

**THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PAN-AMAZON**



**THE AMAZON:  
NEW PATHS FOR THE CHURCH AND  
FOR INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

***INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS***

***UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION***

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AG	Decree <i>Ad Gentes</i> : On the Mission Activity of the Church, Paul VI, Vatican Council II, 1965.
AL	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Amoris Laetitia</i> , Francis, 2016.
CIMI	Indigenist Missionary Council, National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), Brasil.
CNBB	National Conference of Bishops of Brazil
CV	Encyclical <i>Caritas in veritate</i> , Benedict XVI, 2009.
DAp.	Document of the V GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN BISHOPS (CELAM), Aparecida, Brazil, 2007.
DM	Document of the II GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN BISHOPS (CELAM), Medellín, Colombia, 1968.
Doc. Bolivia	Doc. <i>Bolivia: Informe país: consulta pre-sinodal</i> . Bolivia 2019.
Doc. <i>Eje de Fronteras</i>	Doc. <i>Eje de Fronteras</i> (2019). Preparação ao SÍNODO para a Amazônia. Tabatinga, Brasil, 11 a 13 de fevereiro de 2019
Doc. Manaus	Documento da Assembleia dos Regionais Norte 1 e 2 da CNBB, “A Igreja e faz carne e arma sua tenda na Amazônia”, Manaus, 1997, en: CONFERÊNCIA NACIONAL DOS BISPOS DO BRASIL, <i>Desafio missionário</i> . Documentos da Igreja na Amazônia. Coletânea, Ed. CNBB, Brasília, 2014, pág. 67-84.
Doc. Preparatorio.	Preparatory <i>Document for the Synod on the Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for Integral Ecology</i> , General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, 2018.
Doc. Venezuela	Doc. <i>Venezuela. CEV. Respuestas asambleas</i> (2019).
DP	Document of the III GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN BISHOPS (CELAM), Puebla, Mexico, 1979.
DSD	Document of the IV GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN BISHOPS (CELAM), Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1992.
DV	Dogmatic Constitution <i>Dei Verbum</i> (on divine revelation). Vatican Council II, 1965.
EC	Apostolic Constitution <i>Episcopalis Communio</i> , Francis, 2018.

EG	Apostolic Exhortation <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> , Francis, 2013.
Fr.PM	Address of Pope Francis “Meeting with Indigenous People of Amazonia”. Coliseo Regional Madre de Dios (Puerto Maldonado), 19 January 2018.
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
LS	Encyclical <i>Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home</i> , Francis, 2015.
NMI	Apostolic Letter <i>Novo Millenio Ineunte</i> , John Paul II, 2001.
OA	Apostolic Letter <i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> , Paul VI, 1971.
PIAV	Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation.
RM	Encyclical <i>Redemptoris Missio</i> , John Paul II, 1990.
RP	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Reconciliatio et paenitentia</i> (Reconciliation and Penance), John Paul II, 1984.
SC	Constitution <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium (on the Sacred Liturgy)</i> , Vatican Council II, 1963.
Sint.REPAM	AAVV., “Sistematización de aportes esenciales desde las voces de los actores territoriales” en REPAM, <i>Amazonía: Nuevos Caminos para la Iglesia y para la Ecología Integral. Síntesis general de la red eclesial Panamazónica –REPAM- Asambleas Territoriales, Foros Temáticos, Contribuciones especiales y escuchas sobre el sínodo</i> , Secretaría Ejecutiva de la REPAM, Quito 2019.
SRS	Encyclical <i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> , John Paul II, 1987.
VG	Apostolic Constitution <i>Veritatis Gaudium</i> on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, Francis, 2017.

## INTRODUCTION

*“The Synod of Bishops must increasingly become a privileged instrument for listening to the People of God: For the Synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, that with him we may hear the cry of the people; to listen to the people until breathing in it God’s will to which he calls us”* (EC, 6)

1. On 15 October 2017, Pope Francis announced the convocation of a Special Synod for the Amazon, initiating a process of synodal listening that began in the Amazon Region with his visit to Puerto Maldonado (19/01/2018). This *Working Document* is the fruit of a long process that includes the drafting of the *Preparatory Document for the Synod* in June 2018; and an extensive survey of Amazon communities.<sup>1</sup>
2. Today the Church again has the opportunity to be a listener, and particularly in this region where so much is at stake. Listening implies recognizing the dramatic emergence of the Amazon as a new subject. Having received insufficient consideration in the national or world context or in the life of the Church, this new subject is now a privileged interlocutor.
3. But listening is not easy. On the one hand, synthesising the questionnaire responses of the Episcopal Conferences and the communities will always remain provisional and insufficient. On the other hand, the urgency to validate the contents and proposals must be tempered by a process of ecological and pastoral conversion that lets itself be seriously challenged by the geographical and existential peripheries (cf. EG 20). And this process must continue during and after the Synod as a central element of the future life of the Church. The Amazon cries out for a concrete and reconciling response.
4. The *Working Document* consists of three parts. The first involves seeing-listening and is entitled “The Voice of the Amazon”; its purpose is to present the reality of the territory and its peoples. The second part, “Integral Ecology: the cry of the earth and of the poor”, sets out the ecological and pastoral problems, while the third part, “A Prophetic Church in the Amazon: challenges and hopes”, is devoted to ecclesiological and pastoral issues.
5. Thus a Church called to be ever more synodal begins by listening to the peoples and to the earth by coming into contact with the abundant reality of an Amazon full of life and wisdom but also of contrasts. It continues with the cry that is provoked by destructive deforestation and extractivist activities and that demands an integral ecological conversion. And it concludes with the encounter with cultures that inspires the new paths, challenges and hopes of a Church that, embracing pastoral conversion, desires to be Samaritan and prophetic. Following the proposal of the Pan-Amazon Church Network (REPAM), the document is structured on the basis of three conversions to which Pope Francis invites us: the pastoral conversion to which he calls us in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (see-listen); the ecological conversion which the Encyclical *Laudato si’* urges, setting the course (judge-act); and the conversion to church synodality detailed in the

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to this official process, numerous seminars have been held in Washington D.C., Rome and Bogotá, with experts in different areas and representatives of Amazon peoples, to reflect on the issues analyzed here.

Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*, that guides the walking together (judge-act). All of this occurs within a dynamic process of listening and discerning the new paths whereby the Church in the Amazon will announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the coming years.

## PART I

### THE VOICE OF THE AMAZON

*“It is good that now you are the ones who define yourselves and show us your identity. We need to listen to you” (Fr.PM)*

6. Evangelization in Latin America was a gift of Providence that calls everyone to salvation in Christ. In spite of military, political and cultural colonization, and beyond the ambition and greed of the colonizers, there were many missionaries who gave their lives to pass the Gospel on. This missionary sensibility not only inspired the formation of Christian communities, but also legislation such as the Laws of the Indies that protected the dignity of indigenous peoples against the abuse of their populations and territories. Such abuses wounded the communities and overshadowed the message of the Good News; Christ was often proclaimed in connivance with the powers that exploited the resources and oppressed the populations.
7. Today the Church, in order to exercise its prophetic role with transparency, has the historic opportunity to differentiate itself clearly from the new colonizing powers by listening to the Amazon peoples. The current socio-environmental crisis opens new opportunities to present Christ in all his liberating and humanizing power. This first chapter is structured around four key concepts closely interrelated: life, territory, time and dialogue, where the Church is incarnated with an Amazonian and missionary face.

## CHAPTER I

### LIFE

*"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10)*

#### *The Amazon, source of life*

8. This Synod revolves around *life*: the life of the Amazon territory and its peoples, the life of the Church, the life of the planet. As reflected in the consultations with the Amazon communities, life in the Amazon is identified, among other things, with water. The Amazon River is like an artery of the continent and of the world, it flows like veins for the flora and fauna of the territory, like a spring for its peoples, its cultures and its spiritual expressions. As in Eden (Gn 2:6), water is a source of life, but also a connection between the different manifestations of life, in which everything is connected (cf. LS, 16, 91, 117, 138, 240). "The river does not separate us, it unites us, it helps us to coexist between different cultures and languages."<sup>2</sup>
9. The Amazon River basin and the surrounding tropical forests nourish the soil and regulate, through the recycling of moisture, the cycles of water, energy and carbon at the planetary level. The Amazon River alone sends 15% of the total fresh water of the planet every year into the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>3</sup> The Amazon is essential for the distribution of rainfall in other distant regions of South America and contributes to the great movements of air around the planet. Moreover, it nurtures the nature, life and cultures of thousands of indigenous, peasant, Afro-descendant, river and urban communities. But it should be noted that according to international experts, the Amazon is the second most vulnerable area of the planet, after the Arctic, when it comes to climate change caused by humans.
10. The Amazon territory includes parts of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana. It totals 7.8 million square kilometers in the heart of South America. The Amazon forests cover approximately 5.3 million km<sup>2</sup>, which represents 40% of the global tropical forest area. This is only 3.6% of the land area of the earth, which amounts to some 149 million square kilometers, or about 30% of the surface of our planet. The Amazon territory contains one of the geologically richest and most complex biospheres on the planet. Its generous natural abundance of water, heat and humidity means that the ecosystems of the Amazon host around 10% to 15% of the terrestrial biodiversity and store between 150 and 200 billion tons of carbon each year.

#### *Life in abundance*

11. Jesus offers life to the full (cf Jn 10:10), a life full of God, a salvific life (*zōē*), which begins with creation and manifests itself from the start in the most elementary dimension of life (*bios*). In the Amazon, it is reflected in its abundant bio-diversity and cultures. That is to say, a full and integral life, a life that sings, a song to life, like the songs of rivers. It is

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<sup>2</sup> Doc. *Eje de Fronteras*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Nobre, C. A., Sampaio, G., Borma, L. S., Castilla-Rubio, J. C., Silva, J. S., Cardoso, M., et al., "The Fate of the Amazon Forests: land-use and climate change risks and the need of a novel sustainable development paradigm". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U.S.A.*, 113(39), September 2016.

a life that dances and that represents divinity and our relationship with it. "Our pastoral service," as the Bishops affirmed in Aparecida, is a service "to the full life of the indigenous peoples [that] demands to announce Jesus Christ and the Good News of the Kingdom of God, to denounce situations of sin, structures of death, violence and internal and external injustices, to foster intercultural, interreligious and ecumenical dialogue" (DA 95). Such announcing and denouncing we discern in the light of Jesus Christ the Living One (Rev 1:18), "the fullness of all revelation" (DV 2).

### "Good living" (*buen vivir*)

12. The quest of the indigenous Amazon peoples for life in abundance finds expression in what they call "good living" (*buen vivir*).<sup>4</sup> It is about living in "harmony with oneself, with nature, with human beings and with the supreme being, since there is an inter-communication between the whole cosmos, where there is neither excluding nor excluded, and that among all of us we can forge a project of full life."<sup>5</sup>
13. Such an understanding of life is characterized by the connectivity and harmony of relationships between water, territory and nature, community life and culture, God and the various spiritual forces. "Good living" means understanding the centrality of the relational-transcendent character of human beings and of creation, and includes "good doing" or good actions. The material and spiritual dimensions cannot be disconnected. This integral mode expresses itself in a distinctive manner of self-organization, which starts from the family and community, and embraces a responsible use of all the goods of creation. Some speak of walking towards the "land without evils" or in search of "the holy hill", images that reflect their communal movement and notion of existence.

### *Life threatened*

14. But life in the Amazon is threatened by environmental destruction and exploitation and by the systematic violation of the basic human rights of the Amazon population. In particular, the violation of the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the right to territory, to self-determination, to the demarcation of territories, and to prior consultation and consent. According to the communities participating in this synodal listening, the threat to life comes from economic and political interests of the dominant sectors of today's society, especially resource-extractive companies, often in collusion with or tolerated by local and national governments as well as traditional indigenous leaders. As Pope Francis affirms, those who pursue such interests seem to be disconnected from or indifferent to the cries of the poor and the earth (cf. LS 49, 91).
15. The numerous consultations held throughout the Amazon show that the communities consider that life in the Amazon is especially threatened by: (a) criminalization and assassination of leaders and defenders of the territory; (b) appropriation and privatization

<sup>4</sup> There are various expressions for this in their languages, such as *Sumak Kawsay* in Quechua, or *Suma Qamaña* in Aymara, or *Teko Porã* in Guaraní. In African philosophy, the word *ubuntu* means something comparable to *sumak kawsay quechua*: generosity, solidarity, compassion for those in need, and the sincere desire for happiness and harmony among all.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. "The cry of *sumak kawsay* in the Amazon," Declaration of the indigenous peoples and nationalities of the Mesoamerican, Andean, Caribbean, Southern Cone and Amazon regions, gathered in the city of Pujili-Cotopaxi with the aim of deepening the true sense of *sumak kawsay*, in: home-page of the Vicariate of Aguarico; Acosta, Alberto (2008). *Good living, an opportunity to build*, Ecuador Debate: Quito; cf. "Sumak Kawsa, Suma Qamaña, Teko Porã. O Bem-Viver" (Year X, n. 340, 23.08.2010), in: IHUOnlineEdicao 340.pdf

of natural goods, such as water itself; (c) both legal logging concessions and illegal logging; (d) predatory hunting and fishing, mainly in rivers; (e) mega-projects: hydroelectric and forest concessions, logging for monoculture production, construction of roads and railways, or mining and oil projects; (f) pollution caused by the entire extractive industry that causes problems and diseases, especially among children and young people; (g) drug trafficking; (h) the resulting social problems associated with these threats such as alcoholism, violence against women, sex work, human trafficking, loss of original culture and identity (language, spiritual practices and customs), and all conditions of poverty to which the peoples of the Amazon are condemned (cf. Fr.PM).

