

## The Synod on the Pan-Amazon Region



On October 15, 2017, Pope Francis convened a Special Synodal Assembly on the Pan-Amazon, indicating that the main objective is “to find new ways for the evangelization of that portion of the People of God, especially the indigenous, often forgotten and without a perspective of a good future, also for the cause of the crisis of the Amazonian forest, lung of fundamental importance for our planet”.

The Amazon Synod is a great ecclesial, civic and ecological project that seeks to overcome the confines and redefine the pastoral lines, adapting them to contemporary times. The Pan-Amazon is made up of nine countries: **Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Guiana and French Guiana**, it is a region that is an important source of oxygen for the whole earth, where more than one third of the world's primary forest reserves are found. It is one of the largest biodiversity reserves on the planet, containing 20% of the not frozen freshwater.

The first time the Pope visited the Amazonian territory (in Peru) on January 19, 2018, he expressed his concern for the indigenous people affirming: “The native Amazonian peoples have probably never been so threatened on their own lands as they are at present. The Amazon is being disputed on various fronts”. On that occasion he officially opened the preparation for the event that will take place in October 2019.

**The population of this vast territory is about 34 million inhabitants**, of which more than three million are indigenous, belonging to more than 390 ethnic groups. Peoples and cultures of all types such as Afro-descendants, farmers, settlers, who live in a vital relationship with the vegetation and the waters of the rivers.

Social Justice and the rights of these peoples are a priority for Pope Francis who reiterated: “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”. (III Forum of the Indigenous Peoples, February 15, 2017)

Although the theme refers to a specific region, such as the Pan-Amazon, the proposed reflections go beyond the geographical territory, since they cover the whole Church and refer to the future of the planet.

According to the Preparatory Document (No. 12) “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”.