

2nd General Congregation Overview presented by Vatican News



#SinodoAmazonico

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#SinodoAmazonico. Youth, protagonists of integral ecology.

Monday afternoon 7 October, the real work of the Special Synod for the Pan-Amazon region begins in the presence of the Holy Father. The Second Congregation finishes the election of the members for the Commission for the Redaction of the Final Document as well as the Commission for Information. In total there are 176 Synod Fathers in the Synod Hall.

In total, four members are elected for the Commission for the Redaction of the Final Document. This document is the fruit of the reflections and the work of the Synod. The election of members is according to an absolute majority reached after a number of ballots. The following Synod Fathers were elected to this Commission.

+Mario Antonio Da Silva, Bishop of Roraima in Brasil

+Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, O.F.M., Archbishop of Trujillo and President of the Bishops Conference of Peru

+Nelson Jair Ramírez, Bishop of San José del Guaviare in Colombia

+Sergio Alfredo Gualberti Calandrina, Archbishop of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia

Another three members were chosen by the Holy Father.

First to be nominated was Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes, Archbishop of Mexico City. The Cardinal although declined his nomination in favour of the nomination going to a Synod Father from one of the Bishops Conferences directly involved in the Amazonian region. Thus the following bishops were nominated to work with the Commission.

Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Relator General and President of the Synod

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops

+Mario Grech, Pro-Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops

Cardinal Michael Czerny, Under Secretary for the Dicastery for Promoting

Integral Human Development

+David Martinez, Apostolic Vicar of Aguirre Guinea

The other three members of the Commission by pontifical nomination will be formalised over the next few days.

Election of members for the Commission for Information

The Synod also elected according to the method of a relative majority, the following participants.

+Erwin Kräutler, C.PP.S. Bishop Emeritus of Xingu in Brazil.

+Rafael Cob Garcia, Apostolic Vicar of Puyo in Ecuador

+Ángel Divassón Cilveti, S.D.B., Apostolic Vicar of Puerto Ayacucho in Venezuela

Fr Antonio Spadaro, S.J., Director of *La Civiltà Cattolica*

These names are in addition to the following officials of the Press Office of the Holy See.

Paolo Ruffini, Prefect for the Dicastery for Communications

Fr Giacomo Costa, S.J.

Matteo Bruni, Director of the Press Office of the Holy See

Andrea Torielli, Editorial Director of the Dicastery for Communications

Sr Maria Ines Lopes dos Santos, Assessor for the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon of the Bishops Conference of Brazil

Mauricio López Oropeza, Executive Secretary of the Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network

Greta Thunberg and Youth Activism

In continuity with last year's Synod on Youth, one finds in the *Instrumentum Laboris* various reflections on the role of youth in society. This is especially true in the area of integral ecology where many young people are inspired by the example of Greta Thunberg and consequently have participated in various strikes against climate change. The 'option for the youth,' is a key theme wherein one is called to dialogue using their terms regarding the protection of Creation. Along with this dialogue, is the necessity to value the social contributions of young people, capable of inspiring the Church to be a prophetic voice in the area of integral ecology. The young heart, it is said, desires to create a better world, because the youth of today represent Social Doctrine 'in movement.' More than anything else, the youth of today wish to make known the need to establish a new relationship with Creation, not an exploitative relationship, but rather one that is aware of the sufferings of the planet. The theme of the environment also has an ecumenical and interreligious character. This is considered to be

a positive challenge for the Church, along with the exhortation to enter into a dialogue with youth, accompanying them on the true path of discernment so that their desire to protect the planet does not simply become a slogan of the Green Movement, but truly becomes a question of life or death for humanity and for the planet.

Protection of the water table

Some of the Synod Fathers brought to the attention of participants the need to protect the water table from chemical contamination, especially pollution coming from certain multinationals. This issue also touches upon the survival of certain indigenous populations and the need to preserve their culture according to new paths of evangelization. The enormous activities of the mining industry are noted in many of the interventions in the Synod Hall, in particular, certain abuses committed by some groups that have harmful repercussions for the indigenous people living in the Amazon. Because of this, many of the bishops have highlighted the necessity to protect all rights, be they human rights or environmental rights. The reason for this is that to have a true integral ecology one must find anew the equilibrium between humanity and nature.

Fossil fuels and the question of climate change

The view of the Synod Hall then turned to the question of climate change and its effect on the environment. Climate is a global good, a common good to be protected and preserved for future generations. One of the suggestions made has been to cease use of fossil fuels, above all in countries more industrialised as they share the greater responsibility for this problem. In the Synod Hall reflections were shared on how to overcome various forms of colonialism that have characterised a greater part of the missions of centuries past in favour of ways of preserving the cultural identity of the Amazon. Every culture in fact, gives its own particular contribution to the catholicity of the Church, thus providing a certain complementarity to her identity. Citing Saint John Paul II, some of the Synod Fathers reminded participants that it is Christ who animates the centre of every culture. Therefore one might consider the Church as a complex ecosystem with a “wonderful spiritual biodiversity” that is expressed in various communities, cultural expressions that form consecrated life and various ministries within the Church. Multiple references were made to Saint Paul as the first Apostle of Inculturation who made himself “Greek for the Greeks.” [Cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23]

Indigenous Rites

The topic of Indigenous Rites was another theme treated by some of the Synod Fathers. One of the Synod Fathers suggested that the Church can consider justly that those aspects of indigenous culture which are not linked to superstition may be harmonised with the spirit of the liturgy. From this the suggestion was made to begin in the Amazon a process of sharing experiences of those indigenous communities that have celebrated liturgies that reflect inculturation, for example, Baptism, Matrimony, and Priestly Ordination. In such a way the proposition was made to establish *ad experimentum* an Amazonian Rite. This would be in accord with true theological discernment, both liturgical and pastoral so as to create a Catholic Amazonian Rite that lives and celebrates faith in Christ. At the base of these reflections in the Synod Hall, was the point that just as there exists an environmental ecosystem, there also exists an ecclesial ecosystem.

The question of *Viri Probati*

Some interventions also touched upon the question of the so called *viri probati*. The *Instrumentum Laboris* proposes the idea of *viri probati* as a way of ensuring the frequent celebration of the sacraments in areas where there is a certain shortage of priests. An intervention highlighted though that this cannot result in a substantial revision of the nature of the priesthood and its relationship with celibacy as envisaged in the Latin Rite of the Church. Along with these interventions was the suggestion to develop a pastoral vocation amongst young indigenous peoples so as to promote evangelisation in the most remote areas of the Amazon. This was made so as not to create a type of ‘first class Catholic’ who has easy access to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in contrast

to so called 'second class Catholics' who must wait long times to have access to the Eucharist. In some parts of the Amazon peoples wait more than two years for the Sacraments.