16. At present, climate change and the increase in human intervention (deforestation, fires and changes in land use) are driving the Amazon towards a point of no return, with high rates of deforestation, forced displacement of the population, and pollution. They are putting its ecosystems at risk and exerting pressure on local cultures. Thresholds of 4°C of warming or 40% deforestation are “tipping points” of the Amazon biome towards desertification, which means a transition to a new biological state that is generally irreversible. And it is worrying that today deforestation has already reached between 15 and 20%.

#### *Defending life, confronting exploitation*

17. The communities consulted have also emphasized the link between the threat to biological life and to spiritual life, that is, a comprehensive integral threat. The multi-faceted destruction of the Amazon basin produces imbalance: imbalance of local and global territory, imbalance in the seasons, imbalance in the climate. This affects, among other things, the dynamics of fertility and reproduction of fauna and flora, distressing all Amazon communities. For example, natural destruction and pollution affect food production, access and quality. So caring responsibly for life and “good living” is tied in with urgently confronting threats, aggressions and indifference in this domain. The care for life is opposed to the throwaway culture, to the culture of exploitation, oppression and lying. At the same time, it means opposing an insatiable vision of unlimited growth, of the idolatry of money, of a world disconnected from its roots and environment, of a culture of death. In short, the defence of life implies the defence of the territory and its resources or natural goods; it also implies defending the life and culture of its peoples, strengthening their organisations, the full enforceability of their rights, and the possibility of being heard. In the words of the indigenous people themselves: “We, the indigenous people of Guaviare (Colombia), are part of nature because we are water, air, earth and life of the environment created by God. Therefore, we ask that the mistreatment and extermination of ‘Mother Earth’ cease. The earth has blood and is bleeding, the multinationals have cut the veins of our ‘Mother Earth’. We want our indigenous cry to be heard by the whole world.”<sup>6</sup>

#### *Crying out for life*

18. Aggression and threats against life generate cries, both from the people and from the earth. Starting from this clamour as a theological topic (a *locus* where to think the faith), one can initiate paths of conversion, communion and dialogue, paths of the Spirit, of abundance and “good living”. The image of life and “good living” as “a way to the holy hill” implies a communion with fellow-pilgrims and with nature as a whole, that is, a pathway of integration with the abundance of life, with history and with the future. These new paths

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<sup>6</sup> Diocese of San José del Guaviare and Archdiocese of Villavicencio and Granada (Colombia, Brazil frontier, Colombia and Peru).

are necessary because, from a pastoral perspective, the great geographic distances and the abundant cultural diversity of the Amazon have not yet been pastorally addressed. The new paths are based “on intercultural relations where diversity does not mean threat, does not justify hierarchies of power of one over others, but dialogue from different cultural visions, of celebration, of interrelation and of revival of hope” (DAp 97).

## CHAPTER II

### TERRITORY

*“Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place you step on is sacred” (Ex 3:5)*

#### *Territory, life and God’s revelation*

19. In the Amazon, life is inserted into, linked with and integrated in territory. This vital and nourishing physical space provides the possibility, sustenance and limit of life. Furthermore, we can say that the Amazon – or another indigenous or communal territory – is not only an *ubi* or a *where* (a geographical space), but also a *quid* or a *what*, a place of meaning for faith or the experience of God in history. Thus territory is a theological place where faith is lived, and also a particular source of God’s revelation: epiphanic places where the reserve of life and wisdom for the planet is manifest, a life and wisdom that speaks of God. In the Amazon, the “caresses of God” become manifest and become incarnate in history (cf. LS 84, “Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God”).

#### *A territory in which everything is connected*

20. A contemplative, attentive and respectful look at their brothers and sisters, and also at nature – the brother tree, the sister flower, the sisters birds, the brothers fish, and even the smallest sisters like ants, larvae, fungi or insects (cf. LS 233) – allows the Amazonian communities to discover how everything is connected, to value each creature, to see the mystery of God’s beauty revealed in all of them (cf. LS 84, 88), and to live together amicably.
21. No parts of the Amazon territory can subsist on their own. The parts are not just externally related, rather they are dimensions that constitutively exist in relation, forming a vital whole. Hence, the Amazon territory offers a vital teaching for an integral understanding of our relationships with others, with nature, and with God, as Pope Francis puts it (cf. LS 66).

#### *The beauty of and threat to the territory*

22. When we contemplate the beauty of the Amazon territory, we discover a masterpiece of the creation of the God of Life. Its endless horizons of boundless beauty are a song, a hymn to the Creator. “Lord, my God, how great you are! Clothed in majesty and splendor, wrapped in a mantle of light” (Ps 104 (3),1-2). Its manifold expression of life is a mosaic of God who gives us a “free inheritance that we receive to protect [...] the precious space of human coexistence” and shared responsibility “for the good of all” (DAP. 471). Pope Francis’s invitation in Puerto Maldonado to defend this threatened region, to preserve it and restore it for the good of all, gives us hope in our abilities to build the common good and our common home.
23. Today the Amazon is wounded, its beauty deformed, a place of pain and violence, as the reports of the local Churches eloquently point out: “The jungle is not a resource to exploit,

it is a being or various beings with whom to relate.”<sup>7</sup> “We are hurt by the destruction of nature, the destruction of the rainforest, of life, our children and future generations.”<sup>8</sup> The manifold destruction of human and environmental life, the diseases and pollution of rivers and lands, the felling and burning of trees, the massive loss of biodiversity, the disappearance of species (more than one million of the eight million animals and plants are at risk),<sup>9</sup> constitute a brutal reality that challenges us all. Violence, chaos and corruption are rampant. The territory has become a space of discord and of extermination of peoples, cultures and generations. Those who are forced to leave their land often fall into the traps of mafias, drug and human trafficking (mostly women), child labour and child prostitution.<sup>10</sup> This tragic and complex reality is well outside the limits of law and human rights. The Amazon’s cry of pain echoes the cry of the people enslaved in Egypt whom God does not abandon: “I have seen the oppression of my people in Egypt, I have heard the clamour of their oppressors and I know their anguish! I will go down to deliver him from the power of the Egyptians” (Ex. 3:7-8)

### *Territory of hope and of “good living”*

24. The Amazon is where there’s the possibility of “good living”, and the promise and hope of new paths for life. Life in the Amazon is integrated and united with the territory; there is no separation or division between the parts. This unity includes all of existence: work, rest, human relationships, rites and celebrations. Everything is shared; private spaces, so typical of modernity, are minimal. Life proceeds on a communal path where tasks and responsibilities are distributed and shared for the sake of the common good. There is no place for the idea of an individual detached from the community or its territory.
25. The life of Amazon communities not yet influenced by Western civilization is reflected in the beliefs and rites regarding the actions of spirits, of the many-named divinity acting with and in the territory, with and in relation to nature. This worldview is captured in the ‘mantra’ of Francis: “everything is connected” (LS 16, 91, 117, 138, 240).
26. The integration of creation, of life considered as a totality that embraces all of existence, is the basis of traditional culture that is transmitted from generation to generation through listening to ancestral wisdom – a living reserve of indigenous spirituality and culture. This wisdom inspires care and respect for creation, clearly aware of its limits and prohibiting its abuse. To abuse nature is to abuse the ancestors, the brothers and sisters, creation and the Creator. To abuse all these is to mortgage the future.
27. The Amazon cosmovision and the Christian worldview are both in crisis due to the imposition of mercantilism, secularization, the throwaway culture and the idolatry of money (cf. EG 54-55). This crisis especially affects young people and the urban contexts that lose their solid roots of tradition.

<sup>7</sup> Bolivia, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Venezuela, 1.

<sup>9</sup> IPBES, Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’ Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’; [https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment#\\_Indigenous\\_Peoples\\_Local](https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment#_Indigenous_Peoples_Local)

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. III of this document: *Migration*

## CHAPTER III

### TIME (KAIROS)

*“In a time of favour I answer you; and on the day of salvation I helped you” (Is 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2)*

#### *A time of grace*

28. The Amazon is living a moment of grace, a *kairós*. The Synod of the Amazon is a sign of the times when the Holy Spirit opens new paths that we discern through a mutual dialogue among all the people of God. The dialogue began some time ago, from the poorest, beginning from the bottom upwards, assuming that “every process of construction is slow and difficult. It includes the challenge of breaking open the space itself and opening oneself up to working together, to living the culture of encounter, [...] to building a sister church.”<sup>11</sup>
29. The original peoples of the Amazon have much to teach us. We recognize that for thousands of years they have taken care of their land, water and forest, and have managed to preserve them until today so that humanity can benefit from enjoying God’s free gifts of creation. The new paths of evangelization must be built in dialogue with the ancestral wisdom in which the seeds of the Word become manifest.

#### *A time of inculturation and interculturality*

30. The Church in the Amazon has marked its presence in the region with noteworthy experiences and in ways that are original, creative and inculturated. Its style of evangelization is not merely a strategic response to current realities; rather, it embraces a path that responds to the *kairós* that impels the people of God to welcome his Kingdom amidst their bio-socio-diversities. The Church became flesh by making her dwelling – her “tapiri” or thatched-roof shelter – in the Amazon.<sup>12</sup> This aligns with a journey that began with the Second Vatican Council for the whole Church; has been recognized in the Latin American Magisterium since Medellín (1968); and was explicitly assumed for the Amazon in Santarém (1972).<sup>13</sup> Since then the Church continues to seek to inculturate the Good News in the face of the challenges of the territory and of its peoples, in intercultural dialogue with them. The unique diversity of the Amazon region – biological, religious and cultural – suggests a new Pentecost.

#### *A time of serious and urgent challenges*

31. Accelerating urbanization and expanding agriculture carried out by agribusinesses plus the abuse of natural assets by the Amazon peoples themselves: these all add to the major grievances mentioned earlier. The exploitation of nature and of the Amazon peoples

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<sup>11</sup> Doc. Eje Fronteras, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Document of the Assembleia dos Regionais Norte 1 e 2 da CNBB, “A Igreja e faz carne e arma sua tenda na Amazônia”, Manaus, 1997, en: CONFERÊNCIA NACIONAL DOS BISPOS DO BRASIL, *Desafio missionário. Documentos da Igreja na Amazônia*. Coletânea, Ed. CNBB, Brasília, 2014, 67-84.

<sup>13</sup> Santarém (1972) and Manaus (1997) are located in CNBB (2014). *Desafio missionário. Documentos da Igreja na Amazônia*. Coletânea, Ed. CNBB, Brasília, 9-28 and 67-84.

(indigenous, mestizos, rubber tappers, river people and even city dwellers) provokes a crisis of hope.

32. The migrations of recent years have also increased religious and cultural changes in the region. Faced with rapid processes of transformation, the Church has ceased to be the only point of reference for people's decisions. Moreover, the new life in the city is not always kind to dreams and aspirations, but often disorients and opens spaces for short-lived, disconnected, alienating and meaningless messianisms.

#### *A time of hope*

33. Contrasting with this reality, the Synod of the Amazon thus becomes a sign of hope for the Amazon people and for all of humanity. It is a great opportunity for the Church to discover the incarnate and active presence of God: in the most diverse manifestations of creation; in the spirituality of original peoples; in the expressions of popular religiosity; in the different popular organizations that resist the mega-projects; and in the proposal of an economy of solidarity, productive and sustainable, that respects nature. In recent years, the mission of the Church has been carried out in partnership with the aspirations and struggles for life and respect for nature of the Amazon peoples and their own organizations.
34. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church, identified with this history of the cross and resurrection, wants to learn, dialogue and respond with hope and joy to the signs of the times together with the peoples of the Amazon. We hope that such learning, dialogue and co-responsibility can also extend to all corners of the planet that aspire to the integral fullness of life in all senses. We believe that this *kairós* of the Amazon, as God's time, convokes and provokes, and is a time of grace and liberation, of memory and conversion, of challenges and hope.

