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HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE   BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE   PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE   SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ  
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N. 180608a

Friday 08.06.2018

## **Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology": Preparatory Document of the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazon Region**

### **AMAZONIA: NEW PATHS FOR THE CHURCH AND FOR AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

#### **Preparatory Document**

#### **Preamble**

In accordance with the proclamation by Pope Francis on October 15, 2017, the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, called to reflect on the theme: *New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*, will take place in October 2019. New paths for evangelization must be designed for and with the People of God who live in this region: inhabitants of communities and rural areas, of cities and large metropolises, people who live on river banks, migrants and displaced persons, and especially for and with indigenous peoples.<sup>1</sup>

In the Amazon rainforest, which is of vital importance for the planet, a deep crisis has been triggered by prolonged human intervention, in which a "culture of waste" (LS 16) and an extractivist mentality prevail. The Amazon is a region with rich biodiversity; it is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious; it is a mirror of all humanity which, in defense of life, requires structural and personal changes by all human beings, by nations, and by the Church.

The Special Synod's reflections transcend the strictly ecclesial-Amazonian sphere, because they focus on the universal Church, as well as on the future of the entire planet. We begin with a specific geographical area in order to build a bridge to the other important biomes of our world: the Congo basin, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, the tropical forests of the Asia Pacific region, and the Guarani Aquifer, among others.

Listening to indigenous peoples and to all the communities living in the Amazonia – as the first interlocutors of this Synod – is of vital importance for the universal Church. For this we need greater closeness. We want to know the following: How do you imagine your "serene future" and the "good life" of future generations? How can we work together toward the construction of a world which breaks with structures that take life and with

colonizing mentalities, in order to build networks of solidarity and inter-culturality? And, above all, what is the Church's particular mission today in the face of this reality?

This Preparatory Document is divided into three parts corresponding to the method “see, judge (discern), and act”. At the end of the text there are questions that allow for dialogue and a progressive approach to the regional reality and the expectation of a “culture of encounter” (EG 220). The new paths for evangelization and for shaping a Church with an Amazonian face grow out of this “culture of encounter” in daily life, “in a multifaceted harmony” (EG 220) and “happy sobriety” (LS 224-225), as contributions for the building of the Kingdom.

## I. SEEING. IDENTITY AND CRIES OF THE PAN-AMAZONIA2

### 1. The territory

The Amazon Basin encompasses one of our planet's largest reserves of biodiversity (30 to 50% of the world's flora and fauna) and freshwater (20% of the world's fresh water). It constitutes more than a third of the planet's primary forests and – although the oceans are the largest carbon sinks – the Amazon's work of carbon sequestration is quite significant. It covers more than seven and a half million square kilometers, and 9 countries share this great Biome (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela, including French Guyana as an overseas territory).

The so-called “Islands of Guyana” – bordered by the Orinoco and Black Rivers –, the Amazon River, and the South American Atlantic coasts between the mouths of the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers, are also part of this geographical area. Other areas are counted as part of the territory because they fall under the influence of its climatic and geographical system due to their proximity to the Amazon Basin.

However, these details do not imply a uniform region. We can identify many types of “Amazonias” within the Amazon Basin. In this context, it is water – through its gorges, rivers, and lakes – that becomes the region's organizing and integrating element, with its main axis being the Amazon, the mother and father river of all. Within such a diverse Amazonian territory, it can be assumed that the different human groups that inhabit it have had to adapt to its different geographical, ecological, and political realities.

The centuries-long work of the Catholic Church in the Amazon Basin has been oriented towards responding to these varied human and environmental contexts.

### 2. Socio-cultural Diversity

Given its geographical proportions, the Amazonia is a region where many different peoples, cultures, and lifestyles live and coexist.

The demographic occupation of the Amazon Basin precedes the process of colonization by many, perhaps thousands of years. Until colonization, Amazonian populations were concentrated on the banks of large rivers and lakes as a matter of survival, which included activities such as hunting, fishing, and farming in the floodplains. With colonization and the widespread practice of indigenous slavery, many people abandoned these sites and took refuge in the interior of the jungle. In addition, during the first phase of colonization, a process of population substitution occurred, causing extensive demographic concentration on the banks of rivers and lakes.

Besides the historical circumstances, the so-called “*people of the waters*” – in this case those of the Amazon Basin – have always had a relationship of interdependence with water sources. For this reason, the rural peoples of the Amazonia use the resources of the floodplains, against the backdrop of the cyclical movement of their rivers – flooding, reflux, and the dry season – in a relationship of respect that grows out of knowing that “life steers the river” and that “the river steers life”. In addition, the peoples of the jungle – gatherers and hunters par excellence – survive on what the land and the forest have to offer. They watch over the rivers and the land, just as the land cares for them. They are the custodians of the rainforest and its resources.

Nonetheless, the wealth of the Amazonian rainforest and rivers is being threatened by expansive economic interests, which assert themselves in various parts of the territory. Such interests lead, among other things, to the intensification of indiscriminate logging in the rainforest, as well as the contamination of rivers, lakes, and tributaries (due to the indiscriminate use of agro-toxins, oil spills, legal and illegal mining, and byproducts from the production of narcotics). Added to this is drug trafficking, which together with the above puts at risk the survival of those peoples who depend on the region's animal and plant resources.

On the other hand, the cities of the Amazon Basin have grown quite rapidly, and have integrated many migrants forcibly displaced from their lands, resulting in the expansion of large urban centers ever-deeper into the rainforest. Most of these migrants are indigenous peoples of Afro-descent hailing from river lands, who have been expelled by illegal and legal mining and by the oil extraction industry. They often find themselves cornered by the expansion of timber extraction, and are those most affected by agrarian and socio-environmental conflicts. Cities are also characterized by social inequalities. The poverty produced therein throughout history has generated relationships of subordination, of political and institutional violence, and of increased alcohol and drug consumption – both in cities and in rural communities. Poverty represents a deep wound in the lives of many Amazonian peoples.

