

Presentation of the document “Querida Amazonia” by Card. Baldisseri



During the Angelus on 15 October 2017 Pope Francis called a Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazon Region on the theme “Amazonia: new paths for the Church and for integral ecology”. From that moment a synodal process began, which continued for two years, during which there was a preparatory phase guided by this General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, along with the pre-synodal Council – specifically appointed by the Holy Father – with the valuable collaboration of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM).

Thus an extensive consultation took place with the entire People of God in the Amazon, starting with the Preparatory Document and the related Questionnaire, published on 8 June 2018. In this phase the activity carried out by REPAM was decisive, in the organization of about 260 events throughout the Amazon territory, including 70 territorial assemblies, 25 thematic forums and more than 170 other activities. It can therefore be said that, in total, more than 87,000 people took part in these initiatives. No less significant was the Study Seminar organized in Rome by the General Secretariat from 25 to 27 February 2019 on the theme: *Toward the Special Synod for the Amazon: Regional and Universal Dimension*. During the preparatory phase, an international conference was also held from 19 to 21 March 2019 at Georgetown University in Washington to address the theme of *Integral ecology: a synodal response from the Amazon and other essential biomes/territories for the care of our common home*.

All this material converged in the drafting of the *Instrumentum laboris* or Working Document, published on 17 June 2019, which then formed the base text for discussion during the Synod event itself.

The Synodal Assembly was characterized by choral and lively participation, rich in testimonies and proposals by the 185 Synod Fathers. Among the participants, there was a significant presence of 25 experts and 55 auditors, including 16 representatives of various indigenous ethnic groups and original peoples, 10 women religious presented by the International Union of Superiors General (U.I.S.G.), 6 fraternal delegates and 12 special guests selected on the basis of their high scientific competence and also for their membership of international bodies and organizations.

The Synod event was held over a period of three weeks (from 6 to 27 October 2019), during which an accurate methodology was followed to facilitate the work. Therefore moments of listening in plenary

sessions alternated with other moments of active participation in working groups. All this great work then converged in the drafting of a Plan for the Final Document, which, once amended in the working groups, became the Final Document, voted for by a large majority of more than two thirds. Following the vote, in accordance with Synod praxis, the Document was submitted to the Holy Father and, at his behest, published immediately in the press.

During the Synod event there was no lack of interventions by Pope Francis, who offered significant reflections for synodal discussion.

For example, in his opening address, the Holy Father underlined “four dimensions: the pastoral dimension, the cultural dimension, the social dimension and the ecological dimension”, which are then in some way reflected in the final document. Indeed, this – after an initial chapter dedicated to integral conversion – the theme of the new paths is developed in four chapters, each one of which is dedicated to a type of conversion: pastoral conversion, cultural conversion, ecological conversion and synodal conversion.

Also in his address at the conclusion of the Synod, the Holy Father considered the content which had emerged in the Assembly, dividing it into four diagnoses: cultural, which includes inculturation and interculturality in Amazonian peoples; ecological, in accordance with an integral perspective that denounces the destruction of creation, of which the Amazon is one of the most important points; social, which implies not only the exploitation of creation but also of people along with the destruction of cultural identity; and finally pastoral, the principal, since the proclamation of the Gospel is urgent, but what is important is that it is heard, assimilated and understood by the diverse cultures in the Amazon region.

With the submission of the Final Document to the Holy Father, the Synod Assembly phase was concluded. The Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops has since then awaited the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, presented today.

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