## CHAPTER IV

### DIALOGUE

*“They have eyes and they do not see, they have ears and they do not hear” (Mk 8:18)*

#### *New paths of dialogue*

35. Pope Francis puts to us the need to gaze anew so as to open avenues of dialogue that will help us escape the self-destructive path of the present socio-environmental crisis.<sup>14</sup> Referring to the Amazon, the Pope considers that it is “essential to carry out ... an intercultural dialogue in which [the indigenous peoples] are the main interlocutors, especially when it comes to making progress in large projects that affect their areas. Recognition and dialogue will be the best way to transform historical relationships marked by exclusion and discrimination” (Fr.PM). This local dialogue in which the Church wants to be involved is at the service of life and of the “future of the planet” (LS 14).

#### *Dialogue and mission*

36. Since the Amazon is a pluri-ethnic, pluri-cultural and pluri-religious world (cf. DAp 86), communication, and therefore evangelization, requires ways of encountering and living together that foster dialogue. The opposite of dialogue is the lack of listening and the imposition that prevent us from meeting, communicating and, therefore, living together. Jesus was a person of dialogue and encounter. So we see him “with the Samaritan woman, at the well where he sought to quench his thirst (cf. Jn 4: 7-26)” (EG 72); “as soon as she left her dialogue with Jesus,” the Samaritan woman returned to her village, “she became a missionary, and many Samaritans believed in Jesus ‘by the word of the woman’ (Jn 4:39)” (EG 120). Jesus was able to dialogue and love beyond the particularity of her Samaritan religious heritage. This is how evangelization is carried out in the ordinary life of Samaria, in the Amazon, all over the world. Dialogue is a joyful communication “among those who love each other” (EG 142).
37. Since his Incarnation, the encounter with Jesus Christ has always taken place within the ambit of a historical and eschatological dialogue of the heart. It occurs in the different settings of the plural and intertwined world of the Amazon. It encompasses political relations with States, social relations with communities, cultural relations with different ways of living, and ecological relations with nature and with oneself. Dialogue seeks interchange, consensus and communication, agreements and alliances, “but without losing the underlying issue”, that is, the “concern for a just society, capable of memory and without exclusion” (EG 239). Therefore, dialogue always makes a preferential option for the poor, marginalized and excluded. The causes of justice and otherness are causes of the Kingdom of God. We do not defend “a project of a few for a few, or of an enlightened minority” (EG 239). Dialogue includes “an agreement to live together, a social and cultural pact” (EG 239). For this pact, the Amazon represents a *pars pro toto*, a part for the whole, a paradigm, a hope for the world. Dialogue is the method that must always be applied to achieve the good life [if buen vivir, then good living] for all. The great questions of humanity that arise in the Amazon will not find solutions through violence or imposition, but through dialogue and communication.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. LS 163, and Preparatory Document n. 13.

### *Dialogue with the peoples of the Amazon*

38. It is the peoples of the Amazon, especially the poor and the culturally different, who are the main interlocutors and protagonists of the dialogue. They confront us with the memory of the past and with the wounds caused during long periods of colonization. That is why Pope Francis humbly asked for “forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church itself but also for the crimes against the original peoples during the so-called conquest of America.”<sup>15</sup> There were moments when the Church was complicit with the colonizers, and this stifled the prophetic voice of the Gospel. Many of the obstacles to a dialogical evangelization and to being open to cultural otherness are historical in character and hidden behind certain petrified doctrines. Dialogue is a process of learning, facilitated by “openness to transcendence” (EG 205) and hindered by ideologies.

### *Dialogue and learning*

39. Many peoples of the Amazon are inherently people of dialogue and communication. There is a broad and essential arena of dialogue between the Amazon’s spiritualities, creeds and religions that requires an approach of the heart to the different cultures. Respect for this space does not mean relativizing one’s own convictions, but recognizing other avenues / pathways that seek to decipher the inexhaustible mystery of God. Insincere openness to the other, just like a corporatist attitude, that reserve salvation exclusively for one’s own creed, are destructive of that very creed. This is what Jesus explained to the Doctor of the Law in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37). Love lived in any religion pleases God. “Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us more and more to truth and goodness” (EG 246).
40. A dialogue in favour of life is at the service of the “future of the planet” (LS 14), of transforming narrow mentalities, of converting hardened hearts, and of sharing truths with all humanity. We could say that dialogue is Pentecostal, as is the birth of the Church, which journeys in search of its identity towards unity in the Holy Spirit. We discover our identity from the encounter with the other, from the differences and coincidences that show us the inscrutability of the reality and mystery of the presence of God.

### *Dialogue and resistance*

41. Willingness to engage in dialogue often meets with resistance. Economic interests and a technocratic paradigm rebuff any attempt to change. Their supporters are willing to impose themselves by force, transgressing the fundamental rights of the populations in the Amazon and the norms for its sustainability and preservation. In such a situation, the possibilities of dialogue and encounter are greatly reduced and even disappear in some cases. How to react to this? On the one hand, one will necessarily become indignant, not in a violent way, but firmly and prophetically. It is the indignation of Jesus against the Pharisees (cf. Mk 3:5; Mt 23) or against Peter himself (Mt 16:23) – what Thomas Aquinas called “holy indignation”, provoked by injustices,<sup>16</sup> or associated with unfulfilled promises or betrayals of all kinds. A next step is to seek agreement, as Jesus himself suggests (cf. Lk

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<sup>15</sup> Pope Francis, *Speech on the occasion of the II World Meeting of the Popular Movements*, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, 9 July 2015. Cf. Part II, Ch. I: *Extractivist destruction*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. ST II-II, Q 158, Art 1.

14:31-32). It is a question of establishing a possible dialogue and never remaining indifferent to the injustices of the region or of the world.<sup>17</sup>

42. A prophetic Church is one that listens to the cries and songs of pain and joy. At the same time as they inspire, songs shed light on the situations that people live and intuit possible solutions and transformative changes. There are peoples who sing their history and also their present, such that those who hear the songs can glimpse, can outline their future. In short, a prophetic Church in the Amazon is one that dialogues, that knows how to seek agreements, and that, from an option for the poor and their testimony of life, seeks concrete proposals in favour of an integral ecology. A Church with the capacity for discernment and audacity in the face of the abuses of peoples and the destruction of their territories, which responds without delay to the cry of the earth and of the poor.

### *Conclusion*

43. Life in the Amazon, where water, territory, and the identities and spiritualities of its peoples are interwoven, invites dialogue and learning about its biological and cultural diversity. The Church participates in and generates learning processes that open pathways of ongoing formation on the meaning of life integrated into its territory and enriched by wisdom and ancestral experiences. Such processes invite us to respond honestly and prophetically to the clamour for the life of the peoples and land of the Amazon. This implies a renewed sense of the mission of the Church in the Amazon that, starting from the encounter with Christ, goes out to meet the other, initiating processes of conversion. In this context, room is now opening up to recreate ministries appropriate to this historical moment. It is the right moment to listen to the voice of the Amazon and to respond as a prophetic and Samaritan Church.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 135.

## **PART II**

### **INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND OF THE POOR**

*"I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology...  
environmental, economic and social" (LS, 137-8)*

44. Part II addresses the serious problems caused by the attacks against life in the Amazon territory. The aggression towards this vital zone of Mother Earth and its inhabitants threatens their subsistence, their culture and their spirituality. It also affects the life of all humanity, particularly the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, the persecuted. The present situation calls urgently for an integral ecological conversion.

## CHAPTER I

### EXTRACTIVIST DESTRUCTION

*“[T]oday ... sin is manifest in all its destructive power in ... the various forms of violence and abuse, the abandonment of the most vulnerable, and attacks on nature” (LS 66)*

#### *The cry of the Amazon*

45. “The original Amazonian peoples have probably never been as threatened in their territories as they are now” (Fr.PM). The extractive and agricultural projects that exploit the land with no consideration whatsoever are destroying this territory (cf. LS 4, 146), which runs the risk of turning into savannah.<sup>18</sup> The Amazon is being contested on several fronts. One of them responds to great economic interests eager for oil, gas, wood, gold, agro-industrial monocultures, etc. Another is an ecological conservationism that cares about the biome but ignores the Amazon’s peoples. Both threats injure the land and the peoples: “We are being affected by loggers, ranchers and other third parties. We are threatened by economic actors who implement an alien model in our territories. The logging companies enter the territory to exploit the forest. We take care of the forest for our children. We have meat, fish, medicinal plants, fruit trees [...] Hydroelectric installations and the waterways project have impacts on the river and on the territories [...] We are a region of stolen territories.”<sup>19</sup>
46. According to the consultations, the cries of the Amazon reflect three major causes of pain. (a) The lack of recognition, demarcation and title of the indigenous lands that are an integral part of their lives. (b) The invasion of huge, so-called “development” projects which actually destroy both lands and peoples. Important examples are hydroelectric projects; legal and illegal mining associated with illegal *garimpeiros* (informal miners who extract gold); waterways projects which threaten the main tributaries of the Amazon River; hydrocarbon activities, livestock activities, deforestation, monoculture farming, agroindustry and *grilagem* (appropriation of land using false documentation). Many of these destructive projects in the name of progress are supported by local, national and foreign governments. (c) The pollution of rivers, the air, soils and forests and the deterioration of the quality of life, cultures and spiritualities. Today, therefore, “we have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*” (LS 49). This is what Pope Francis calls integral ecology.

#### *Integral Ecology*

47. Integral ecology is based on the recognition of being-in-relationships as a fundamental human category. This means that we develop as human beings on the basis of our relationships with ourselves, with others, with society in general, with nature/environment, and with God. This integral connectivity was regularly emphasized during the consultations with the communities of the Amazon.

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<sup>18</sup> A new Spanish word, “sabanizarse”, names the process whereby a jungle or rainforest is turned into savannah or grassland.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM – Brazil, 120.

48. The Encyclical *Laudato si'* (nn. 137-142) introduces this relational paradigm of integral ecology as the fundamental articulation of the bonds that make true human development possible. Human beings are part of the ecosystems that facilitate the relationships that give life to our planet; therefore the care of these ecosystems is essential. And it is fundamental both for promoting the dignity of the human person and the common good of society, and for environmental care. The notion of integral ecology has been illuminating for the different perspectives that address the complex interactions between the environmental and the human, between management of the goods of creation and proposals for development and evangelization.

### *Integral ecology in the Amazon*

49. For the care of the Amazon, the aboriginal communities are indispensable interlocutors, since it is precisely they who normally take best care of their territories (cf. LS 149). Hence, at the beginning of the synodal process, Pope Francis, on his first visit to an Amazon area, told the local indigenous leaders: “I wanted to come and visit you and listen to you, to be together in the heart of the Church, to unite ourselves to your challenges and with you to reaffirm a sincere option for the defence of life, the defence of the land and the defence of cultures” (Fr.PM). The Amazon communities share this perspective of integral ecology: “All the activity of the church in the Amazon must start from the integrality of the human being (life, territory and culture)”.<sup>20</sup>
50. However, in order to promote integral ecology in the daily life of the Amazon, it is also necessary to understand the notion of intergenerational communication and justice, which includes the transmission of ancestral experience, cosmologies, spiritualities and theologies of the indigenous peoples in terms of care for our common home.<sup>21</sup> “In the struggle we must trust in God’s power, because creation is of God, because God continues his work. The struggle of our ancestors to fight for these rivers, for our territories, to fight for a better world for our children.”<sup>22</sup>

### *No to the destruction of the Amazon*

51. To be specific, the cry of the Amazon speaks to us of struggles against those who want to destroy the life as conceived integrally. Such forces are guided by an economic model linked to production, commerce and consumption, where the maximization of profit takes priority over human and environmental needs. In other words, the struggles oppose those who do not respect human rights and the rights of nature in the Amazon.
52. Another attack on human rights is the criminalization of protests against the destruction of the territory and its communities, since some laws in the region depict them as “illegal”.<sup>23</sup> A further abuse is the widespread refusal by States to respect the right to consultation and prior consent of indigenous and local groups before granting concessions and contracts for exploiting the territory, even though such a right is explicitly recognized by the International Labour Organization: “The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 43.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 86.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, Antonio, Brazil, 57.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. II. (PIAV)

exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development.”<sup>24</sup> The same right is recognized by the constitutions of some Amazon countries.

53. The drama of the inhabitants of the Amazon appears not only in the loss of their lands due to forced displacement, but also in succumbing to the seduction of money, bribes and corruption by the agents of the techno-economic model of the “throwaway culture” (cf. LS 22), especially among young people. Life is linked and integrated into the territory, so the defence of life is the defence of the territory, there is no separation between the two aspects. This is the message in so many of the testimonies: “They are taking away our land -- where shall we go?” Because to have this right taken away is to run out of options for defending oneself against those who threaten their survival.
54. The massive felling of trees, the extermination of the tropical forest by intentional forest fires, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and monocultures are the cause of the current regional climate imbalances, with obvious effects on the global climate, with planetary dimensions such as great droughts and increasingly frequent floods. Pope Francis refers to the Amazon and Congo basins as “lungs of our planet”, underlining the urgency of protecting them (LS 38).
55. Creation is presented in the book of Genesis as a manifestation of life, sustenance, possibility and limit. In the first account (Gn 1:1-2:4a) the human being is invited to relate to creation in the same way as God does. The second account (Gn 2:4b-25) deepens this perspective with the mandate to “cultivate” (in Hebrew it also means “to serve”) and “keep” (the attitude of protection and love) the garden (Gn 2:15). “This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature” (LS 67) which entails acknowledging the proper limit of creatureliness and therefore an attitude of humility since we are not outright owners (Gn 3:3).