The most recent migratory displacements within the Amazon region have been characterized, above all, by the movement of indigenous people from their native lands to the cities. Currently, between 70% and 80% of the Pan-Amazonian population resides in urban areas. Many of these indigenous people are undocumented or irregular, refugees and those hailing from riverside areas or belonging to other vulnerable categories of people. As a result, an attitude of xenophobia and criminalization of migrants and displaced persons is growing throughout the Amazon region. This, furthermore, leads to the exploitation of Amazonian populations, who become victims of the changing values of the global economy, for which profit has higher value than human dignity. One example of this is the dramatic increase in trafficking in persons, especially women, for the purpose of sexual and commercial exploitation. They thus lose their leading role in their communities' processes of social, economic, cultural, ecological, religious, and political transformation.

In summary, the excessive growth of agricultural, extractive, and logging activities in the Amazonia has not only damaged the ecological richness of the region, its rainforest, and its waters, but has also impoverished its social and cultural wealth. It has forced a "piecemeal" and "non-inclusive" urban development upon the Amazon Basin. In response to this situation, there has been an increase in organizational capacities and an improvement in civil society, particularly regarding environmental issues. In the field of social relations, despite some limitations, the Catholic Church has generally carried out significant efforts, bolstering its work through its on-the-ground presence and its pastoral and social creativity.

### 3. Identity of indigenous peoples

Within the nine countries that make up the Pan-Amazonian region, there are about three million indigenous people, representing about 390 different peoples and nationalities. In addition, according to data gathered by specialized Church institutions (e.g. the *Missionary Indigenous Council of Brazil* and others), there are between 110 and 130 different *Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation (PIAV)* or "free peoples" in the region. Moreover, a new category of indigenous people has recently emerged, consisting of indigenous people living in urban areas, some of whom are recognizable as such. But there are other groups which disappear into the urban fabric and are therefore called "invisible". Each of these peoples represents a particular cultural identity and a specific historical richness, each with its own particular way of seeing the world and its surroundings and of relating to it out of their specific worldview and territoriality.

Apart from the threats that emerge from within their own cultures, indigenous peoples have experienced severe external threats ever since the first contact with the colonizers (cf. *LS* 143, *DAP* 90). Against these threats, indigenous peoples and Amazonian communities have organized themselves and fought to defend their lives and cultures, territories and rights, and the life of the universe and of all creation. The most vulnerable group, however, are the "Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation" (*PIAV*), who do not possess the tools required for dialogue and negotiation with the outsiders that invade their territories.

Some “non-indigenous” people find it difficult to understand the otherness of native peoples, and often do not respect their differences. The Aparecida Document, referring to respect for indigenous and Afro-American peoples, says: “Society tends to underestimate them, ignoring their differences. Their social situation is marked by exclusion and poverty” (*DAP* 89). However, as Pope Francis remarked in Puerto Maldonado: “Their worldview and wisdom have much to teach those of us who do not belong to their culture. All our efforts towards improving the lives of the Amazonian peoples will always be too few” (*Fr.PM*).

In recent years, indigenous peoples have begun to write down their own history and to document more formally their own cultures, customs, traditions, and knowledge. They have written about the teachings received from their elders, parents, and grandparents, which are both personal and collective memories. Today, indigenous identity is not only derived from ethnicity. It also refers to the ability to maintain that identity without isolating oneself from the surrounding societies with which one interacts.

Faced with this integration process, indigenous organizations are emerging that seek to strengthen the history of their peoples, so as to guide their struggle for autonomy and self-determination: “It is right to acknowledge the existence of promising initiatives coming from your own communities and organizations, which advocate that the native peoples and communities themselves be the guardians of the woodlands. The resources that conservation practices generate would then revert to benefit your families, improve your living conditions and promote health and education in your communities” (*Fr.PM*). However, no initiative can ignore the fact that the relationship of belonging and participation, which Amazonian inhabitants establish with creation, is part of their identity and contrasts with a mercantilist vision of the riches of creation (cf. *LS* 38).

The Catholic Church is present in many of these contexts in the person of missionaries committed to the causes of indigenous and Amazonian peoples.

#### 4. Church's historical memory

The Church's presence in the Amazon Basin has its roots in the colonial occupation of the area by Spain and Portugal. The incorporation of the immense Amazonia territory into colonial society, and its subsequent division into nation states, took place over a period of more than four centuries. Until the beginning of the 20th century, voices raised in defense of indigenous peoples were few and far between – although not absent (cf. Pius X, Encyclical Letter *Lacrimabili Statu*, 7.6.1912). These voices were strengthened following the Second Vatican Council. In order to encourage “the process of change through evangelical values”, the II Conference of Latin American Bishops, held in Medellin (1968), in its *Message to the Peoples of Latin America*, recalled that “in spite of her limitations”, the Church “has lived through, alongside our peoples, the process of colonization, liberation, and organization.” Also, the III Conference of Latin American Bishops, held in Puebla (1979), is a reminder that the occupation and colonization of indigenous lands was “an extensive process of domination”, which was full of “contradictions and deep wounds” (*DP* 6). Later, the IV Conference of Santo Domingo (1992) recalled “one of the saddest episodes in Latin American and Caribbean history”, which “was the forced transfer, as slaves, of an enormous number of Africans”. Pope St. John Paul II called this forced displacement an “unrecognized holocaust”, in which “baptized persons who did not live their faith took part” (*DSD* 20); cf John Paul II, *Discourse to the Catholic Community on the Island of Gorea*, Senegal, 22.02.1992, n. 3; *Message to the Afro-Americans*, Santo Domingo, 12.10.1992, n. 2) The Pope and delegates in Santo Domingo begged forgiveness for this “scandalous stain on the history of humanity” (*DSD* 20).

Today, unfortunately, traces still exist of the colonizing project, which gave rise to attitudes that belittle and demonize indigenous cultures. These attitudes weaken indigenous social structures and allow their intellectual knowledge and means of expression to be stripped away. It is frightening that still today – 500 years after external conquest, following more or less 400 years of organized mission and evangelization, and 200 years after the independence of Pan-Amazonian countries – similar vicious cycles continue to hold sway over the territory and its inhabitants, who today are victims of a ferocious neocolonialism, carried out “under the auspices of progress”. It is likely that, as Pope Francis stated in Puerto Maldonado, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon Basin have never been as threatened as they are at present. Today, due to the scandalous offenses of “new forms of colonialism”, “The Amazonia is being disputed on various fronts” (*Fr.PM*).

