



## Synod of the Amazon, 6-27 October 2019

Since the Synod of the Amazon was convened by Pope Francis on October 15, 2017, a broad movement of active and direct listening was launched in the synodal key promoted by the Pope. That consultation process helped to draft the Documentus Laboris made public last June and that will be the basis of work in the synod.



The Amazon region has 7.8 million square kilometers and houses 40% of the world's tropical forest area. Inside it they live 33 million people. Climate change and human intervention are leading the Amazon to a point of no return, and the consequences are not local, but planetary.

The recent very serious fires are a reflection of the enormous economic interests behind and the climate of impunity created by governments.



The Panamazonic Synod is a synod of the Universal Church based on a specific reality that is the Amazon. As Mauricio López, Executive Secretary of the REPAM suggests, we would be faced with the emergence of the territory as a theological

place, something deeply rooted in the tradition of the Church, where the notion of territory (promised land) gives meaning and identity and is the basis of being. The incarnation of Jesus also speaks of a territorial concretion.

Today, from the Amazon, the Pope summons us to three conversions:

**1- Pastoral: to be a Church in exit (*Evangelium Gaudium*), missionary, who evangelizes from the social.**

The new paths of evangelization must be constructed in dialogue with the ancestral wisdoms in which the seeds of the Word are manifested. The Church with an Amazonian face does not say that there is only one way to believe in God, to celebrate God, but that it is multiple, because there are multiple cultures. We must find that seed of God sown there (*Instrumentus Laboris* n ° 29). As Mauricio López emphasizes, the teaching of the original peoples throughout the Church, in their spiritual depth, in their harmony with the territory, between brothers and sisters, and with the presence of transcendence, is profoundly valuable. From them, we feel challenged to rethink our spirituality so that it will be more sober, sustained in the essential, that allows us to have a true communion with the sister mother earth, with the brothers and sisters of this world, especially with the most excluded. Pastoral conversion should lead us to a material and relationship conversion, underlines Mauricio.



**2- Socio-environmental, in the line of *Laudato Si*.**

The integral ecology that advocates the encyclical is already part of the notion of the good living of Indigenous peoples, the vision of non-accumulation in general, of non-destruction, of reciprocity with the land , with others, with spirits. We are called to ecological conversion, with the *Laudato Si* itinerary, so that integral ecology is the way of being and proceeding in the Church. We are called to change our mode of relationship with our sister mother earth, and to a profound change in

our relationship with each other, since the unprecedented dynamics of exploitation and accumulation have led us to the "throwaway culture".



### **3- Towards a Synodal Church (*Episcopalis Communio*).**

A more participatory Church is desired, with new criteria and structures, capable of incorporating the novelty that comes from the richness of diversity.

In order not to leave the communities without the Eucharist, it is proposed to reconsider some criteria for the selection and preparation of the ministers authorized to celebrate it. For example, in the indigenous tradition there is the figure of the *sacha*, a wise old man whose authority is recognized, who has a family formed.

The *Instrumentus Laboris* also advocates to identify the type of official ministry that can be conferred on women, in order to recover the space that Jesus gave them. It is proposed to guarantee their leadership and training.



As Pope Francis likes to say, "the periphery is the center." From the Amazon, rich in biodiversity and people, comes the call to unity in diversity, taking root in the trinitarian dimension of our faith. **Let us join together in prayer to this ecclesial encounter so that it is the Pentecost that the Spirit is wishing to enlighten and the Church needs.**

Ursulines of Jesus, St. Kateri community.

Edmonton, Canada, September 2019.