### *Suggestions*

56. The challenge presented is great: How to recover the Amazon territory, rescue it from neocolonial degradation and restore its authentic and healthy well-being? To the aboriginal communities we owe their thousands of years of care and cultivation of the Amazon. In their ancestral wisdom they have nurtured the conviction that all of creation is connected, and this deserves our respect and responsibility. The culture of the Amazon, which integrates human beings with nature, constitutes a benchmark for building a new paradigm of integral ecology. The Church should assume in its mission the care for our common home:
  - a) Proposing institutional lines of action that promote respect for the environment.
  - b) Mounting formal and informal training programs on the care for our common home for its pastoral agents and the faithful, and open to the whole community, in order to “raise people’s awareness” (LS 214) as called for by chapters V and VI of the Encyclical *Laudato si’*.
  - c) Denouncing the violation of human rights and the destruction caused by unlimited extractivism.

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<sup>24</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), 1989. Convention 169: On Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, art. 7

## CHAPTER II

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION (PIAV): THREATS AND PROTECTION

*"I am thinking of the [...] indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation (PIAV). We know that they are the most vulnerable among the vulnerable" (Fr.PM)*

#### *Peoples in the peripheries*

57. In the Amazon territory, according to data from specialized Church institutions (e.g. CIMI) and others, there are between 110 and 130 different Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation or "free peoples". They live on the margins of society or in sporadic contact with it. We do not know their proper names, languages or cultures. That is also why we call them "isolated peoples", "free", "autonomous" or "peoples without contact". These peoples live in deep connection with nature. Many of them have chosen to isolate themselves because they previously suffered traumas; others have been violently pushed aside by the economic exploitation of the Amazon. The PIAVs resist the current model of predatory, genocidal and ecocidal economic development, opting for captivity in order to live in freedom (cf. Fr.PM).
58. Some "isolated peoples" live on exclusively indigenous lands, others on indigenous lands shared with the "contacted peoples", others in conservation areas, and some in border territories.

#### *Vulnerable peoples*

59. PIAVs are vulnerable to threats from agro-industrial enterprises and from those who clandestinely exploit minerals, timber and other natural resources. They are also victims of drug trafficking, infrastructural mega-projects like hydroelectric dams and international highways, and illegal activities linked to the extractivist development model.
60. The risk of violence against women of these villages rose due to the presence of settlers, loggers, soldiers, and employees of resource industries, most of them men. In some regions of the Amazon, 90% of the indigenous people murdered in isolated settlements have been women. Such violence and discrimination severely threatens the physical, spiritual and cultural survival of these indigenous peoples.
61. Add to this the lack of recognition of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples and of the PIAVs. Criminalizing their allies for their protests and cutting budgets meant to protect their lands make it even easier to invade their territories, thus further threatening their vulnerable lives.

#### *Suggestions*

62. In view of this dramatic situation, and hearing such cries of the earth and of the poor (cf. LS 49), it would be opportune to:
  - a) Require the respective governments to guarantee the necessary resources for the effective protection of isolated indigenous peoples. Governments must implement all measures

necessary to protect their physical integrity and that of their territories, based on the precautionary principle, or other protection mechanisms in accordance with international law, such as the specific Recommendations defined by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR of the OAS) and contained in the last chapter of the report, *Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact in the Americas* (2013). It is also necessary to guarantee their freedom to abandon their isolation when they so desire.

- b) Demand the protection of the areas / natural reserves where they are located, especially in terms of their demarcation / titling in order to prevent the invasion of the places where they live.
- c) Promote the updating of the census and mapping of the territories where these peoples live.
- d) Form specific teams in dioceses and parishes and plan joint pastoral action in border regions because that is where people on the move are to be found.
- e) Inform indigenous peoples about their rights, and inform the general public about their situation.

## CHAPTER III

### MIGRATION

*“My father was an Aramaic wanderer ...” (Dt 26:5)*

#### *Peoples of the Amazon who leave*

63. In the Amazon, migration in search of a better life has been a historical constant. It is like a pendulum of coming and going,<sup>25</sup> of forced displacement within the same country and abroad, of voluntary migration from rural areas to the cities as well as international migration. This transhumance<sup>26</sup> in the Amazon has not been well understood or sufficiently worked out from the pastoral point of view. Pope Francis, in Puerto Maldonado, referred to this reality: “Many people have immigrated to the Amazon in search of housing, land and work. They come in search of a better future for themselves and their families. They abandon poor, yet worthy lives. Many of them, in the hope that certain jobs will bring an end to their precarious situations, are drawn by the promising allure of gold mining. But let us not forget that gold can turn into a false god which demands human sacrifices.”<sup>27</sup>

#### *Causes of migration*

64. The Amazon is among the regions with the highest levels of internal and international mobility in Latin America. The causes are socio-political, climatic and economic as well as ethnic persecution. The economic ones are mostly induced by political projects, mega-projects and extraction companies, which attract workers but at the same time expel the inhabitants of the affected areas. The aggression against the environment in the name of “development”<sup>28</sup> has dramatically worsened the quality of life of the peoples of the Amazon, both urban and rural populations, due to the contamination of the territory and its loss of fertility.
65. Due to these causes, the region has “in fact” become a migratory corridor. Such migrations occur between countries of the Amazon (such as the growing wave of migration from Venezuela) or to other regions (e.g. to Chile and Argentina).<sup>29</sup>

#### *Consequences of migration*

66. The phenomenon of migration, neglected both politically and pastorally, has contributed to social destabilization in the communities of the Amazon. The region’s cities, which constantly receive a large number of migrating newcomers, are unable to provide the basic

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<sup>25</sup> Some migrate to the cities to market basic necessities or obtain temporary work to earn money to support their families (e.g. Peruvian internal pendular migration to work with loggers).

<sup>26</sup> The practice of transhumance is based on two interrelated natural phenomena: seasonal differences in primary production and animal migration. Thus human transhumance is linked to integral ecology: the human need to produce, and to the ecological situation that causes the migration of some human groups.

<sup>27</sup> Francis, *Meeting with the Population, Jorge Basadre Institute (Puerto Maldonado)*, 19 January 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Part I, Ch. I, point 14; Part II, Ch. I, point 48.

<sup>29</sup> Missionary Disciples na Amazônia, 2007. Document IX Meeting of Bispos da Amazônia, Manaus (2007). In: CNBB (2014), *Desafio missionário: Documentos from Igreja na Amazônia*. Coletânea, Ed. CNBB, Brasília, pp. 161-216 (269).

services that migrants need. This has led many people to wander about and sleep in downtown areas, without work, without food, without shelter. Many of these belong to the indigenous peoples forced to abandon their lands. "The cities seem to be a land without an owner. They are the destiny to which people turn after having been evicted from their territories. The city must be understood according to this model of exploitation: to empty the territories in order to appropriate them, to displace the populations and expel them into the city."<sup>30</sup>

67. Among other things, this phenomenon destabilizes families when one of the parents goes far away in search of work, leaving the children and young people to grow up without the paternal and/or maternal figure. Young people also move in search of employment or underemployment to help maintain what is left of the family, abandoning their primary education and enduring all kinds of abuse and exploitation. In many regions of the Amazon, these young people are victims of drug trafficking, human trafficking or prostitution (male and female).<sup>31</sup>
68. The neglect of governments with regard to implementing quality public policies in the interior, mainly in education and health, allows this process of mobility to accelerate every day. Although the Church has accompanied this migratory flow, pastoral gaps remain in the interior of the Amazon region that need to be addressed.

### *Suggestions*

69. What do migrants expect from the Church? How can we help them more effectively? How can we promote integration between migrants and the local community?
  - a) There is a need for a better understanding of the mechanisms that have led to disproportionate growth of urban centres and abandonment of the interior, because both dynamics are part of the same system (everything is connected). All this will require preparation of the head and heart of pastoral agents in order to face this critical situation.
  - b) It is necessary to work as a team, imbued with strong missionary ideals and coordinated by persons with diverse and complementary skills in order to act effectively. The problem of migration needs to be dealt with in a coordinated manner, especially by churches on the border.
  - c) Establish a reception service in each urban community that quickly welcomes those who arrive unexpectedly with urgent needs and can also offer protection against the threat of criminal organizations.
  - d) Promote agro-family projects in rural communities.
  - e) Involve the ecclesial community in pressing public authorities to respond to the needs and rights of migrants.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. REPAM Synthesis, 124.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Venezuela, Final Summary, 4.

- f) Promote integration between migrants and local communities while respecting each one's cultural identity, as Pope Francis states: "Integration, which is neither assimilation nor incorporation, is a two-way process, rooted essentially in the joint recognition of the other's cultural richness: it is not the superimposing of one culture over another, nor mutual isolation, with the insidious and dangerous risk of creating ghettos."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the International Forum "Migration and Peace", 21 February 2017.

## CHAPTER IV

### URBANIZATION

*"Cities create a sort of permanent ambivalence because, while they offer their residents countless possibilities, they also present many people with any number of obstacles to the full development of their lives" (EG 74)*

#### *Urbanization of the Amazon*

70. Despite speaking today of the Amazon as the lung of the planet (cf. LS 38) and the breadbasket of the world, the devastation of the region and poverty have caused a great displacement of the population in search of a better life. The result of this "exodus in search of the promised land" is the growth of the phenomenon of urbanization in the region,<sup>33</sup> where cities constitute an ambivalent reality. The Bible portrays this ambiguity when it presents Cain as the founder of cities after his sin (Gen 4:17), but then also presents humanity as striving towards the fulfillment of the promise of the heavenly Jerusalem, God's dwelling place with humankind (Rev 21:3).
71. According to statistics, the urban population of the Amazon has increased exponentially; currently between 70% and 80% of the population resides in cities.<sup>34</sup> Many of them lack the infrastructure and public resources required to meet the needs of urban life. As the number of cities increases, the number of inhabitants in rural populations decreases.

#### *Urban culture*

72. However, the question of urbanization encompasses not only the displacement of people and the growth of cities, but also the transmission of a particular metropolitan lifestyle. Its pattern reaches into the rural world, modifying habits, customs, and traditional ways of living. Culture, religion, the family, the education of children and youth, employment and other aspects of life change rapidly to respond to the new calls from the city.

#### *Urban challenges*

73. Introducing the Amazon into the globalized market produced more exclusion, as well as an urbanization of poverty. According to the responses to the Preparatory Document Questionnaire, the main problems that have arisen with urbanization are the following:
- a) Increase in violence of all kinds.
  - b) Sexual abuse and exploitation, prostitution, and human trafficking, especially of women.
  - c) Drug trafficking and consumption.

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. III: *Migration*

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Preparatory Document, 6.

- d) Arms trafficking.
- e) Human mobility and identity crisis.
- f) Family breakdown.<sup>35</sup>
- g) Cultural conflicts and loss of meaning in life.
- h) Inefficiency of health/sanitation services.<sup>36</sup>
- i) Lack of quality in education and dropping out of school.<sup>37</sup>
- j) Lack of response from the public authorities regarding infrastructure and the promotion of employment.
- k) Lack of respect for the right to self-determination and the autonomy of populations.
- l) Administrative corruption.<sup>38</sup>

### *Suggestions*

74. It is suggested to:

- a. Promote an urban environment where public spaces are revitalised, with well-distributed plazas and cultural centres.
- b. Promote universal access to education and culture.
- c. Promote environmental awareness, recycling of garbage, and avoidance of burning.
- d. Promote a system of environmental sanitation and universal access to health.
- e. Discern how to help improve the appreciation rural life, with survival alternatives such as family farming.
- f. Create spaces for interaction between the wisdom of the indigenous, river and quilombola peoples in urban settings and the wisdom of the urban population, so as to generate dialogue and integration around the care of life.

