

Woman and Panamazon Synod

The significance of the Amazonian synod will become evident over time. No doubt it will be a light that guides the steps that the Church is called to take in the immediate future. But there is a field in which the novelty and openness is obvious, and it is the issue of women. Accustomed to invisibility and lack of appreciation, the final document of the synod is a breath of fresh air that makes us stand tall and makes us feel full of life, with a future of possible dignity.

This synod is not explained without the precedent of *Laudato Si*. This encyclical emphasizes the assessment of Indigenous Peoples and the invitation to learn from their cultural background. The final document of the synod states that "the wisdom of ancestral peoples affirms that Mother Earth has a female face" (No. 101). The divinity too. God, of course, has no sex, but our way of representing God speaks of us as a society. The first way to imagine God was in the feminine, to the amazement of the ability to give life. As far as it is known, it is common to all cultures. The subsequent masculinization of the divine was derived from the "patriarchal religious culture." Ecofeminism enlightens us to see that the oppression of women and the devastation of the planet are two forms of violence that are reinforced. As Mary Judith Ressa states, "After having been both - women and the earth - source of life, we have become resources to be used - and abused - as the power structure desires." Overcoming macho values, so normalized, will result in liberation for women and for nature. The synod recognizes women as guardians of creation (No. 102), something so evident in the Amazonian Peoples. And how important it is to identify God also with the feminine. This is underlined by Daniela Andrade, responsible for REPAM communication. Every day in nature the symbolism is evident.



If the Gospel is good news, it must also be for women in an effective way. And so it was in Jesus, women found liberation. They were part of his group of closest followers and played a leading role among the first evangelizers. No. 102 of the final document of the synod recognizes the unique ministry that Jesus reserved for women. This is a reality is addressed in thousands of speeches. It has been collected in the New Testament texts even though the editors were totally imbued with

the patriarchal culture. The application that is addressed in No. 103 is based on this finding and it is overlapped in the reopening of the study commission of the female diaconate.

It is a breath of fresh air to read that it is urgent for the Amazon Church to promote and confer ministries for men and women in an equitable manner (No. 95). This is based on the equality and dignity we share as the baptized. It should be obvious, but it is not. Jesus repeatedly shows his preference to incarnate in the margins. And our liberation is in placing ourselves in solidarity with those who are there, because only from them can we get closer to the truth, to the just measure of things. The periphery, the Amazon, is what places the basic equity between men and women on its agenda, which should be a priority and urgency for the entire universal Church.

Among the ministries to be developed, No. 102 asks that the ministry of the woman leader of the community be recognized. It's about verifying reality. This must be advanced, honoured and made visible through official, public recognition. Unfortunately, women are so accustomed to serving in the occult, without public recognition or appreciation, that we do not claim this honour. And this attitude is unfair to women as a whole, since invisibility is part of the breeding ground for contempt, which results in so many forms of violence against women.



In this same n° 102, the document recognizes the violence suffered by women on a physical level (violence against women is normalized in many geographical areas, including Latin America), on a moral level (how many times women have been told that they must endure the bad treatment because it is the cross that God has given them), and on a religious level. It is new and highly valued that this last level is pointed out. Personally, the reflection of María López Vigil from the headline that read: "Where God is male, men believe themselves gods" was very clarifying. The religious patriarchy is based on the assumption of sacred masculinity, which appeals to the manly character of God to make man the sole representative and spokesman of the divinity. María López Vigil suggests that herein lies the root of the discrimination of men over women and the subsequent violence. And as long as that root remains hidden and untouched, we will continue to suffer the normalization of discrimination and violence. Without a radical condemnation of violence against women, like the one done in this document, the Church will not be credible. Hopefully the consistent practice is in the three levels mentioned.

In this way to walk towards equality, it is pointed out in the same n ° 102 the need to enhance the formation of women. Many women already have formation and are trained for leadership, but many others have been refused their right to training, by not offering or by denying it to them. Yes, we want to participate in training spaces, not deformation. For this, a first step is that in the teaching profession there is, at least, parity in the teaching staff, that is, 50% of the teaching staff are women. Otherwise, we run the risk of repeating indoctrination.



The Pope said at the closing of the synod that what is said about women in the final document falls short. His diagnosis is that the Church has not yet realized what the woman means in herself, because the question goes much deeper than functionality. At a minimum, No. 101 asks that women be consulted and take part in decision-making, so that they can contribute their sensitivity to ecclesial synodality. It is requested that their participation in the pastoral councils of parishes and dioceses be strengthened, even in government instances. A language so cautious is a sign of the enormous difference that exists with current reality and a concession to the need to take progressive steps. But without stopping.

For me, one of the most beautiful parts of the document is the expression of the desire for the Church to be Magdalene (n ° 22), to feel loved and reconciled, to announce with joy and conviction the crucified and risen Christ. How important is this visibility of a female reference for the whole Church. To name Mary Magdalene so centrally is to honour her, to give her rightful place; she is the first witness of the resurrection, apostle of the apostles. Let us all recognize ourselves in this and go out to announce the good news of the gospel that comes to us from the Amazon.

Mariángel Marco Teja
Ursuline of Jesus

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