Throughout its history as a mission territory, the Amazon Basin has been filled with examples of concrete witness to the Cross, and was often a place of martyrdom. The Church has also learned that throughout this territory, which a great variety of peoples has inhabited for approximately 10,000 years, indigenous cultures are formed in harmony with the environment. Pre-Columbian cultures offered the Christianity of the Iberian Peninsula, brought by the conquistadors, multiple bridges and points-of-contact, “such as an openness to God’s activity; a sense of gratitude for the fruits of the earth, the sacredness of human life, and an appreciation of the family; a sense of solidarity and co-responsibility in joint efforts; the importance of worship; and the belief in life beyond the grave, as well as so many other values” (*DSD* 17).

## 5. Justice and the rights of peoples

Pope Francis, in his visit to Puerto Maldonado, called for a change in the historical paradigm, as a result of which States view the Amazonia as a storage room filled with natural resources, with little regard for the lives of indigenous peoples or for the destruction of nature. The harmonious relationship between God the Creator, human beings, and nature is broken by the harmful effects of neo-extractivism; by the pressure being exerted by strong business interests that want to lay hands on its petroleum, gas, wood, and gold; by construction related to infrastructure projects (for example, hydroelectric megaprojects and road construction, such as thoroughfares between the oceans); and by forms of agro-industrial mono-cultivation (cf. *Fr.PM*).

The dominant culture of consumerism and waste turns the planet into one giant landfill. The Pope denounces this model of development as faceless, suffocating, and motherless, and as obsessed only with material goods and the idols of money and power. New ideological colonialisms hidden under the myth of progress are being imposed, thereby destroying specific cultural identities. Pope Francis thus appeals for the defense of cultures and for the re-appropriation of a heritage permeated by ancestral wisdom. Such a legacy advocates a harmonious relationship between nature and the Creator, and articulates the belief that “defense of the earth has no other purpose than the defense of life” (*Fr.PM*). It should be considered holy ground: “This is not an orphan land! It has a Mother!” (*Fr.EP*).

On the other hand, the threat against the Amazonian territories “also comes from the distortion of certain policies aimed at the ‘conservation’ of nature without taking into account the men and women, specifically [these] Amazonian brothers and sisters, who inhabit it” (*Fr.PM*). Pope Francis’ guideline on this point is clear: “I believe that the central issue is how to reconcile the right to development, both social and cultural, with the protection of the particular characteristics of indigenous peoples and their territories. [...] In this regard, the right to prior and informed consent should always prevail” (*Fr.FPI*).

At the same time, indigenous, rural, and other populations in the Amazonia – as well as at the national level in various counties – have been building political and organizational processes around agendas grounded in a human rights-based perspective. The question of indigenous peoples’ territorial rights in the Pan-Amazonian region revolves around the consistent lack of land regularization and a refusal to recognize their ancestral and collective ownership. Likewise, the territory has been stripped of a comprehensive interpretation based on the culture and worldview specific to each indigenous people or community.

Protecting indigenous peoples and their lands represents a fundamental ethical imperative and a basic commitment to human rights. Moreover, it is a moral imperative for the Church, consistent with the approach to integral ecology called for by *Laudato si’* (cf. *LS*, ch. IV).

## 6. Spirituality and wisdom

For the indigenous peoples of the Amazon Basin, the *good life* comes from living in communion with other people, with the world, with the creatures of their environment, and with the Creator. Indigenous peoples, in fact, live within the home that God created and gave them as a gift: the Earth. Their diverse spiritualities and beliefs motivate them to live in communion with the soil, water, trees, animals, and with day and night. Wise elders – called interchangeably “*payés*, *mestres*, *wayanga* or *chamanes*”, among others – promote the harmony of people among themselves and with the cosmos. Indigenous peoples “are a living memory of the mission that God has entrusted to us all: the protection of our common home” (*Fr. PM*).

Indigenous Christians of the Amazon region understand the invitation to the *good life* as a full life within the realm of the co-creation of the Kingdom of God. This *good life* will only be achieved when a common project in defense of life, the world, and all living things becomes a reality.

“We are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty, and fullness” (LS 53). This dream begins to be realized within the family, which is the first community of our life: “The family is, and always has been, the social institution that has most contributed to keeping our cultures alive. In moments of past crisis, in the face of various forms of imperialism, the families of the original peoples have been the best defense of life” (Fr.PM).

However, it is necessary to recognize that there is great cultural and religious diversity within the Amazonia. Although the majority promote the *good life* as a project of harmony between God, peoples, and nature, there are also some groups that, motivated by interests unconnected to the territory, do not always favor an integral ecology.

## II. DISCERNMENT. TOWARDS A PASTORAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

### 7. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the Amazonia: Biblical-theological dimension

The specific reality of the Amazon Basin, and its fate, today challenges every person of good will with regard to the identity of the cosmos, its life-giving harmony, and its future. The bishops of Latin America acknowledge nature as a gratuitous inheritance; and, as prophets of life, they assume their commitment to protect our Common Home (cf. DAp 471).

Biblical accounts contain several theological nodes which reveal universal values. First of all, every created reality is oriented towards life, and everything that leads to death is opposed to the divine will. Secondly, God establishes a relationship of communion with humanity “created in his image and likeness” (Gen 1:26), to whom he entrusts the stewardship of creation (cf. Gen 1:28; 2:15). “Give thanks for the gift of creation, which is a reflection of the wisdom and beauty of the Creator, who entrusted his creative work to humanity, so that they would cultivate and care for it” (DAp 470). Finally, the harmonious relationship between God, humanity, and the cosmos is opposed to the strife caused by disobedience and sin (cf. Gen 3:1-7), which leads to fear (cf. Gen 3:8-10), the rejection of the other (cf. Gen 3:12), the curse of the ground (cf. Gen 3:17), the banishment from the garden (cf. Gen 3:23-24), and even to the ordeal of fratricide (cf. Gen 4:1-16).