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. V: Family and community

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. VII: The question of integral health

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. VIII: Integral education

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. VI: Corruption

## CHAPTER V

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

*“Jesus himself is born into a modest family that must soon flee to a foreign land” (AL 21)*

#### *Families of the Amazon*

75. A cosmic dimension of experience (*cosmovivencia*) palpitates within the families. It draws on age-old traditional knowledge and practices in different fields such as agriculture, medicine, hunting and fishing, in harmony with God, nature and the community. It is also in the family that cultural values are transmitted, such as love of the land, reciprocity, solidarity, living in the present, the sense of family, simplicity, community work, self-organization, ancestral medicine and education. In addition, oral culture (stories, beliefs and songs) with its colours, clothing, food, languages and rituals are part of this heritage that is transmitted in the family. In short, the family is where one learns to live in harmony: between peoples, between generations, with nature, in dialogue with the spirits.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Social changes and family vulnerability*

76. The family in the Amazon has been a victim of colonialism in the past and of neo-colonialism in the present. The imposition of a western cultural model inculcated a certain contempt for the people and customs of the Amazon territory, even calling them “savages” or “primitive”. Today, the imposition of a western extractivist economic model once again affects families by invading and destroying their lands, their cultures and their lives, forcing them to emigrate to the cities and their peripheries.
77. The current accelerating changes affect the family in the Amazon. Thus we find new family structures: single-parent families headed by a woman; an increase in separated families, consensual unions and assembled families; and fewer institutional marriages. In addition, one still finds women being subjugated within the family, while family violence, absentee parents, teenage pregnancies and abortions are on the rise.
78. The family in the city is a place of synthesis where traditional and modern cultures meet. However, families often suffer from poverty, precarious housing, lack of work, increased consumption of drugs and alcohol, discrimination and juvenile suicide. In addition, there is a lack of dialogue between generations in families; traditions and language are lost. Families also face new health problems; there is a need for adequate education about motherhood. One also finds a lack of attention to women in pregnancy and the pre-partum and post-partum phases.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Suggestions*

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<sup>39</sup> Sint.REPAM, 42.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 71, and Part II, Ch. VII: *The question of integral health*.

79. The Pan-Amazon is abundantly multicultural, therefore the greatest contribution is to continue fighting to preserve its beauty by strengthening the community-family structure of its peoples. To this end, the Church must value and respect cultural identities. In particular, it should:

- a) Respect the proper mode of community organization. Given that many public policies affect family and collective identity, it is necessary to initiate and assist processes that start from the family / clan / community to promote the common good, helping to overcome structures that alienate: “We must organize ourselves from our home.”<sup>41</sup>
- b) Listen to songs learned in the family as a way of expressing prophecy in the Amazon world.
- c) Promote the role of women, recognizing their fundamental functions in the formation and continuity of cultures, in spirituality, in communities and families. Women must assume a leadership role within the Church.
- d) Articulate elements of family ministry that reflect the counsel of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*:
  - i. A family pastoral ministry of integral accompaniment, which does not exclude the wounded family.
  - ii. A sacramental pastoral ministry that strengthens and comforts everyone and excludes no one.
  - iii. Ongoing formation of pastoral agents that takes into account the recent synods and the realities of Amazon families.
  - iv. A family pastoral ministry in which the family is both subject and protagonist.

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<sup>41</sup> Sint.REPAM, 57.

## CHAPTER VI

### CORRUPTION

*"All this becomes even more exasperating for the marginalized in the light of the widespread and deeply rooted corruption found in many countries – in their governments, businesses and institutions – whatever the political ideology of their leaders" (EG 60)*

#### *Corruption in the Amazon*

80. Corruption in the Amazon seriously affects the lives of its peoples and territories. There are at least two types of corruption: one which exists outside the law and the other which is protected by legislation that betrays the common good.
81. In recent decades, investment in the exploitation of the riches of the Amazon region by large companies has accelerated. Many of them pursue profit at all costs without caring about the socio-environmental damage they cause. The governments that authorize such practices, in need of foreign exchange to promote their public policies, do not always fulfill their duty to protect the environment and the rights of their populations. Thus corruption snares the political, judicial, legislative, social, ecclesial and religious authorities who receive benefits in exchange for permitting the actions of these companies (cf. DAp 77). There are cases in which large companies and governments have fashioned systems of corruption. Some individuals who held public office are currently being tried, are in jail or have fled. As the Aparecida Document says: "The level of corruption in economies is also alarming, involving both the public and private sectors, to which is added a notable lack of transparency and accountability to the citizenry. On many occasions, corruption is linked to the scourge of drug trafficking or narco-business and, on the other hand, it has been destroying the social and economic fabric of entire regions" (DAp. 70).

#### *A structural moral scourge*

82. A culture is thus created that poisons the state and its institutions, permeating all social strata, including indigenous communities. This is truly a moral scourge; as a result, trust in institutions and their representatives is lost, politics and social organizations are totally discredited. The Amazon peoples are no strangers to corruption, and they become its main victims.

#### *Suggestions*

83. Considering the clear lack of economic means of the particular Churches in the Amazon, special attention should be paid to the origin of donations or other kinds of benefits, as well as to investments made by church institutions or Christians. The Episcopal Conferences could offer a service of advice and accompaniment, of consultation and promotion of common strategies in the face of widespread corruption and also to address

the need to generate and invest resources to support pastoral work. A careful analysis is needed in the face of drug trafficking.

- a. Prepare the clergy properly to face the complexity, subtlety and gravity of the urgent problems linked to corruption and the exercise of power.
- b. Promote a culture of honesty and of respect for others and for the common good.
- c. Accompany, promote and train lay people for meaningful public presence in politics, economics, academic life and all forms of leadership (cf. DAp. 406).
- d. Accompany the people in their struggles for the care of their territories and respect for their rights.
- e. Investigate how money is generated and how it is invested in the Church, overcoming naïveté in this regard through a system of community administration and auditing, taking into account the ecclesial norms in force.
- f. Establish partnerships of the Church with other entities in initiatives to demand that companies assume responsibility for the socio-ecological impacts of their actions, according to the juridical parameters of the States themselves.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE QUESTION OF INTEGRAL HEALTH

*"This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Arabah, and empties into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh ... Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine"*  
(Ez 47:8,12)

#### *Health in the Amazon*

84. The Amazon region today contains the greatest diversity of flora and fauna in the world, and its native population has an integral sense of life not contaminated by economic materialism. The Amazon is a healthy territory in its long and fruitful history, although there was no shortage of diseases. However, with people's mobility, with the uncontrolled invasion of polluting industries, given the conditions of climate change, and before a total indifference of the public health authorities, new diseases have appeared and pathologies have reappeared that had been overcome. The model of development focused exclusively on the economic exploitation of the forest, mining and hydrocarbon wealth of the Pan-Amazon affects the health of the Amazon biomes, their communities, and the entire planet! The damage afflicts not only the physical health but also the culture and spirituality of the people: it damages their "integral health". The Amazon people have the right to health and to "live healthily", which means harmony "with what Mother Earth offers us".<sup>42</sup>

#### *Appreciation and development of traditional medicines*

85. In response to the "throwaway culture" (cf. LS 22), the disciples of Christ are called to promote a culture of care and health. Commitment to health care therefore demands urgent changes in personal lifestyles and in structures.
86. The richness of the flora and fauna of the rainforest contains veritable "living pharmacopoeias" and unexplored genetic principles. Deforestation in the Amazon will prevent us from sharing in such riches, impoverishing future generations. Currently, the extinction rate of species in the Amazon due to human activities is a thousand times greater than from natural processes. The only way to preserve this wealth is to take care of the territory and the Amazon rainforest and to empower the indigenous people and citizens.
87. Indigenous rituals and ceremonies are essential for integral health because they integrate the different cycles of human life and nature. They create harmony and balance between human beings and the cosmos. They protect life from evils that can be caused by both human beings and other living beings. They help to cure diseases that harm the environment, human life and other living beings.

#### *Suggestions*

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 161.

88. Health care of the inhabitants involves detailed knowledge of medicinal plants and other traditional elements that are part of healing processes. To this end, indigenous peoples rely on people who, throughout their lives, specialize in observing nature and in listening to and collecting the knowledge of the elderly, especially women. But because of environmental pollution, both nature and the bodies of people in the Amazon are deteriorating. Contact with new toxic elements such as mercury causes new diseases to appear that were unknown until now by the elderly healers. All this puts this ancestral wisdom at risk. That is why the responses to the Preparatory Document emphasize the need to preserve and transmit the knowledge of traditional medicine.<sup>43</sup> It is proposed to help the peoples of the Amazon to maintain, recover, systematize and disseminate this knowledge for the promotion of integral health.
89. Faced with these new diseases, inhabitants are forced to buy medicines from pharmaceutical companies using the same plants from the Amazon. Once marketed, these drugs are beyond their financial reach for reasons that include patenting of drugs and overpricing. Therefore, it is proposed to value traditional medicine, the wisdom of the elders and indigenous rituals, and at the same time to facilitate access to medicines that cure new diseases.
90. But it is not only medicinal herbs and medicines that aid healing. Clean water and air, and healthy food, the fruit of their own cultivation, gathering, hunting and fishing, are necessary conditions for the integral health of indigenous peoples.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is proposed that governments be required to regulate industries strictly and to denounce those that pollute the environment. On the other hand, it is suggested to create spaces for interaction and educational accompaniment to recover the habits of “good living”, thus generating a culture of care and prevention.
91. Finally, it is proposed to evaluate the health structures of the Church, such as hospitals and health centres, in terms of integral health available to all the inhabitants who count on traditional medicine as part of their health programmes.

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 125.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 125.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INTEGRAL EDUCATION

*“We young people have been losing our cultural identity and our language in particular. We forget that we have our roots, that we belong to an original people, and we are allowing ourselves to be carried away by technology. It is not bad to walk with both feet, to know the modern and also to take care of the traditional. Always in the place where you have both things present, keeping your roots in mind, where you come from, and do not forget” (Slendy Grefa, Doc. Consulta, Ecuador)*

#### *A synodal Church: disciple and teacher*

92. Through mutual listening to peoples and nature, the Church transforms into a Church that goes out in both geographical and structural ways, and a Church that is sister and disciple through synodality. This is what Pope Francis made clear in the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*: “Hence the Bishop is both teacher and disciple ... he is a disciple when, knowing that the Spirit has been bestowed upon every baptized person, he listens to the voice of Christ speaking through the entire People of God” (EC 5). He himself became a disciple in Puerto Maldonado by expressing his willingness to listen to the voice of the Amazon.

#### *Education as an encounter*

93. Education implies an encounter and an exchange in which values are assimilated. Every culture is rich and poor at the same time. Because it is historical, culture always has a pedagogical dimension of learning and improvement. “When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world” (EG 132). The encounter is “an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness” (EG 171) of spirit that can lead to multiple learnings.
94. This education, which develops through encounter, is different from an education that seeks to impose on the other (and especially on the poor and vulnerable) the very worldviews which are precisely the cause of their poverty and vulnerability. Education in the Amazon does not mean imposing cultural parameters, philosophies, theologies, liturgies and strange customs on the Amazon peoples. Today, “some simply content themselves with blaming the poor and the poorer countries themselves for their troubles; indulging in unwarranted generalizations, they claim that the solution is an ‘education’ that would tranquilize them, making them tame and harmless” (EG 60). “In response, we need to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values” (EG 64), an education open to interculturality.

#### *Education in an integral ecology*

95. The worldview of the Amazon’s indigenous peoples includes the call to free themselves from a fragmentary vision of reality, which is not capable of perceiving multiple connections, inter-relationships and interdependencies. Education in an integral ecology

encompasses all the constitutive relationships of individuals and peoples. In order to understand this vision of education, it is worth applying the same principle as in health: the goal is to observe the whole body and the causes of the disease and not only the symptoms. A sustainable ecology for future generations “cannot be reduced to a series of urgent and partial responses to the immediate problems of pollution, environmental decay and the depletion of natural resources. There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme...” (LS 111). An education based only on technical solutions to complex environmental problems hides “the true and deepest problems of the global system” (LS 111).

96. It is then an education for solidarity born of “awareness of our common origin” and of a “future to be shared by everyone” (LS 202). Indigenous peoples have a teaching-learning method based on oral tradition and experiential practice with a contextualized pedagogical process within each stage. The challenge is to integrate this method in the dialogue with other educational proposals. This requires “developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care” (LS 210). The Amazon invites us to discover the educational task as an integral service for all humanity in view of an “ecological citizenship” (LS 211).
97. Such education unites commitment to care for the earth with the commitment to the poor, and stimulates attitudes of sobriety and respect lived through “responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God’s world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment” (LS 214). Such education “needs to be translated into new habits” (LS 209) taking into account cultural values. Education, from an ecological and Amazon point of view, promotes ‘good living’, ‘good living together’ and ‘good actions’, which must be perceivable and persistent in order to have a significant impact on our common home.

### *Suggestions*

98. The following is suggested:
  - a) The formation of adult lay pastoral agents to help them grow in responsibility and creativity.
  - b) The formation of ordained ministers:
    1. The formation plans must reflect a philosophical-theological culture adapted to the cultures of the Amazon, capable of being understood and therefore of nourishing Christian life. Indigenous theology and ecotheology ought to be integrated for this very reason: this will prepare them for the listening and open dialogue in which evangelization takes place.
    2. It is proposed to reform the structures of the seminars in order to facilitate the integration of candidates for the priesthood in the communities.
  - c) Formation centres:
    1. Schools: educational plans are needed to focus on education that reflects one's own culture and respects native languages, an integral education that responds to one's own reality, in order to deal with school dropouts and illiteracy, especially among women.
    2. University: it is necessary to promote not only an inter-disciplinary orientation but also to address issues in a trans-disciplinary manner, that is to say, favouring an approach

that restores unity in diversity to human knowledge, along the lines of the study of an integral ecology according to the prologue of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*.

