaconate of Women" which, as a Commission, arrived at a partial result based on what the reality of the diaconate of women was like in the early centuries of the Church and its implications for today. We would therefore like to share our experiences and reflections with the Commission and await its results.

#### **d. Permanent Diaconate**

104. For the Amazon Church, the promotion, formation and support of permanent deacons is urgent because of the importance of this ministry for the community. In a particular way,



because of the needs of ecclesial service required by many communities, especially indigenous peoples. The specific pastoral needs of the Amazonian Christian communities lead us to a broader understanding of the diaconate, a service that has existed since the beginning of the Church, and restored as an autonomous and permanent grade by the Second Vatican Council (*LG 29, AG 16, SO 17*). Today's diaconate must also promote integral ecology, human development, social pastoral work, service to those in situations of vulnerability and poverty, configuring it to Christ the Servant, becoming merciful, Samaritan, compassionate and diaconal Church.

105. Priests are to keep in mind that the deacon is at the service of the community by appointment and under the authority of the bishop, and that they have an obligation to support permanent deacons and to act in communion with them. The maintenance of permanent deacons must be borne in mind. This includes the vocation process according to the admission criteria. The candidate's motivations should point to the service and mission of the permanent diaconate in the Church and in today's world. The formative project must be interspersed between academic study and pastoral practice, accompanied by a formation team and the parish community, its contents and itineraries adapted to each local reality. It is desirable that the wife and children would participate in the formation process.
106. The curriculum for the formation of the permanent diaconate, in addition to the mandatory subjects, should include themes that foster ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue, the history of the Church in the Amazon, affective life and sexuality, indigenous worldview, integral ecology, and other cross-cutting themes that are typical of the diaconal ministry. The team of formators shall consist of competent ordained ministers and laypersons who are in line with the approved permanent diaconate directory in each country. We want to encourage, support and personally accompany the vocational process and the formation of future permanent deacons in the river side and indigenous communities, with the participation of pastors, religious men and women. Finally, that there be a follow-up program for ongoing formation (spirituality, theological formation, pastoral matters, church document updates, etc.), under the guidance of the bishop.

#### **e. Itineraries of inculturated formation**

107. "I will give you shepherds according to my heart" (*Jer 3:15*). This promise, which is divine, is valid for all times and contexts; therefore, it is also valid for the Amazon. Destined to configure the priest to Christ, formation for the ordained ministry should be a community school of fraternity, experiential, spiritual, pastoral and doctrinal, in contact with the reality of persons, in harmony with the local culture and religiosity, close to the poor. We need to prepare good pastors who live the Good News of the Kingdom, know the canonical laws, are compassionate, as close to Jesus as possible, whose practice is to do the will of the Father, nourished by the Eucharist and Holy Scripture. That is to say, a more biblical formation in the sense of an assimilation to Jesus as shown in the Gospels: close to people, able to listen, to heal, to console patiently, not demanding but to manifesting the tenderness of his Father's heart.
108. In order to give future priests of the churches in the Amazon a formation with an Amazonian face, inserted and adapted to reality, contextualized and able to respond to the many pastoral and missionary challenges, we propose a formation plan in line with the challenges of the local churches and the reality of the Amazon. It has to include in the academic content disciplines that deal with integral ecology, ecotheology, theology of



creation, Indian theologies, ecological spirituality, and the history of the Church in the Amazon, Amazonian cultural anthropology, and so on. The centres of formation for priestly and consecrated life should be inserted, preferably, in the Amazonian reality, with a view to favouring the contact of the young Amazonian in formation with his own territory, while preparing for his future mission, thus guaranteeing that the process of formation does not distance itself from the vital content of the persons and their culture, as well as offering other young non-Amazonians the opportunity to take part in their formation in the Amazon, thus fostering missionary vocations.

