

Like the Amazon, the Spirit overflowed

Summary of the Final Document of the Panamazon Synod

The Panamazonian synod concluded with fresh air and overflowing life. The 120 points of the final document passed with a wide margin, a sign of the previous preparation work and the open dialogue that took place. The synod points to concrete clues and encourages creating spaces for dialogue rather than structures. It is not a point of arrival, but of departure.

The previous consultation work, in which about 87,000 people were involved, gave authority to defend innovative positions that could be controversial. As the final document says, just like the Amazon River, which periodically overflows, the Spirit also caused the overflow of life. Yes, there is significant and brave novelty in this synod.



Pope Francis begged in the closing ceremony that in the transmission of the synod we should not focus exclusively on the novelty of disciplinary matters, but rather that we emphasize the diagnosis, which was the most important thing that had been done in the synod. Yes, much has been said by him about the reality of pain, violence and hope that is lived in the Amazon.

The entire document is a call to conversion, specifying four necessary conversions.

Pastoral conversion: we are invited to a spirituality of listening and announcement. In the Amazon, forced migration is experienced, due to the expulsion from the territory by megaproject pressures and lack of expectations. 70% of the Amazonian population already lives in cities. Young people experience a crisis of values and require accompaniment in situations that destroy their identity and damage their self-esteem. An indigenous pastoral plan is necessary in the city. It is expressly proposed to create the ministry of welcome in urban communities, where it is necessary to claim basic rights such as water, housing, energy ... We are reminded that being missionary disciples is placed in the order of being. Traveling mission teams in the Amazon are valued, and religious

congregations are invited to establish at least one missionary front in one of the Amazonian countries.

Cultural conversion: in several points of the text it is talked about the seeds of the Word present in local cultures. It is declared that for the Church the defense of life, community, land and the rights of indigenous peoples is an evangelical principle. Inculturation is the incarnation of the gospel in indigenous cultures. A colonialist evangelization is rejected. Faced with the mistakes and sins of the past, the Church has the historical opportunity to differentiate itself from the new colonizing powers and exercise its prophetic activity with transparency. For this reason, it undertakes to be an ally of the Amazonian peoples to denounce the attacks on the life of the indigenous communities, the projects that affect the environment, the lack of demarcation of territories, as well as the economic model of predatory and ecocidal development.



Ecological conversion: faced with the unprecedented crisis we are experiencing, it is urgent to seek models of fair and supportive development. In the face of predatory extraction. It is claimed that an integral ecology is the only possible approach. The document reminds us that the defense and promotion of human rights is a requirement of faith. Therefore: they denounce the violation of human rights and the destruction caused by extraction; they encourage the divestment of capital in extractive companies, and point out that a radical energy transition is necessary. States are expressly requested to stop considering the Amazon as an inexhaustible pantry. Novelty is the introduction of the definition of ecological sin, which manifests itself in acts and habits of pollution and destruction of the harmony of the environment; goes against justice and is a sin against future generations. The need for more simple lifestyles is pointed out. It is proposed to create special ministries for the care of the “common home”, and the promotion of integral ecology at the parish level and in each ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The synod urges all to assume the Laudato Si program at all levels and structures of the Church.

Synodal conversion: Synodality is presented as the most genuine way of being a Church, characterized by respect for the dignity and equality of all the baptized, men and women, the complementarity of charisms and ministries, and the habit of discerning together. It is urgent for the Amazon Church to promote and confer ministries for men and women in an equitable manner. It advocates greater participation of lay people and women, also in decision-making areas. The Church is committed to the defense of women against the physical, moral and religious violence they suffer, which sometimes reaches femicide, and recognizes them as protagonists and guardians of creation. The ministry that Jesus reserved for women is recognized. The creation of the instituted ministry of "the woman leader of the community" is expressly requested. Finally, as regards women, they request to be able to talk with the Commission that was in charge of the study on the Diaconate of Women (at the closing of the synod the Pope promised to reactivate it with new members). Regarding the ordination of permanent deacons of proven suitability with a constituted family, the possibility opens up considering that legitimate diversity does not harm the communion and unity of the Church, but rather manifests and serves it. It advocates a permanent Amazon episcopal body. This should constitute a competent commission for the elaboration of an Amazonian rite.



In his final intervention after the vote, the Pope acknowledged that what is said about the women in the document falls short, and predicted that the Church has not yet realized what being a woman means, because the issue goes much further than functionality. There is certainly a long way to go. The Pope invites us not to be afraid and to play overflow, to go further.

The synod gives concrete clues to deepen. For example, it acknowledges that "the wisdom of ancestral peoples affirms that mother earth has a female face." Daniela Andrade, responsible for REPAM communication, reminded us of the importance of identifying God with the feminine, because the symbolic becomes daily nature. The liberation of nature and women go hand in hand; the same possessive logic oppresses them. That the synodal

document uses feminine images to talk about the sacred is already a step of conversion that we greet with gratitude: “We want a Magdalena Church, that feels loved and reconciled, that announces with joy and conviction the crucified and risen Christ” (n 22). Certainly, as Mauricio López, executive secretary of REPAM, affirmed in his intervention at the synod, we are on our way with Jesus towards Easter because death will not have the last word.



The mystery of the incarnation cannot set limits. Jesus is embodied in the margins. The periphery, the Amazon, reached the center of Christianity, Rome, and its overflow of life fertilized it. And that overflow came mainly from the presence of women (35 in total) and Indigenous peoples. Doors have been opened and we feel the possibility of creating roads. Reality cannot be denied. As Sister Alba Teresa Cediél, general superior of the Lauritas sisters, the female diaconate, whether it was recognized or not, is being lived.

The Amazon is a laboratory for the Church and for the world. In the ecological dimension we play the future, insists again and again Pope Francis. The synod concludes with the proposal to create a commission that continues to work on the open road. That is feminine wisdom, we know about processes. Without a doubt, the final document is also the result of the dynamism of the women present in Rome. It is in the hands of everyone to make this synod a reality and continue to deepen the synod.

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