On the other hand, the biblical accounts also testify that the germ of the promise and the seed of hope are planted within wounded creation, because God does not abandon the work of his hands. Throughout salvation history, God renews his intention to “make a covenant” between humanity and the earth, rehabilitating the beauty of creation through the gift of the Torah. All this culminates in the person and mission of Jesus. In showing compassion for humanity and its infirmities (cf. Mt 9:35-36), He confirms the goodness of all created things (cf. Mk 7:14-15). The wonders performed for the sick and in nature reveal both the Father’s Providence and the goodness of creation (cf. Mt 6:9-15; 25-34).

The created world invites us to praise the beauty and harmony of creatures and their Creator (cf. LS 12). As the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out, “each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection”, and reflects in its own way “a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness”, that is, his love (CCC 339). “Soil, water [...] everything is a caress of God” (LS 84), a divine song, whose lyrics are made up of “the multitude of creatures present in the universe”, as Pope St. John Paul II pointed out (Catechesis, 30/1/2002). When the life of any of these creatures is snuffed out by human causes, they can no longer sing praise to the Creator (cf. LS 33).

The Father’s Providence, and the goodness of creation, reaches its climax in the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, which draws near to and embraces all human contexts, but especially that of the poorest. The Second Vatican Council mentions this contextual closeness with terms such as adaptation and dialogue (cf. GS 4:11; CD 11; UR 4; SC 37ff), and incarnation and solidarity (cf. GS 32). Later, especially in Latin America, these

words were translated as *option for the poor* and *liberation* (Medellín 1968), *participation* and *base communities* (Puebla 1979), *insertion* and *inculturation* (cf. Santo Domingo 1992), *mission* and *service* of a Samaritan Church and advocate for the poor (cf. DAp 2007).

The death and resurrection of Jesus illuminated the destiny of all of creation, filling it with the power of the Holy Spirit, who had already been evoked in the Wisdom tradition (cf. *Wis* 1:7). Easter brought to fulfillment the project for a “new creation” (cf. *Eph* 2:15; 4:24), revealing that Christ is the creative Word of God (cf. *Jn* 1:1-18) and that “in him were created all things in heaven and on earth” (*Col* 1:16). “In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning of all things” (LS 99).

The tension between “already” and “not yet” concerns the human family and the whole world: “For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord, but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now (*Rm* 8:19-22). In the paschal mystery of Christ, the whole creation tends toward its final fulfillment, when “the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise, because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence” (LS 100).

## 8. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the Amazonia: Social dimension

The mission of evangelization always has “a clear social content” (EG 177). Belief in a Triune God invites us to keep ever in mind “that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfillment or salvation purely by our own efforts” (EG 178). In fact, “from the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement” (EG 178) and between the acceptance and transmission of divine love. Thus, if we accept the love of God the Father and Creator, who conferred an infinite dignity upon us; the love of God the Son, who ennobled us with his redemption; and the love of the Holy Spirit, who invades and breaks all human-made bonds, we will be impelled to communicate that Trinitarian love by respecting and promoting the dignity, nobility, and freedom of each human being in our every work of evangelization (cf. EG 178). In other words, the evangelizing task of receiving and transmitting the love of God begins with longing, searching, and caring for others (cf. EG 178).

Therefore, evangelization means being committed to our brothers and sisters, improving community life, and thus “making the Kingdom of God present in the world” (EG 176), promoting throughout the whole world (cf. *Mk* 16:15) not “a charity à la carte” (EG 180), but a truly integral human development, that is, for all persons and for the whole person (cf. *PP* 14 and EG 181). This is what is known as the “principle of universality” in the task of evangelization, “for the Father desires the salvation of every man and woman, and his saving plan consists in ‘gathering up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth’ (*Eph* 1:10). [...] All creation refers to every aspect of human life” (EG 181), that is, to all its relationships.

Already in the biblical stories of creation it emerges that human existence is grounded in “three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. [...] These three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin” (LS 66). Redemption in Christ, who has vanquished sin, offers the possibility of harmonizing these relationships. The “mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ”, therefore, promotes hope both in the purpose of history and in the course of human history itself, as well as in the valorization and reconstruction of all of life’s relationships (cf. EG 181). Accordingly, the task of evangelization invites us to strive against social inequalities and the lack of solidarity through the promotion of charity, justice, compassion, and care amongst ourselves and with animals, plants, and all creation. The Church is called to accompany and share the pain of the Amazonian people, and to collaborate in healing their wounds, putting into practice its identity as the Samaritan Church, as expressed by the Latin American Bishops (cf. DAp 26).

This social – and even cosmic – dimension of the mission of evangelization is particularly relevant in the Amazon

region, where the interconnectivity between human life, ecosystems, and spiritual life was, and continues to be, apparent to the vast majority of its inhabitants. Destruction is “a trail of waste and even death, throughout the region. [...] It endangers the lives of millions of people, and especially the habitat of rural and indigenous peoples” (*DAP* 473). Refusal to care for our Common Home “is an offence against the Creator, an attack on biodiversity and, in short, on life itself” (*DAP* 125).

Therefore, as Pope Francis pointed out, the task of evangelization cannot “mutilate the integrity of the Gospel message” (*EG* 39). In point of fact, its harmonious integrity, “requires of the evangelizer certain attitudes to aid acceptance of the proclamation: closeness, openness to dialogue, patience, and cordial welcome” (*EG* 165). It means accepting and comprehending that “everything is connected” (*LS* 91, 117, 138, 240). This implies that the evangelizer should promote projects related to personal, social, and cultural life through which we can nurture the integrity of our vital relationships with others, with creation, and with the Creator. Such a call requires attentive listening to the twin cry of the poor and of the earth (cf. *LS* 49).

Today the cry of the Amazonia to the Creator is similar to the cry of God’s People in Egypt (cf. *Ex* 3:7). It is a cry of slavery and abandonment, which clamors for freedom and God’s care. It is a cry that yearns for the presence of God, especially when the Amazonian peoples, in order to defend their lands, stumble upon the criminalization of protest – both by the authorities and public opinion – or when they witness the destruction of the rainforest, which serves as their ancient habitat; or when the waters of their rivers are filled with deadly substances instead of life.

## 9. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the Amazonia: Ecological dimension

“The kingdom, already present and growing in our midst, engages us at every level of our being and reminds us” (*EG* 181) that “everything in the world is connected” (*LS* 16) and that, therefore, the “principle of discernment” in evangelization is linked to a process of integral human development (cf. *EG* 181). This process is characterized, as *Laudato si’* (cf. 137-142) points out, by a relational paradigm called *integral ecology*, which articulates the fundamental links that make true development possible.