#### **f. The Eucharist, source and summit of synodal communion**

109. According to the Second Vatican Council, participation in the Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian life; it is the symbol of that unity of the Mystical Body; it is the centre and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community. The Eucharist contains all the spiritual good of the Church; it is the source and culmination of all evangelization. Let us echo the phrase of St. John Paul II: "The Church lives by the Eucharist" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 1). The Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship *Redemptoris sacramentum* (2004) insists that the faithful enjoy the right to have the Eucharistic celebration as established in the liturgical books and norms. But it seems strange to speak of the right to celebrate a Eucharist according to what is prescribed, not to mention the most fundamental right of access to the Eucharist for all: "In the Eucharist the fullness has already been realized, and it is the vital centre of the universe, the centre full of love and inexhaustible life. United to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. In fact, the Eucharist is in itself an act of cosmic love" (*LS* 236).
110. There is a right of the community to celebration, which derives from the essence of the Eucharist and its place in the economy of salvation. The sacramental life is the integration of the various dimensions of human life into the Paschal Mystery, which strengthens us. That is why living communities truly cry out for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is, without a doubt, the point of arrival (culmination and consummation) of the community; but it is, at the same time, the point of departure: of encounter, of reconciliation, of learning and catechesis, of community growth.
111. Many of the ecclesial communities of the Amazonian territory have enormous difficulties in accessing the Eucharist. Sometimes it takes not just months but even several years before a priest can return to a community to celebrate the Eucharist, offer the sacrament of reconciliation or anoint the sick in the community. We appreciate celibacy as a gift of God (*Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, 1) to the extent that this gift enables the missionary disciple, ordained to the priesthood, to dedicate himself fully to the service of the Holy People of God. It stimulates pastoral charity and we pray that there will be many vocations living the celibate priesthood. We know that this discipline "is not required by the very nature of the priesthood... although it has many reasons of convenience with it" (*PO* 16). In his encyclical on priestly celibacy, St. Paul VI maintained this law and set out theological, spiritual and pastoral motivations that sustain it. In 1992, the post-synodal exhortation of John Paul II on priestly formation confirmed this tradition in the Latin Church (*PDV* 29). Considering that legitimate diversity does not harm the communion and unity of the Church, but expresses and serves it (*LG* 13; *SO* 6) which testifies to the plurality of existing rites and disciplines, we propose to establish criteria and dispositions on the part of the competent authority, within the framework of *Lumen Gentium* 26, to ordain priests suitable and esteemed men of the community, who have had a fruitful permanent diaconate and receive an adequate



formation for the priesthood, having a legitimately constituted and stable family, to sustain the life of the Christian community through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments in the most remote areas of the Amazon region. In this regard, some were in favour of a more universal approach to the subject.

## **NEW WAYS FOR ECCLESIAL SYNODALITY**

### **a. Regional Synodal Structures in the Amazon Church**

112. Most of the Dioceses, Prelatures and Vicariates of the Amazon have extensive territories, few ordained ministers and scarce financial resources, they have difficulties in sustaining the mission. The "Amazon cost" has serious repercussions on evangelization. Faced with this reality, it is necessary to rethink the way in which local churches are organized, to review the structures of communion at the provincial, regional and national levels, and also from the Pan-Amazonian point of view. Therefore, it is necessary to articulate synodal spaces and generate solidarity support networks. It is urgent to overcome the frontiers that geography imposes and to build bridges that unite. The Aparecida document already insisted that local churches generate forms of interdiocesan association in each nation or between countries in a region and that it foster greater cooperation among sister churches (cf. *DAp* 182). With a view to a local Samaritan Church, we propose: to design the vast geographical areas of the dioceses, vicariates and "prelacias"; to create an Amazonian fund for the support of evangelization; to sensitize and encourage international Catholic cooperation agencies to support evangelization activities beyond social projects.
113. In 2015, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops by St. Paul VI, Pope Francis invited us to renew synodal communion at the various levels of the life of the Church: local, regional and universal. The Church is developing a renewed understanding of synodality on a regional scale. Supported by tradition, the International Theological Commission expresses: "The regional level in the exercise of synodality is that which occurs in regroupings of particular Churches present in the same region: a province - as happened especially in the first centuries of the Church - or a country, a continent or part of it" (Document "Synodality in the life and mission of the Church", Vatican, 2018, 85). The exercise of synodality at this level strengthens spiritual and institutional bonds, fosters the exchange of gifts and helps to project common pastoral criteria. The joint social pastoral work of the dioceses located on the borders of the countries must be strengthened in order to face common problems that go beyond the local level, such as the exploitation of people and territory, drug trafficking, corruption, human trafficking, etc. The migration problem needs to be addressed in a coordinated way by the border churches.