3. The teaching of Pan-Amazon indigenous theology is requested in all educational institutions.

d) Amazonian Indian theology:

1. It is desirable to deepen existing Amazonian Indian theology, which will allow for a better and greater understanding of indigenous spirituality and thus avoid committing the historical errors that have violated many original cultures.
2. It is requested, for example, to take into account the original myths, traditions, symbols, knowledge, rites and celebrations that include transcendent, community and ecological dimensions.

## CHAPTER IX

### ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

*“So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (LS 217)*

*Christ calls us to conversion (Mk 1:15)*

99. A fundamental aspect of the root of human sin is to detach oneself from nature and not recognize it as part of the human and to exploit nature without limits, thus breaking the original covenant with creation and with God (Gen 3:5). “The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations” (LS 66). After the ruptures of sin and the universal flood, God re-establishes the covenant with man himself and with creation (Gen 9:9-17), calling upon humanity to care for it.
100. The reconciliation with creation to which Pope Francis invites us (cf. LS 218) presupposes above all that we overcome passivity – like the passive attitude of King David refusing to take charge of his mission (cf. 2 Sam 11:1). The course of King David’s sin begins with a personal omission (he stays in his palace when the army is on the battlefield) and then takes active form in the commission of reprehensible acts in the eyes of God (adultery, lying and murder) which involve others, creating a network of complicity (2 Sam 11:3-25). Likewise the Church can be tempted to remain closed in on herself, renouncing her mission of proclaiming the Gospel and of making the Kingdom of God present. On the contrary, an outgoing Church is a church that confronts the sins of this world from which it is not alien (cf. EG 20-24). This sin, as St. John Paul II said, is not only personal but also social and structural (Cf. RP 16; SRS 36; SD 243; DAp. 92). “Everything is connected,” Francis warns (LS 138); “Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble” (LS 117). Christ redeems all of creation submitted by humanity to sin (Rom 8:19-22).

*Integral conversion*

101. Therefore, conversion must also have the same levels of concreteness: personal, social and structural, bearing in mind the various dimensions of relationality. It is an “integral personal conversion” that comes from the heart and opens up to a “communal conversion” recognizing its social and environmental links, that is, an “ecological conversion” (cf. LS 216-221). This conversion implies recognizing personal and social complicity in the structures of sin, unmasking the ideologies that justify a lifestyle that assaults creation. We often hear stories that justify the destructive actions of power groups that exploit nature, dominate its inhabitants in a despotic manner (cf. LS 56, 200), and ignore the cries of pain of the earth and of the poor (cf. LS 49).

*Ecclesial conversion in the Amazon*

102. The process of conversion to which the Church is called involves unlearning, learning and relearning. This path requires a critical and self-critical regard that allows us to identify what we need to *unlearn*, what harms our common home and its inhabitants. We need to

take an inner journey to find the attitudes and mentalities that prevent us from connecting with ourselves, with others and with nature. As Pope Benedict XVI said, “The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.”<sup>45</sup> This process continues as one is open to wonder at the wisdom of indigenous peoples. Their daily life gives testimony to contemplation, care and relationship with nature. They *teach* us to recognize ourselves as part of the biome and as co-responsible for its present and future care. Therefore, we must *relearn* how to weave links that connect all the dimensions of life and to undertake a personal and communal asceticism that allows us to “cultivate a sober and satisfying life” (LS 225).

103. Conversion is presented in Sacred Scripture as a movement that goes from sin to friendship with God in Jesus Christ; that is why it belongs to the process of faith (Mk 1:15). Beholding the reality of the Amazon with believing eyes has made us appreciate the work of God in creation and its peoples, but we also observe the presence of evil at various levels: colonialism (dominion), an economicist-mercantilist mentality, consumerism, utilitarianism, individualism, technocracy, throwaway culture.

- A mentality that was historically expressed in a system of territorial, political, economic and cultural domination that persists to this day in various ways that perpetuate *colonialism*.
- An *economy* based exclusively on profit as its only goal, which excludes and tramples on the weakest and on nature, constitutes an idol that sows *destruction and death* (cf. EG 53-56).
- A *utilitarian mentality* conceives nature as a mere resource and human beings as mere producers-consumers, obliterating the intrinsic value and the relational character of creatures.
- “*Individualism* weakens community bonds” (DAp. 44), eclipsing responsibility towards one’s neighbour, community and nature.
- Technological development has brought great benefits to humanity, but it has as well become an absolute and an instrument of possession, domination and manipulation (cf. LS 106) of nature and human beings. All of this has generated a predominant global culture that Pope Francis has called the “*technocratic paradigm*” (LS 109).
- The result is the loss of a transcendent and humanitarian horizon and the spread of the “use and throw away” logic (LS 123), generating a “*throwaway culture*” (LS 22) that assaults creation.

### *Suggestions*

104. It is suggested to:

- a. Unmask the new forms of colonialism present in the Amazon.
- b. Identify and critically analyze the new ideologies that justify ecocide in the Amazon.
- c. Denounce the structures of sin at work in the Amazonian territory.

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<sup>45</sup> Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Mass for the Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry* (24 April 2005).

- d. Identify the reasons with which we justify our participation in the structures of sin in order to analyze them critically.
- e. Favour a church as an institution of service (not a self-referential institution) that shares in the responsibility for care for our common home and for the defence of the peoples' rights.
- f. Promote eco-solidarity markets, fair consumption and "happy sobriety" (LS 224-225) that respect nature and the rights of workers. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act" (CV 66; LS 206)
- g. Promote habits of behaviour, production and consumption, recycling and reuse of waste.
- h. Salvage myths and update community rites and celebrations that contribute significantly to the process of ecological conversion.
- i. Thank the native peoples for their care of the territory through time and recognize in this the ancestral wisdom that forms the basis for a good understanding of integral ecology.
- j. Create organic pastoral itineraries on the basis of integral ecology in order to protect our common home, with the guidance of chapters 5 and 6 of the Encyclical *Laudato si'*.
- k. The local Church formally to recognize the special ministry of pastoral agents who promote care for our common home.

## CHAPTER I

### A CHURCH WITH AN AMAZON AND MISSIONARY FACE

*"Let your face shine upon your servant" (Ps 31(30):17)*

#### *A richly expressive face*

107. The Amazonian face of the Church is manifest in the multiplicity of its peoples, cultures and ecosystems. This diversity demands that the Church choose to be an outgoing and missionary Church, incarnated in all its activities, expressions and languages. The Bishops in Santo Domingo proposed to us the goal of an inculturated evangelization, which "will always be the salvation and integral liberation of a particular people or human group, which will strengthen its identity and its confidence in its specific future, opposing the powers of death" (DSD, Conclusions 243). And Pope Francis clearly formulates this need for an inculturated and intercultural Church: "we need the indigenous peoples to mold the local Amazonian Churches culturally" (Fr.PM).
108. Inculturation and interculturality are not mutually opposed; they complement each other. Just as Jesus became incarnate in a particular culture (inculturation), his missionary disciples follow in his footsteps. For this reason, Christians from one culture go out to meet people from other cultures (interculturality). This happened from the beginning of the Church when the Hebrew apostles brought the Good News to different cultures, such as Greek culture, discovering there "seeds of the Word".<sup>47</sup> New paths of the Spirit emerged from that encounter and dialogue between cultures. Today, in the encounter and dialogue with cultures of the Amazon, the Church continues to search for new pathways.
109. According to the Aparecida Document, the preferential option for the poor is the hermeneutical criterion for analyzing proposals for the construction of society (501, 537, 474, 475), and the criterion for the Church's self-understanding as well. It is also one of the physical features, as it were, that characterize the Latin American and Caribbean Church (391, 524, 533) and all its structures, from the parish to its educational and social centres (176, 179, 199, 334, 337, 338, 446, 550). The Amazonian face is that of a Church with a clear option for (and with) the poor<sup>48</sup> and for the care of creation. From the poor, and from the attitude of caring for God's goods, new pathways are opened for the local Church and they continue towards the universal Church.

#### *A local face with a universal dimension*

110. A Church with an Amazonian face with its many nuances tries to be an "outgoing" Church (EG 20-23), rejecting a monocultural, clericalist and colonial tradition that imposes itself, and knowing how to discern and fearlessly embrace the diverse cultural expressions of the

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Saint Justin, II *Apologia*, 7,3; 8,1; 13, 2-3; 13, 6; Ad Gentes 11; DP 401, 403.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. the Latin American magisterium in the General Assemblies of CELAM; St John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 42 and *Centesimus annus* 11.57; Benedict XVI in the *Address to the Inaugural Session of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean* (2007); and Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 197-201.

### PART III

#### A PROPHETIC CHURCH IN THE AMAZON: CHALLENGES AND HOPE

*"Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!" (Nm 11:29)*

105. The proclamation of Jesus Christ and having a profound encounter with Him through conversion and the ecclesial experience of the faith presuppose a welcoming and missionary Church that is incarnated in cultures. She must keep in mind the steps that have been taken in response to the challenging themes of the centrality of the kerygma and of the mission in the area of the Amazon. This paradigm of church action inspires ministries, catechesis, liturgy, and social pastoral ministry in both rural and urban areas.
106. The new paths for pastoral ministry in the Amazon require "relaunching with fidelity and audacity" the mission of the Church (DAp. 11) in the territory and deepening the "process of inculturation" (EG 126) and interculturality (cf. LS 63, 143, 146). This demands "brave" proposals of the Church in the Amazon, which in turn presupposes courage and passion, as Pope Francis asks of us. Evangelization in the Amazon is a set of tests for the Church and for society.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Address of Pope Francis, *Meeting with the Bishops of Brazil* (27 July 2013).

peoples. This face warns us of the risk of “pronouncing a univocal word [or] proposing a solution with universal value” (Cf. OA 4; EG 184). Certainly the complex, plural, conflictive and opaque socio-cultural reality prevents the application of “a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance” (EG 40). The universality or catholicity of the Church, therefore, is enriched by “the beauty of the Church’s varied face” (NMI 40) in which the different manifestations of the particular churches and their cultures form a polyhedric Church (cf. EG 236).

#### *A defiant face facing injustices*

111. Shaping a Church with an Amazonian face includes an ecclesial, social, ecological and pastoral dimension, often conflictual. In fact, political and legal organization has not always taken into account the cultural face of the justice proper to the peoples and their institutions. The Church is no stranger to this tension. It has a tendency at times to impose a culture alien to the Amazon that prevents us from understanding its peoples and appreciating their worldviews.
112. The reality of the local churches requires a *participative Church* that makes itself present in the social, political, economic, cultural and ecological life of its inhabitants; a *welcoming Church* hospitable to cultural, social and ecological diversity in order to be able to serve individuals or groups without discrimination; a *creative Church* that can accompany its people in fashioning new responses to urgent needs; and a *Church of harmony* that fosters the values of peace, mercy and communion.

#### *An inculturated and missionary face*

113. Cultural diversity calls for a more robust incarnation in order to embrace different ways of life and cultures. “The principle of the incarnation formulated by Saint Irenaeus remains valid in the pastoral order: ‘What is not assumed is not redeemed.’”<sup>49</sup> The impulses and inspirations that are important for this desired inculturation are to be found in the magisterium of the Church and in the Latin American church process of its Episcopal Conferences (Medellín, 1968, Puebla, 1979, Santo Domingo, 1992, Aparecida, 2007), of its communities, and of its saints and martyrs.<sup>50</sup> An important reality of this process has been the emergence of a Latin American theology, especially Indian Theology.
114. Constructing a missionary Church with a local face means to progress in building an inculturated Church that knows how to work and articulate (like the rivers in the Amazon basin) with what is culturally available, in all fields where it is present and active. “Being Church means being God’s people” (EG 114), incarnated “in the peoples of the earth” and in their cultures (EG 115).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. San Ireneo de León, *Contra Herejes*, V, praef; I, 6, 1; DP 400.

<sup>50</sup> Among others one can mention: Rodolfo Lunkenbein SDB and Simão Bororo (1976), Marçal de Souza Tupã-i (1983, Guaraní), Ezequiel Ramin (1985, Comboniano), Sr. Cleusa Carolina Rody (1985, Agustinian Recolects Missionary), Josimo Moraes Tavavares (1986, diocesan priest), Vicente Cañas SJ (1987), Bp. Alejandro Labaka and Sr. Inés Arango (1987, both Capuchins), Chico Mendes (1988, ecologist), Galdino Jesus dos Santos (1997, Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe), Ademir Federici (2001), Sr. Dorothy Mae Stang (2005, Sister of N.S. de Namur).