The first level of articulation for authentic progress is the intrinsic link between the social and the environmental spheres. Since human beings are part of the ecosystems which facilitate the relationships that give life to our planet, caring for them – given that everything is interconnected – is fundamental to promoting the dignity of each individual, the common good of society, social progress, and care for the environment.

In the Amazon Basin, integral ecology is key to responding to the challenge of caring for the immense wealth of its environmental and cultural biodiversity. From an environmental point of view, the Amazonia, in addition to being “a source of life at the heart of the Church” (*REPAM*), is a lung of the planet and one of the sites of greatest biodiversity in the world (cf. *LS* 38). In fact, the Amazon Basin encompasses the last great rainforest, which, despite the interventions it has suffered and continues to suffer, is the largest forested area in our Earth’s tropical zone. Recognizing the Amazon territory as a basin, by transcending the borders between countries, facilitates an unified view of the region, and is essential for the promotion of integral development and ecology.

From the cultural point of view – as has been extensively pointed out in the previous section (*see above*) – the Amazonia is particularly rich in the diverse ancestral worldviews of its populations. This cultural heritage, which is “part of the common identity” of the region, is as “threatened” as its environmental heritage (*LS* 143). The threats come mainly from a “consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanisms of today’s globalized economy, [which] has a leveling effect on cultures, diminishing the immense cultural variety which is the heritage of all humanity” (*LS* 144).

Therefore, the Church’s evangelizing activity in the Amazonia can appear alien to the promotion of care for the territory (nature) and its peoples (cultures). For this reason, it needs to establish bridges to connect ancestral wisdom with contemporary knowledge (cf. *LS* 143-146), particularly those types related to the sustainable management of the territory and to development in accordance with the cultural value systems of the populations that inhabit this space, who must be recognized as its genuine custodians and even landowners.

However, integral ecology is more than just the connection between the social and the environmental spheres. It also encompasses the need to promote personal, social, and ecological harmony, for which all are called to a personal, social, and ecological conversion (cf. *LS* 210). Integral ecology, then, invites us to an integral conversion. “This entails [...] the recognition of our errors, sins, faults, [...] failures” and omissions by which “we have harmed God’s creation”, and “leads to heartfelt repentance” (*LS* 218). Only when we are aware of how our lifestyles – and the ways we produce, trade, consume, and discard – affect the life of our environment and our societies can we initiate a comprehensive change of direction.

Directional change, or integral conversion, is not exhausted in personal conversion. A profound change of heart, expressed in personal habits, also requires structural change, expressed in social habits, laws, and corresponding economic programs. Evangelizing efforts have much to contribute to promoting this radical change which the Amazon and the planet need, especially considering the depth with which the Spirit of God penetrates nature and the hearts of individuals and peoples.

#### **10. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the Amazonia: Sacramental dimension**

While the Church recognizes the strong headwind that comes from the power of sin, especially in social and environmental destruction, she is not discouraged in her accompaniment of the Amazonian peoples and is committed to overcoming the source of sin, supported by the grace of Christ. A contemplative ecclesial gaze and sacramental practice are the keys to evangelization in the Amazonia.

“The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face” (*LS* 233). Whoever knows how to contemplate “the goodness present in the realities and experiences of this world” discovers the intimate connection of all things and experiences with God (*LS* 234). For this reason, the Christian community, especially in the Amazon region, is invited to see reality with a contemplative gaze, through which it can grasp the presence and action of God in all creation and in all history.

Moreover, since “the Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life”, their celebration is a permanent invitation “to embrace the world on a different plane” (*LS* 235). For example, the celebration of Baptism invites us to consider the importance of “water” as a source of life, not only as a tool or material resource, and it makes the community of believers responsible for guarding this element as a gift of God for the whole planet. Furthermore, since the water of Baptism purifies the baptized of all sins, its celebration allows the Christian community to adopt the value of water and “the river” as a source of purification, thus facilitating the inculturation of the water-related rites that come from the ancient wisdom of the Amazonian peoples.

The celebration of the Eucharist invites us to rediscover how the “Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter” (*LS* 236). The Eucharist, therefore, redirects us to the “living center of the universe”, to the overflowing core of love and inexhaustible life of the “incarnate Son”, present under the species of bread and wine, fruit of the earth and work of human hands (cf. *LS* 236). In the Eucharist, the community celebrates an act of cosmic love, in which human beings, together with the incarnate Son of God and all creation, give thanks to God for new life in the risen Christ (cf. *LS* 236). In this way, the Eucharist builds community, a festive, pilgrim community that becomes “a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation” (*LS* 236). At the same time, the blood of so many men and women that has been shed – bathing the Amazonian lands for the good of its inhabitants and of the territory – is joined to the Blood of Christ, which was poured out for all and for all creation.

#### **11. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the Amazonia: Ecclesial-missionary dimension**

In the outgoing Church (cf. *EG* 46), which is “missionary by nature” (*AG* 2, *DAP* 347), all the baptized have the responsibility of being missionary disciples, participating in different ways and in different spheres. Indeed, one of the riches of the Church’s magisterial teaching is that of “always and everywhere proclaiming moral principles, including those pertaining to the social order, and making judgments on any human affairs to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls” (*CCC* 2032; *CIC* can. 747).

Praise of God needs to be accompanied by the practice of justice on behalf of the poor, as Psalm 146 (145) proclaims: “Praise the LORD, my soul; I will praise the Lord all my life [...] the Lord who sets prisoners free, who gives bread to the hungry, who comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow.” This mission requires the participation of all and a broad reflection which allows us to contemplate the concrete historical conditions of the social, environmental, and ecclesial fields. In this sense, a missionary approach in the Amazonia requires, now more than ever, ecclesial magisterium exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who guarantees unity and diversity. This unity in diversity, following the tradition of the Church, is structurally underpinned by what is known as the *sensus fidei* of the People of God.