### **b. Universities and new Amazonian synodal structures**

114. We propose that an Amazon Catholic University be established based on interdisciplinary research (including field studies), inculturation and intercultural dialogue; that inculturated theology include joint formation for lay ministries and formation of priests, based primarily on Sacred Scripture. Research, education and extension activities should include environmental study programmes (theoretical knowledge based on the wisdom of the peoples living in the Amazon region) and ethnic studies (description of the different languages, etc.). Teacher training, teaching and production of teaching materials should

respect the customs and traditions of indigenous peoples, developing inculturated teaching materials and carrying out outreach activities in different countries and regions. We ask the Catholic universities of Latin America to help in the creation of the Amazonian Catholic University and to accompany its development.

**c. Postsynodal Regional Ecclesial Organization for the Amazon Region**

115. We propose to create an episcopal organism that promotes synodality among the churches of the region, helps to delineate the Amazonian face of this Church and continues the task of finding new ways for evangelisation, especially incorporating the proposal of integral ecology, thus strengthening the physiognomy of the Amazonian Church. It would be a permanent and representative episcopal organism that promotes synodality in the Amazon region, articulated with CELAM, with its own structure, in a simple organization and also articulated with REPAM. In this way it can be the effective instrument in the territory of the Latin American and Caribbean Church, many of the proposals that emerged in this Synod. It would be the nexus that articulates ecclesial and socio-environmental networks and initiatives at the continental and international levels.

**d. Rite for the indigenous peoples**

116. The Second Vatican Council created possibilities for liturgical pluralism "for variations and legitimate adaptations for diverse groups and peoples" (SC 38). In this sense, the liturgy must respond to culture so that it may be the source and summit of Christian life (cf. SC 10) and so that it may feel linked to the sufferings and joys of the people. We must give an authentically Catholic response to the request of the Amazonian communities to adapt the liturgy by valuing its worldview, traditions, symbols and original rites that include transcendent, community and ecological dimensions.
117. In the Catholic Church there are 23 different Rites, a clear sign of a tradition that from the first centuries has tried to inculturate the contents of the faith and its celebration through a language as coherent as possible with the mystery that is to be expressed. All these traditions have their origin in function of the mission of the Church: "The Churches of the same geographical and cultural scope have come to celebrate the mystery of Christ with particular expressions, characterized culturally: in the tradition of the "deposit of faith", in liturgical symbolism, in the organization of fraternal communion, in the theological understanding of mysteries and in the various forms of holiness" (CCC 1202; cf. also CCC 1200-1206).
118. It is necessary that the Church, in her tireless evangelizing work, work so that the process of inculturation of the faith may be expressed in the most coherent forms, so that it may also be celebrated and lived according to the languages proper to the Amazonian peoples. It is urgent to form committees for the translation and writing of biblical and liturgical texts in the languages of the different places, with the necessary resources, preserving the material of the sacraments and adapting them to the form, without losing sight of what is essential. In this sense it is necessary to encourage music and singing, all of which is accepted and encouraged by the liturgy.
119. The new organism of the Church in the Amazon must constitute a competent commission to study and dialogue, according to the customs and customs of the ancestral peoples, the elaboration of an Amazonian rite that expresses the liturgical, theological, disciplinary and



spiritual patrimony of the Amazon, with special reference to what the *Lumen Gentium* affirms for the Oriental Churches (cf. *LG* 23). This would add to the rites already present in the Church, enriching the work of evangelization, the capacity to express the faith in a proper culture, and the sense of decentralization and collegiality that the catholicity of the Church can express; it could also study and propose how to enrich ecclesial rites with the way in which these peoples care for their territory and relate to its waters.

## CONCLUSION

120. We conclude under the protection of Mary, Mother of the Amazon, venerated with various titles throughout the region. Through her intercession, we ask that this Synod be a concrete expression of synodality, so that the full life that Jesus came to bring into the world (cf. *Jn* 10:10) may reach everyone, especially the poor, and contribute to the care of our "common home". May Mary, Mother of the Amazon, accompany our journey; to St. Joseph, faithful custodian of Mary and her son Jesus, we consecrate our ecclesial presence in the Amazon, a Church with an Amazon face and in missionary departure.