## CHAPTER II

### CHALLENGES OF INCULTURATION AND INTERCULTURALITY<sup>51</sup>

*“In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the ‘beauty of her varied face’” (EG 116)*

*On the path to a Church with an Amazonian and indigenous face*

115. The mission of the Church is to announce the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-36), who has compassion on wounded and abandoned humanity. The Church proclaims the mystery of his death and resurrection to all cultures and all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). Following the example of Saint Paul who wanted to become Greek with the Greeks, trying to adapt himself: “so as to win over as many as possible... I have become all things to all” (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-22), the Church has made a great effort to evangelize all peoples throughout history. She has tried to carry out this missionary mandate by embodying and translating the message of the Gospel in different cultures, in the midst of difficulties of every kind – political, cultural, geographical. But much remains to be done.
116. The Church has tried for centuries to share the Gospel with the peoples of the Amazon, many of whom have joined the church community. Missionary men and women have a deep history of relationship with this region. They have left deep traces in the soul of the Catholic people of the Amazon. The Church has come a long way, but deepening and updating are needed for it to be a Church with an indigenous and Amazonian face.
117. However, as was revealed in our regional consultations, there is still an open wound due to past abuses. In fact, in 1912 Pope Pius X recognized the cruelty with which indigenous people were treated in the Encyclical *Lacrimabili Statu Indorum*. The Latin American bishops in Puebla accepted the existence of “an enormous process of domination” full of “contradictions and tears” (DP 6). In Aparecida, the bishops called for “the decolonizing of minds” (DAP 96). At his encounter with the peoples of the Amazon in Puerto Maldonado, Pope Francis recalled the words of Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo: “not only in times past were great wrongs and acts of coercion done to these poor people, but in our own time many seek to do the same.”<sup>52</sup> Given that a colonial and patriarchal mentality still persists, a deeper process of conversion and reconciliation is essential.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. EG 68-70, 116, 122, 126, 129.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

## *Suggestions*

118. The communities consulted expect the Church to be committed to care for our common home and its inhabitants, “[...] defend the territories, help the indigenous peoples to denounce what causes death and threatens the territories.”<sup>54</sup> A prophetic Church cannot cease pleading for the discarded and for those who suffer (cf. Fr.PM).
119. Listening to the voice of the Spirit in the cry of the Amazon peoples and in the magisterium of Pope Francis requires a process of pastoral and missionary conversion (cf. EG 25). To this end, it is suggested to:
- a) Avoid cultural homogenization in order to recognize and promote the value of the cultures of the Amazon.
  - b) Reject alliance with the dominant culture and with political and economic power in order to promote the cultures and rights of the indigenous people, of the poor and of the territory.
  - c) Surmount all clericalism; live fraternity and service as gospel values that animate the relationship between authority and the members of the community.
  - d) Discard rigid positions that do not take sufficient account of the concrete life of people and the pastoral reality, in order instead to meet the real needs of indigenous peoples and cultures.

## *Evangelization in cultures*<sup>55</sup>

120. The Creator Spirit who fills the universe (Wis 7:1) is the one that has nurtured the spirituality of these peoples for centuries, even before the proclamation of the Gospel, and moves them to accept it from within their own cultures and traditions. This proclamation must take into account the “seeds of the Word”<sup>56</sup> present in them. It also recognizes that the seed has already grown and borne fruit in many of them. It presupposes respectful listening that does not impose formulations of faith expressed with other cultural referents that do not respond to their lived reality. On the contrary, listen to “the voice of Christ speaking through the entire People of God” (EC 5).
121. It is necessary to grasp what the Spirit of the Lord has taught these peoples throughout the centuries: faith in the God Father-Mother Creator; communion and harmony with the earth; solidarity with one’s companions; striving for “good living”; the wisdom of civilizations going back thousands of years that the elderly possess and which influences health, life together, education, cultivation of the land, the living relationship with nature and “Mother Earth”, the capacities of resistance and resiliency of women in particular,

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Preparatory Document, 4; Parte I, Ch. IV: *Dialogue*

<sup>55</sup> Sint. REPAM, 58.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Part I, Ch. III: *Time (kairós)*, n. 30; Part III, Ch.I: *A Church with an Amazonian and a Missionary Face*, nn. 106-107, 113.

rites and religious expressions, relationships with ancestors, the contemplative attitude, the sense of gratuity, celebration and festivity, and the sacred meaning of the territory.

122. The inculturation of faith is not a top-down process or an external imposition, but a mutual enrichment of cultures in dialogue (interculturality).<sup>57</sup> The active subjects of inculturation are the indigenous peoples themselves. As Pope Francis has affirmed, “Grace supposes culture” (EG 115).

### *Suggestions*

123. It would be appropriate:

- a) Start from the spirituality lived by the indigenous peoples in contact with nature and their culture, so that they may be enlightened by the newness of the dead and risen Christ and reach fulfillment in Him.
- b) Recognize indigenous spirituality as a source of riches for the Christian experience.
- c) Given that narrativity is a characteristic of the original peoples and the means through which they transmit their age-old wisdom, undertake a catechesis that assumes the language and meaning of the narratives of the indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures in harmony with the biblical narratives.
- d) Along the same lines, a manner of homiletic preaching that responds to people’s lived experiences and to the socio-environmental reality (EG 135-144) in a narrative style would be appropriate. Hopefully this will arouse the interest and participation of the faithful and engage with the integral indigenous world view, stimulating a pastoral conversion that embraces integral ecology.
- e) In the face of a colonizing invasion of mass media, communities have insistently requested alternative communications grounded in their own languages and cultures. To this end, indigenous subjects themselves should be present in the current communications media.<sup>58</sup>
- f) It would also be opportune to create new radio stations of the Church that promote the Gospel and original cultures, traditions and languages.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Saint Justin, *Apologia II*, 8; *Ad Gentes*, n. 11;

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. I: *A Church with an Amazonian and a Missionary Face*, n. 107.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. VI: *Mission of the Media*.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE CELEBRATION OF THE FAITH: AN ENCULTURATED LITURGY

*“Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness” (EG 24)*

124. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (37-40, 65, 77, 81) proposes that the liturgy should be inculturated among the indigenous peoples. Cultural diversity assuredly does not threaten the unity of the Church; rather, the Church expresses its genuine catholicity by displaying “beauty of her varied face” (EG 116). That is why “we must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings...” (EG 167). Without this inculturation the liturgy can be reduced to a “museum piece” or “property of a select few” (EG 95).
125. The celebration of the faith must be carried out in an inculturated way so that it may be an expression of one's own religious experience and a bond of communion in the celebrating community. An inculturated liturgy will also be a sounding board for the struggles and aspirations of the communities and a transforming impulse towards a “land without evil”.

#### *Suggestions*

126. The following should be kept in mind:
- a) A process of discernment is needed regarding the rites, symbols and styles of celebration of indigenous cultures in contact with nature, which need to be integrated into liturgical and sacramental rituals. It is necessary to be attentive to grasp the true meaning of symbols that transcends the merely aesthetic and folkloric, specifically in Christian initiation and marriage. It is suggested that the celebrations should be festive, with their own music and dances, using indigenous languages and clothing, in communion with nature and with the community. A liturgy that responds to their own culture so to be the source and summit of their Christian life (cf SC 10) and linked to their struggles and sufferings and joys.
  - b) The sacraments should be a source of life and a remedy accessible to all (cf. EG 47), especially the poor (cf. EG 200). We are asked to overcome the rigidity of a discipline that excludes and alienates, and practice a pastoral sensitivity that accompanies and integrates (AL 297, 312).
  - c) Communities find it difficult to celebrate the Eucharist frequently because of the lack of priests. “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist” and the Eucharist builds the Church.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, instead of leaving communities without the Eucharist, change is requested in the criteria for selecting and preparing ministers authorized to celebrate the Eucharist.

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<sup>60</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), 1, Ch. II.

- d) In accordance with a “healthy ‘decentralization’” of the Church (EG 16), the communities request that the Episcopal Conferences adapt the Eucharistic ritual to their cultures.
- e) The communities ask for a greater appreciation, accompaniment and promotion of the piety with which the poor and simple people express their faith through images, symbols, traditions, rites and other sacramentals. All of this happens thanks to community associations that organize various events such as prayers, pilgrimages, visits to shrines, and processions and festivals celebrating the patron saint. This is evidence of a wisdom and spirituality that forms a real theological locus with great evangelizing potential (cf. EG 122-126).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITIES

*"It is fair to acknowledge that there are encouraging initiatives that emerge from your own bases and from your organizations" (Fr.PM)*

#### *The worldview of indigenous people*

127. The Church must be incarnated in the cultures of the Amazon that have a pronounced sense of community, equality and solidarity – and that is why clericalism is not accepted in all its guises. The native peoples have a rich tradition of social organization where authority is rotational and has a deep sense of service. Given this experience of organization, it would be opportune to reconsider the notion that exercise of jurisdiction (power of government) must be linked in all areas (sacramental, judicial, administrative) and in a permanent way to the sacrament of Holy Orders.

#### *Geographic and pastoral distances*

128. In addition to the plurality of cultures in the Amazon, distances generate a serious pastoral challenge that cannot be solved by mechanical and technological means alone. Geographical distances give rise to cultural and pastoral distances as well; it follows that a "pastoral ministry of visiting" needs to give way to a "pastoral ministry of presence". This requires the local church to reconfigure in all its dimensions: ministries, liturgy, sacraments, theology and social services.

#### *Suggestions*

129. The following suggestions from the communities recall aspects of the early Church when it responded to needs by creating appropriate ministries (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim 3:1-13):
  - a) New ministries to respond more effectively to the needs of the peoples of the Amazon:
    1. Promote vocations among indigenous men and women in order to respond to the need for pastoral and sacramental care. Their critical contribution is in the movement towards an authentic evangelization from the indigenous perspective, according to their habits and customs. This would be indigenous people preaching to indigenous people from a deep knowledge of their culture and their language, capable of communicating the message of the Gospel with the strength and effectiveness of those who share their cultural background. It is necessary to switch from a "Church that visits" to a "Church that remains", that accompanies and is present through ministers who arise from their own communities.
    2. Affirming that celibacy is a gift for the Church, it is requested that, for the most remote areas of the region, the possibility of priestly ordination be studied for older people, preferably indigenous, respected and accepted by their community, even if they have

an existing and stable family, in order to ensure availability of the Sacraments that accompany and sustain the Christian life.

3. Identify the type of official ministry that can be conferred on women, taking into account the central role they play today in the Church in the Amazon.

b) Role of the laity:

1. Indigenous communities are participatory with a high sense of co-responsibility. With this in mind, it is asked to put proper value on the proactive role of lay Christian men and women and to recognize their place as subjects in the Church that reaches out.
2. Offer integral training options to assume their role as credible and co-responsible animators of communities.
3. Create formative itineraries in the light of the Social Doctrine of the Church with an Amazonian focus for lay men and women who work in Amazonian territories, especially in areas of citizenship and politics.
4. Open new channels of synodal processes, with the participation of all the faithful, with a view to the organization of the Christian community for the transmission of the faith.

c) Role of women:

1. In the ecclesial field, the presence of women in communities is not always valued. The recognition of women is sought for their charisms and talents. They ask to recover the place accorded by Jesus to women, “where all of us, men and women, we all fit in”.<sup>61</sup>
2. It is also proposed that women have their leadership opportunity guaranteed, as well as an increasingly broad and relevant scope in the area of formation: theology, catechesis, liturgy and schools of faith and politics.
3. It is also requested that women’s voices be heard, that they be consulted and participate in decision-making, and thus be able to contribute with their sensitivity to ecclesial synodality.
4. May the Church embrace more and more the feminine style of acting and of understanding events.

d) Role of consecrated life:

1. “The Latin American and Caribbean peoples expect much from consecrated life [... which shows] the motherly face of the Church. Their longing for listening, welcoming and service, and their witness to the alternative values of the Kingdom, show that a new Latin American and Caribbean society, founded in Christ, is possible” (Dap. 224). It is therefore proposed to promote an alternative and prophetic consecrated life, inter-congregational and inter-institutional, dedicated to be present where no one wants to be and with whom nobody wants to be.
2. Support consecrated men and women in their going to and being with the most impoverished and excluded, and into political advocacy, in order to transform reality.

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Sint.REPAM, 78.