Pope Francis has re-evoked this aspect, emphasized by the Second Vatican Council (cf. *LG* 12; *DV* 10), recalling that: “In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. The people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible ‘*in credendo*’. This means that it does not err in faith... God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – *sensus fidei* – which helps them to discern what is truly of God” (*EG* 119).

Pastors, especially bishops, should accompany this type of discernment. In fact, the upholding of Church tradition – carried out by the whole people of God – requires the unity of the faithful with their pastors (cf. *DV* 10) when examining and discerning new realities. It is the Bishops, in their capacity as the unifying principle of the People of God (cf. *LG* 23), who have the responsibility to maintain the unity of Tradition, which is generated by and based on the Holy Scriptures (cf. *DV* 9).

Thus, the religious sense of the Amazonia, as an example of the expression of the *sensus fidei*, requires the accompaniment and presence of the Pastors (cf. *EN* 48). When Pope Francis met with the peoples of the Amazon Basin in Puerto Maldonado, he said: “I wanted to come to visit you and listen to you, so that we can stand together, in the heart of the Church, and share your challenges and reaffirm with you a heartfelt option for the defense of life, the defense of the earth, and the defense of cultures.” The representatives of the peoples present there, for their part, replied: “We come to listen to Your Holiness, to be with the Pope in the heart of the Church and to participate in the building up of the Church, so that it may have an ever more Amazonian face.” In this reciprocal listening between the Pope (and Church authorities) and the inhabitants of the Amazonia, the people’s *sensus fidei* of the People was nourished and strengthened, and its ecclesial essence flourished: “We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing” (*EG* 171).

The Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian Region requires an extensive exercise in reciprocal listening, especially between the faithful and the Church’s magisterial authorities. One of the main points to be heard is the cry “of thousands of [their] communities deprived of the Sunday Eucharist for long periods of time” (*DAP* 100, e). We trust that the Church, rooted in its synodal and missionary dimensions (cf. Francis, *Address for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015), may generate processes for listening (*see/listen*) and processes for discernment (*judge*), in order to respond (*action*) to the concrete realities of the Amazonian people.

### III. ACTION.

#### NEW PATHS FOR A CHURCH WITH AN AMAZONIAN FACE<sup>3</sup>

##### 12. Church with an Amazonian face

“Being Church means being God’s people”, incarnate “in the peoples of the earth” and in their cultures (*EG* 115). The universality or catholicity of the Church, therefore, is enriched by “the beauty of this multifaceted face” (*NMI* 40), which is manifested differently in the particular Churches and their cultures. Pope Francis pointed out in his meeting with Amazonian communities in Puerto Maldonado: “Those of us who do not live in these lands need your wisdom and knowledge to enable us to enter into, without destroying, the treasures that this region holds. And to hear an echo of the words that the Lord spoke to Moses: ‘Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground’ (*Ex* 3:5)” (*Fr.PM*).

The Church is called to deepen her identity in accordance with the realities of each territory and to grow in her spirituality by listening to the wisdom of her peoples. Therefore, the Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian

Region is invited to find new ways of developing the Amazonian face of the Church and to respond to situations of injustice in the region, such as the neocolonialism of the extractive industries, infrastructure projects that damage its biodiversity, and the imposition of cultural and economic models which are alien to the lives of its peoples.

Thus, through a focus on local realities and on the diversity of the region's experiential microstructures, the Church is strengthened in its opposition to the globalization of indifference and to the unifying logic promoted by the media and by an economic model that often refuses to respect the Amazonian peoples or their territories.

For their part, local Churches – which are also outgoing, missionary Churches – find privileged places within their own peripheries in which to gain evangelizing expertise, since it is there that “the need for the light and the life of the Risen Christ is greatest” (EG 30). In the peripheries, missionaries encounter the marginalized, fugitives, and refugees, as well as those without hope and the excluded, that is to say, they encounter Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Exalted One, “who desired to identify with the weakest and poorest through a special tenderness” (DP 196).

During the preparation for the Synod, the aim will be to identify local pastoral experiences, both positive and negative, that can enlighten discernment for new action guidelines.

### 13. Prophetic dimension

Faced with the current socio-environmental crisis, there is an urgent need for guidance and action, in order to implement the transformation of practices and attitudes.

It is necessary to overcome myopia, nearsightedness, and short-term solutions. A global perspective is required, going beyond one's personal or particular interests, in order to share responsibility for a common, global project.

“Everything is connected” is Pope Francis' overarching emphasis, and is aimed at establishing dialogue with the spirituality of the great religious and cultural traditions. Consensus is needed around a basic agenda regarding integral and sustainable development – as described previously – which includes sustainable livestock and agriculture; non-polluting energy; respect for the identities and rights of traditional peoples; and drinking water for all, among others. These rights are fundamental issues which are often absent in the Pan-Amazonian region.

There must be a balance, and the economy should give priority to a vocation for a dignified human life. This balanced relationship must care for the environment and for the lives of the most vulnerable. “At present we are faced with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental” (LS 139).

The encyclical *Laudato si'* (cf. 216 ff.) invites us to an ecological conversion that implies a new way of life. Our neighbor acquires a central position in our horizon. This involves practicing global solidarity and overcoming individualism, while opening up new paths to freedom, truth, and beauty. Conversion means freeing ourselves from the obsession with consumerism. Purchasing is a moral act, not a merely economic one. Ecological conversion means embracing the mystically-interconnected and interdependent nature of all creation. Thankfulness becomes a part of our attitudes when we understand that life is a gift from God. Embracing life through community-based solidarity entails a change of heart.

This new paradigm opens up new perspectives for personal and societal transformation. Joy and peace are possible when we are not obsessed with consumerism. Pope Francis states that a harmonious relationship with nature allows us to live a happy sobriety of inner peace, in regard to the common good, and a serene harmony that comes from being content with what is really necessary. This is something that Western cultures can, and perhaps should, learn from traditional Amazonian cultures and from other places and communities on the planet. Indigenous peoples “have much to teach us” (EG 198). In their love for their land and their relationship with the ecosystem, they know the Creator God, the source of life. “In their difficulties they know the suffering Christ” (EG 198). In their concept of a social life in dialogue, they are moved by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Pope Francis pointed out that “we need to let ourselves be evangelized by them” and by their cultures, and that the new evangelization implies “lending our voice to their causes, but also [we are called] to be their friends, to listen to

them, to speak for them, and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them" (EG 198). His teachings, therefore, could set the direction of priorities for the new paths of the Church in the Amazon.