3. Encourage the men and women religious who come from abroad to be willing to share the local life with their hearts, heads and hands in order to unlearn models, recipes, schemes and pre-set structures; and to learn the languages, cultures, traditions of wisdom, cosmologies and mythologies of the indigenous peoples.
4. Given the pastoral urgencies and the temptation to get to work immediately, it is recommended to give time for learning of language and culture in order to generate bonds and develop an integral pastoral ministry.
5. It is recommended that formation in religious life include formative processes focused on interculturality, inculturation and dialogue between spiritualities and worldviews of the Amazon.
6. It is suggested that priority be given to the needs of local people over those of religious congregations.

e) Role of young people:

1. There is an urgent need for dialogue with young people to listen to their needs.
2. It is necessary to accompany processes within families of the transmission and reception of cultural and linguistic heritage<sup>62</sup> in order to overcome difficulties in intergenerational communication.
3. Young people find themselves between two worlds, between the indigenous mentality and the lure of the modern mentality, especially when they migrate to the cities. On the one hand, programs are needed to strengthen their cultural identity in the face of the loss of their values, languages and relationship with nature; on the other hand, programs to help them enter into dialogue with modern urban culture.
4. It is urgent to address the problem of the migration of young people to cities.<sup>63</sup>
5. Greater emphasis is needed on the defense and recovery of victims of drug trafficking and human trafficking networks, as well as addiction to drugs and alcohol.

f) Border-area dioceses:

1. The border is a fundamental factor in the life of the Amazonian peoples. It is the location par excellence where conflicts and violence worsen; and where the law is not respected and corruption undermines the control of the State, leaving many companies free to exploit indiscriminately. For all these reasons, it is necessary to work to make the Amazon a home for all and deserving the care of all. The border Churches should join together in pastoral action to face common problems such as the exploitation of the territory, delinquency, drug trafficking, human trafficking, prostitution, etc.
2. Pastoral networks in border areas should be encouraged and strengthened as a path to more effective social and ecological pastoral action, continuing the service of REPAM.
3. Given the specific characteristics of the Amazon territory, the need for an Amazon episcopal structure to implement the Synod ought to be considered.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. V: *Family and community*.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. III: *Migration*.

4. The creation of an economic fund is requested to support evangelization, human promotion and integral ecology, especially for the implementation of the Synod's proposals.

## CHAPTER V

### EVANGELIZATION IN THE CITIES<sup>64</sup>

*“A completely new culture has come to life and continues to grow in the cities” (EG 73)*

#### *Urban mission*

130. St. John Paul II warned us: “Today the image of mission *ad gentes* is perhaps changing: efforts should be concentrated on the big cities, where new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication, which then influence the wider population” (RM, 37b). The Church needs to be in permanent dialogue with the urban reality, which demands different and creative responses. For this, it is necessary that the priests, men and women religious, and laity of the different ministries, movements, communities and groups in the same city or diocese, be increasingly united in carrying out joint, intelligent missionary activities and capable of joining forces. The urban mission will only advance as long as there is a great communion among the workers in the vineyard of the Lord, because, faced with the complexity of the city, individual and isolated pastoral action loses effectiveness.

#### *Urban challenges*

131. The city, even with its challenges, can witness an explosion of life. Cities are part of the territory, so they must take care of the forest and respect the indigenous people. Yet many inhabitants of the Amazon’s cities consider indigenous people to be an obstacle to their progress and live with their backs to the forest.
132. Indigenous individuals in the city are migrants, landless human beings, survivors of a historic battle for the demarcation of their land, with their cultural identity in crisis. In urban centers, government agencies often shirk their responsibility to guarantee their rights, denying them their identity and condemning them to invisibility. Some parishes, for their part, have not yet assumed their full responsibility in the multicultural world that awaits a specific, missionary and prophetic pastoral ministry.
133. An important phenomenon to be taken into account is the rapid growth of recently founded evangelical churches of pentecostal origin, especially in the peripheries.<sup>65</sup>
134. All this leads us to ask ourselves: what parish structure can best respond to the urban world, where anonymity, media influences and pronounced social inequality reign supreme? What kind of education can Catholic institutions promote at the formal and informal levels?

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. IV: *Urbanization*.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. V: *Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue*.

## *Suggestions*

135. It would be appropriate to:

- a. Promote a specific pastoral ministry for the indigenous people who live in cities, with them participating as protagonists.
- b. Promote the integration of the indigenous people in the various pastoral activities of the parish with follow-up and formation, valuing their contribution more and more each day.
- c. Develop a common strategy of pastoral work in the cities.<sup>66</sup>
- d. Rethink church structures, overcoming the outdated cultural forms that have been acquired over the centuries.<sup>67</sup>
- e. Promote opportunities for integral formation.<sup>68</sup>
- f. Raise awareness about the vital importance of the city's place in the territory and of appreciating the forest and its inhabitants. Promote necessary changes in social and economic structures so that the growth of cities is not a threat.
- g. Sensitize the community about social struggles, supporting the different social movements to promote ecological citizenship and defend human rights.<sup>69</sup>
- h. Promote a missionary and evangelizing Church, visiting and listening to the present reality in the new neighbourhoods.
- i. Update the option for young people,<sup>70</sup> fashioning a pastoral ministry in which they themselves are protagonists.<sup>71</sup>
- j. Be present in the media and communications in order to evangelize and promote the original cultures.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. IV: *Urbanization*

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. IV: *The Organization of Communities*.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. IV: *The Organization of Communities*.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. VII: *The prophetic role of the Church and integral human promotion*.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. DP 1166-1205; final document of XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*; Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. IV: *The Organization of Communities*.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Part III, Ch. II: *Challenges of Inculturation and Interculturality*.

## CHAPTER VI

### ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*“Now we shall try to outline the major paths of dialogue which can help us escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us ” (LS 163)*

136. Ecumenical dialogue takes place between people who share faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour and, based on the Holy Scriptures, seek to bear common witness. Interreligious dialogue takes place between believers who share their lives, their struggles, their concerns and their experiences of God, making their differences a stimulus to grow and deepen their own faith.
137. Some groups propagate a theology of prosperity and well-being based on their own reading of the Bible. There are also fatalistic orientations that seek to unsettle their hearers; then, answering the negative view of the world, they offer a bridge to certain salvation. These tendencies have a negative impact on groups in the Amazon, some through fear and others by way of the search for success.
138. However, in the midst of the Amazon rainforest alongside the poorest, other groups are present, evangelizing and educating; they hold a great attraction for the people despite not valuing their cultures positively. Their presence has allowed them to disseminate and teach the Bible translated into the original languages. In large part these movements have spread due to the absence of Catholic ministers. Their pastors have formed small communities with a human face, where people feel personally valued. Another positive factor is the local, close and concrete presence of the pastors who visit, accompany, comfort, know and pray for the specific needs of the families. They are people like the others, easy to meet, who live the same problems and become “closer to” and less “different from” the rest of the community. They are showing us another way of being church where the people feel that they are the protagonists and where the faithful can express themselves freely without censorship or dogmatism or ritual disciplines.

#### *Suggestions*

139. It would be appropriate to:
  - a. Seek common ground through periodic meetings with representatives of other religions in order to work together for the care for our common home, and to fight together for the common good in the face of external aggressions.
  - b. Consider what aspects of being church other religions can teach us and which aspects need to be incorporated into new paths for the Church in the Amazon.
  - c. Encourage translation of the Bible into the original languages of the Amazon.
  - d. Promote meetings with evangelical Christian theologians.

## CHAPTER VII

### MISSION OF THE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

*“The Church will give greater importance to social media and will use them for Evangelization” (DP 158)*

#### *Media, ideologies and cultures*

140. One of the great challenges for the Church is to think about how to position itself in this interconnected world. The mass social communications media transmit patterns of behaviour, lifestyles, values and mentalities that propagate a culture that tends to impose itself and standardize our interconnected world. The problem is ideological seduction by the consumerist mentality, which mainly affects youth. In many cases, young people are led to not value – and even reject – their own culture and traditions, uncritically accepting the prevailing cultural model. This causes uprooting and loss of identity.

#### *Church media*

141. The Church has an infrastructure of media, especially radio stations, which are its principal means of communication. The media can be a very important instrument for transmitting the gospel way of life, its values and its standards. They are also a means to provide information on what is happening in the Amazon, especially with regard to the consequences of a lifestyle that destroys – which is hidden by the media in the hands of large corporations. There are already some social communication centres run by the indigenous people themselves; they experience the joy of being able to express their own words and voice not only to their own communities but also to the outside world. The indigenous world displays values that the modern world does not share. That is why it is important that the natives themselves be empowered to use the media. Their contribution can resonate with and assist the ecological conversion of the Church and of the planet. This is about the Amazon reality rising out of the Amazon and having planetary repercussions.

#### *Suggestions (cf. DAp. 486)*

142. The following is suggested:
- a. Comprehensive training of native communicators, especially indigenous persons, in order to strengthen the narratives specific to the territory.
  - b. Presence of pastoral agents in the mass media.
  - c. Creation, promotion and strengthening of new radio and TV stations with contents appropriate to the Amazon reality.
  - d. Presence of the Church on the Internet and other communication networks to raise awareness of the reality of the Amazon in the rest of the world.
  - e. A specific pastoral plan covering the various means of communication in the hands of the Church and those who work in other media.
  - f. Generation and dissemination of content about the relevance of the Amazon, its peoples and cultures for the world, to be promoted in the structures and channels of the universal Church.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROPHETIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND INTEGRAL HUMAN PROMOTION

*“From the heart of the Gospel we recognize the intimate connection that exists between evangelization and human promotion, which must necessarily be expressed and developed in every evangelizing action” (EG 178)*

#### *The Church reaching out*

143. The Church has the mission of evangelizing, which equally implies commitment to promote the fulfillment of the rights of indigenous peoples. In fact, when these peoples meet, they speak of spirituality as well as about what is happening to them and their social problems. The Church cannot abandon its concern for the integral salvation of the human person, which entails favoring the culture of indigenous peoples, talking about their vital needs, accompanying their movements and joining forces to struggle for their rights.

#### *The Church listening*

144. The Spirit speaks in the voice of the poor; the Church must listen to them because they are a locus of theological thought. When listening to pain, silence becomes necessary to be able to hear the voice of the Spirit of God. The prophetic voice implies a new contemplative gaze capable of mercy and commitment. As part of the Amazon people, the Church renews its prophecy from the indigenous and Christian tradition. But it also means seeing with a critical conscience a series of behaviours and realities of the indigenous peoples that go against the Gospel. The Amazon world asks the Church to be its ally.

#### *The Church and power*

145. Being Church in the Amazon in a realistic way means to prophetically pose the problem of power, because it is impossible in this region for people to assert their rights against large economic interests and political institutions. Today, to question power in the defense of territory and human rights is to risk one's life, to step onto the path of cross and martyrdom. The number of martyrs in the Amazon is alarming (e.g. in Brazil alone, 1,119 indigenous people were murdered between 2003 and 2017 for defending their territory).<sup>73</sup> The Church cannot be indifferent; on the contrary, it must help to protect the men and women who defend human rights and remember their martyrs, among them leaders such as Sr. Dorothy Stang.

#### *Suggestions*

146. As a community of worldwide solidarity, the Church reacts responsibly to the global situation of injustice, poverty, inequality, violence and exclusion in the Amazon. Its fundamental presupposition is the recognition of unjust relationships. Therefore it is necessary to:
- a. Denounce extractivist models that damage the territory and violate the rights of communities. Raise one's voice against projects that affect the environment and

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. CIMI, “Relatório de violência contra os Povos Indígenas no Brasil”.

promote death.

- b. Join grassroots social movements, to prophetically announce an agenda of agrarian justice that promotes profound agrarian reform, supporting organic agriculture and agroforestry. Take up the cause of agroecology by incorporating it in their training activities with a view to developing greater awareness of the indigenous populations themselves.<sup>74</sup>
- c. Promote the formation, defense and enforceability of the human rights of the peoples of the Amazon, of other populations and of nature. Defend minorities and the most vulnerable.
- d. Listen to the cry of “Mother Earth” assaulted and seriously wounded by the economic model of predatory and ecocidal development, that is formulated and imposed from the outside so as to serve powerful external interests, and which kills and plunders, destroys and devastates, expels and discards.
- e. Promote the dignity and equality of women in public, private and the Church, by making sure there are opportunities for participation; by combating physical, domestic and psychological violence, femicide, abortion, sexual exploitation and trafficking; and by committing to fight to guarantee their rights and to overcome any kind of stereotype.
- f. Promote a new ecological awareness that leads us to change our consumption habits, to promote the use of renewable energies, avoiding harmful materials and implementing other pathways of action highlighted by the Encyclical *Laudato si'*.<sup>75</sup> Promote alliances to combat deforestation and promote reforestation.
- g. Fearlessly and concretely adopt the preferential option for the poor in the struggle of indigenous peoples, traditional communities, migrants and young people to shape the character of the Church in the Amazon.
- h. Create networks of collaboration in the areas of regional, global and international advocacy, in which the Church participates organically, so that the peoples themselves can denounce the violation of their human rights.

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<sup>74</sup> See Sint. REPAM, 142, 146.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Part II, Ch. IX, *Ecological Conversion*.

## CONCLUSION

147. Throughout its long journey, this *Working Document* has listened to the voice of the Amazon in the light of faith (Part I); and it has tried to respond to the cry of the Amazon people and territory for integral ecology (Part II) and to seek out new, prophetic pathways in the Amazon (Part III). These voices of the Amazon call out for a new response to the diverse challenges; they ask for new paths to make a *kairós* possible, a time of grace and hope in the Church and for the world. We conclude under the protection of Mary who is venerated with various titles throughout the Amazon. We hope that this Synod will be a concrete expression of the synodality of the Church reaching outwards, so that the full life that Jesus came to bring to the world (Jn 10:10) may reach everyone, especially the poor.