#### 14. Ministry with an Amazonian face

Through many regional meetings in the Amazonia, the Catholic Church has matured the awareness that its universality is incarnated in local history and cultures. In this way, the Church of Christ – the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church – is manifested and made present (cf. CD 11). This awareness has allowed her to fix her eyes today on the Amazonia with an overarching vision, with which she discovers the vast socio-political, economic, and ecclesial challenges that threaten the region. However, she never loses hope in the presence of God, and is nourished by the creativity and tenacious perseverance of the region's inhabitants.

In recent decades, with a great impetus from the Aparecida Document, the Church in the Amazon Basin has come to recognize that – because of the immense territorial expanse, the great diversity of its peoples, and the rapid changes in its socio-economic realities – her pastoral care has been spread precariously thin. It was (and still is) necessary to have a greater presence, in an attempt to respond to this region's specific identity from the point-of-view of Gospel values. This implies recognizing, among other elements, its immense geographical extension, much of it often difficult to access, its broad cultural diversity, and the pervading influence of national and international interests which often seek easy economic enrichment through the region's plentiful resources. An incarnated mission implies rethinking the Church's limited presence in relation to the immensity of the territory and its cultural diversity.

A Church with an Amazonian face must "seek a model of alternative, integral, and solidarity-based development, grounded on an ethical code that includes responsibility for an authentic, natural, and human ecology, which is the foundation for the gospel of justice, solidarity, and the universal destiny of earthly goods. It means going beyond a utilitarian and individualistic logic that refuses to submit economic and technological powers to ethical criteria" (Dap 474,c). Therefore, the entire People of God, who share in the mission of Christ – Priest, Prophet, and King (cf. LG 9), must be encouraged not to remain indifferent to the region's injustices, in order to discover, in listening to the Spirit, the sought-after new paths.

These new paths for pastoral care in the Amazonia call for "re-launching the work of the Church" (Dap 11) in the territory and for delving deeper into the "process of inculturation" (EG 126), which requires the Church in the Amazon region to make "courageous" proposals, that is, the "daring" and "fearless" attitudes that Pope Francis asks of us. The prophetic mission of the Church is today carried out through its inclusive ministerial action, which allows indigenous peoples and Amazonian communities to be its "principal interlocutors" (LS 146) regarding all the territory's pastoral and socio-environmental matters.

In order to transform the Church's precariously-thin presence and make it broader and more incarnate, a hierarchical list of the Amazonia's urgent needs should be established. The Aparecida document mentions the need for "Eucharistic integrity" (Dap 436) for the Amazon region, that is, that there be not only the possibility for all the baptized to participate in the Sunday Mass, but also for a new heavens and a new earth to take root in the Amazon Basin in anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

In this sense, Vatican II reminds us that all the People of God share in the priesthood of Christ, although it distinguishes between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood (cf. LG 10). This gives way to an urgent need to evaluate and rethink the ministries that today are required to respond to the objectives of "a Church with an Amazonian face and a Church with a native face" (Fr.PM). One priority is to specify the contents, methods, and attitudes necessary for an inculturated pastoral ministry capable of responding to the territory's vast challenges. Another is to propose new ministries and services for the different pastoral agents, ones which correspond to activities and responsibilities within the community. Along these lines, it is necessary to identify the type of official ministry that can be conferred on women, taking into account the central role which women play today in the Amazonian Church. It is also necessary to foster indigenous and local-born clergy, affirming their own cultural identity and values. Finally, new ways should be considered for the People of God to have better and more frequent access to the Eucharist, the center of Christian life (cf. Dap 251).

## 15. New paths

In the process of thinking a Church with an Amazonian face, we dream with our feet grounded in our origins, and with our eyes open we consider the future shape of this Church, starting from its peoples' experience of cultural diversity. Our new paths will impact ministries, liturgy, and theology (Indian theology).<sup>4</sup>

The Church first reached the peoples because she was moved by Jesus' command and by faithfulness to the Gospel. Today, she needs to discover "with joy and respect the seeds of the Word" (AG 11) present in the region.

The entire People of God, along with their bishops, priests, religious men and women, and religious and lay missionaries, are called to enter this new ecclesial journey with an open heart. All are called to live together with their communities and to commit themselves to the defense of their lives, loving them and their cultures. Indigenous missionaries, as well as those who come from outside, should cultivate a spirituality of contemplation and thankfulness, opening their hearts and seeing the Amazonian and indigenous peoples with the eyes of God.

A practical spirituality, with its feet on the ground, offers the possibility of finding joy and zest in living together with the Amazonian peoples, and thus of being able to value their cultural riches, in which God sowed the seed of the Good News. We must also be able to perceive the elements present in their cultures which, because they pertain to human history, require purification. We must work towards individual and community conversion, cultivating dialogue at various levels. A prophetic and martyrdom-based spirituality makes us more committed to peoples' lives, their past, and their present, while looking forward to forging a new history.

We are called as a Church to strengthen the leading roles of the peoples themselves. We should refine an intercultural spirituality to help us interact with the diversity of peoples and their traditions. We must join forces to take care of our Common Home.

This requires a spirituality of communion between native missionaries and those who come from outside, in order to discover together how to accompany people: listening to their stories; participating in their life projects; sharing their spirituality; and shouldering their struggles. This is spirituality after the fashion of Jesus: simple, human, in dialogue, and Samaritan, allowing us to celebrate life, Liturgy, the Eucharist, and festivals, always in respect for the rhythms proper to each people.

Enlivening a Church with an Amazonian face requires missionaries to possess the ability to discover the seeds and fruits of the Word already present in a people's worldview. This requires a stable presence and knowledge of the native language, culture, and spiritual background. Only in this way will the Church make Christ's life present in these peoples.

In conclusion, recalling the words of Pope Francis, we would like to "ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'custodians' of creation, custodians of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world!" (Francis, *Homily at the Mass for the Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry*, 19 March 2013)

Furthermore, we would also like to ask the peoples of the Amazonia: "Help your bishops, and help your men and women missionaries, to be one with you, and in this way, by an inclusive dialogue, to shape a Church with an Amazonian face, a Church with a native face. In this spirit, I have convoked a Synod for Amazonia in 2019" (*Fr.PM*).

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to listen to the Church of God regarding the "new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology" in the Amazonia. The Spirit speaks through the entire People of God. Listening to it, we can learn about the challenges, hopes, ideas, and new paths that God is asking of the Church in the region. This

questionnaire is intended to help pastors respond to that invitation through consultation with the People of God. To this end, you are invited to explore the means most suitable for the local realities. The questionnaire is structured in three parts corresponding to the different sections of the Preparatory Document: see, *discern/judge, act*.

## PART I

1. What are the most important problems in your community: threats to, and difficulties of, life, the territory, and its culture?
2. In the light of *Laudato si'*, what is the composition of bio-diversity and socio-diversity in your region?
3. How do these diversities affect or not affect your pastoral work?
4. In the light of Gospel values, what kind of society should we promote, and what are our means for doing so, taking into account rural, urban, and socio-cultural differences?
5. Given the enormous wealth of their cultural identities, what are the contributions, aspirations, and challenges of the Amazonian peoples in relation to the Church and the world?
6. How can these contributions be incorporated into a Church with an Amazonian face?
7. How should the Church, through her integral pastoral care, accompany the organizational efforts of native peoples on issues of identity and defense of their territories and rights?
8. What should the Church's responses be to the challenges of urban pastoral care in the Amazon region?
9. If there are *Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation* in your territory, what should the Church do to defend their lives and rights?

## PART II

1. What hopes does the Church's presence offer Amazonian communities in regards to life, territory, and culture?
2. How can we promote an integral ecology, taking into account the environmental, economic, social, and cultural aspects of daily life (cf. LS 137-162) in the Amazon region?
3. In the context of your local church, how is Jesus "Good News" in Amazonian life in connection with family, community, and society?
4. How can the Christian community respond to situations of injustice, poverty, inequality, violence (drugs, human trafficking, violence against women, sexual exploitation, discrimination against indigenous peoples and migrants, among others), and exclusion in the Amazon region?
5. What are the cultural elements that can facilitate the proclamation of the Gospel in the newness of the mystery of Jesus?
6. What paths can we follow in order to inculturate our sacramental practice into the living experience of indigenous peoples?
7. How does the community of believers, which is "missionary by its very nature" and in its own specific way, participate in the concrete, daily magisterium of the Church in the Amazon region?

## PART III

1. What Church do we dream of for the Amazonia?
2. How do you imagine an outgoing Church with an Amazonian face, and what characteristics should it have?
3. Is there room for indigenous expression and active participation in the liturgical practice of your communities?
4. One of the major challenges in the Amazon Basin is the impossibility of celebrating the Eucharist frequently in all places. How can we respond to this need?
5. How can we recognize and value the role of the laity in various pastoral areas (catechesis, liturgy, and charity)?
6. What role should the laity play in the region's different socio-environmental spheres?
7. What actions should characterize prophetic proclamation and condemnation in the Amazonia?
8. What characteristics should the people who proclaim the Good News in the Amazon possess?
9. What are the particularly Amazonian activities and ministries in your ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and what are their attributes?

10. What are the particularly Amazonian activities and ministries that you believe should be created and promoted?
11. In what ways can consecrated life and its charisms contribute to the building up of a Church with an Amazonian face?
12. The role of women in our communities is of utmost importance, how can we recognize and value them on our new paths?
13. In what ways can popular religiosity, particularly Marian devotion, be integrated into and contribute to the Church's new paths in the Amazon region?
14. What contributions could the communications media make towards building a Church with an Amazonian face?

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AG: Second Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*, on the Mission Activity of the Church (12/7/1965).  
 CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church (10/11/1992).  
 CIC: *Codex Iuris Canonici* – Code of Canon Law (01/25/1983).  
 CD: Second Vatican Council, Decree *Christus Dominus*, concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (10/28/1965).  
 DAp: Aparecida Document. Conclusive Text of the V General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, 2007.  
 DP: Puebla Document. III General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, 1979.  
 DSD: Santo Domingo Document. IV General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, 1992.  
 DSF: John Paul II, Speech to the Catholic community at Gorée Island (Senegal, 22/02/1992 n.3); Message to the Afro-American Community, Santo Domingo (12/10/1992, n.2).  
 DV: Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, on Divine Revelation (11/18/1965).  
 EG: Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, (24/11/2013).  
 EN: Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (8/12/1975).  
 Fr.PM: Francis, *Discourse at Puerto Maldonado (Peru) during the Meeting with Indigenous Peoples of Amazonia* (19/01/2018).  
 Fr.EP: Francis, *Greetings during the Meeting with the Population of Puerto Maldonado* (19/01/2018).  
 Fr.FPI: Francis, *Discourse to Participants in the III Global Meeting of Indigenous Peoples' Forum* (15/02/2017).  
 GS: Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, (07/12/1965).  
 LG: Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (21/11/1964).  
 LS: Francis, *Laudato si'*, Encyclical Letter on the Care for our Common Home, (24/05/2015).  
 NMI: John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (06/01/2001).  
 PANAM: *Panamazonia: Source of Life in the Heart of the Church*, Letter-Document on the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM). November 2014.  
 PIAV: Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation.  
 PO: Second Vatican Council, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, on the Ministry and Life of Priests, (7/12/1965).  
 PP: Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, on the Development of Peoples (26/03/1967).  
 REPAM: Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network.  
 REPAM 2: *Executive Report of the Founding Meeting of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network* (12/09/2014, Brasilia CNBB).  
 SC: Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, on the Sacred Liturgy (04/12/1963).  
 UR: Second Vatican Council, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*, on Ecumenism (21/11/1964).

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<sup>1</sup> This document uses the terms “indigenous”, “original”, and “native peoples” interchangeably.

2 “Pan-Amazonia” is understood to mean all territories beyond the river basin.

3 Source: REPAM. Memoires from the Meeting “*A Church with an Amazonian and Indigenous Face*” Quito, Ecuador, 28-30/11/2017.

4 Cf. CELAM, *VI Symposium on Indian Theology*, (Asunción, Paraguay, 18-23 September 2017).

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