THE HOPE IN THIS NAVEGATION THROUGH THE AMAZONIAN SYNODICAL RIVER: SOURCE OF LIFE, CONVERSION AND ORIENTATION TOWARDS NEW PATHS FOR THE CHURCH IN THE FACE OF A WORLD IN SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL TURMOIL

Special Synod for the Amazon Region. Rome, October 2019

I. Our hope in Christ incarnate in the Amazon and His new paths:
   The experience of ecclesial conversion brought by the "periphery" of the Amazon and its peoples, has produced the new Synodical path that CONTINUES and is still in process, helping the center to be reformed. Therefore, we must work hard and together, to continue navigating these living waters of cultural diversity and commitment to care for our common home to create a better tomorrow (the Kingdom for which Christ calls upon us to work) within an Amazon and a world that is still in material and existential flames from injustice and the desire to accumulate. It is time to change, time is now and will be by way of synodality.

II Our navigational path:

   1. The experience of conversion, in other words, being transformed by and towards the Amazon as a living and diverse territory, and by and towards its peoples and communities, is at the same time the way in which God Himself shows us the path which we must follow as a Church at the service of life. Trusting that God walks with us, that He is and has been present in this process, and invites us to be true co-creators of new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology.

   2. The path is permanent and is a continuous process (it does not end). This Synod is already an unprecedented experience of walking together and has transformed the Church from the gifts of the periphery, previously considered undesirable, that come toward the center, helping it in its own permanent process of ongoing reform. A real conversion led by Pope Francis and that today is indispensable, to be more a Church that is on a missionary outing, that holds dialogue with the various others in terms of respect and equality, a conversation that is affirmed as an ethical, martyr[ideal]ist and prophetic voice in the face of the unprecedented socio-environmental crisis, and one that takes a position like Jesus Himself on the side of those who have been considered disposable and who today illustrate the new paths.

   3. The Synod has had various phases that are like the various tributaries, that are gradually being integrated into the majestic, tumultuous and unstoppable Amazon that is a source of life in the heart of the Church and the world, recognizing:
A) the historical origin of the Synod that is discovered clearly on the path from the Vatican Council II in which we are a Church which in its following of Christ opens up, progressively but irrevocably, to the world and its cries and hopes, making a firm choice to be a sign of life and sister on the path to the reality of today's world. A Church always in reform.

B) the path of the Magisterium of the Church in Latin America (Medellín 1968; Puebla 1979; Santo Domingo 1992; Aparecida 2007), which has made a preferential option for the poor, for dialogue with cultures, for the recognition of its call to evangelize in the respect of identities and illuminating the presence of God already alive and present in the villages, and in his definition of paths of missionary discipleship with an option and preference for the Amazon as a socio-cultural territory and its peoples and communities. A Church that discovers its vocation and mission from the life of the peoples and in their own path.

C) The testimonies of countless women and men, martyrs of the Amazon, that show the living force of the path of commitment to be seeds that are sown in the hearts of the peoples, in the option for justice, and being life and life in abundance for them. In this same sense, so many prophets, the acquaintances and the nameless, who have given their lives and who have committed from their particular options, institutions, networks, and from their being lay peoples, missionaries, religious, priests, bishops, and so many more who have opened their hearts to give life to this synodal event and who are the ones who will continue to carry it beyond this conjunctural and very important moment of Assembly.

D) The Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network -REPAM-, which was born as the confluence of so many living waters and has served as the meeting point and that has served tirelessly so that the essential, but fragile and dispersed forces of the Amazon, can meet to respond to this system that discards, kills, and does not give more. We-REPAM- have been learning and progressively weaving a synodality that has served to reach this Synod, especially in listening carefully to the voices of the territory.

We have learned to serve as a bridge for many people to know an essential part of this Synod within and outside the classroom, all in the same spirit that seeks to create new possibilities to respond together so that in this broken world, seeped in a deep environmental crisis, democratic instability where we face the rejection of what is different, let us heed the calling to be a true presence that opts for life. Even with the consequences that this brings, of confronting and discomforting the powers that in this world want to serve the evil interests of destruction and death.

E) The life of indigenous peoples in general, and of women in particular, who have given a totally different, more alive, renewed, and courageous tone to this Synod. Their clarity, the testament of their lives, the spiritual connection with the Amazon,
and their courageous cry for a change now, to be allies, to respond to the urgency, to walk with the Pope, have left an indelible mark on this Synod. I am sure that this mark will remain in the heart of the Pope, of the whole Church, and of those who have participated in this Synod as the presence of God’s living force among us. A woman’s voice, intercultural, and courageous dedication for life to the last consequences, although we still have a long way to go as a Church to give the deserved space to these voices.

F) And, above all, to know that the SYNOD is an ongoing PROCESS, that it is a long-term navigation and that it has much more to continue traveling in these living waters of the Amazon, learning from the villages and communities, making its choice acculturated and inter-cultural with them, but that the BEST WINE is yet to come. The Post-Assembly Phase of the Synod is the most important. In it as a Church in the territory, as REPAM, and with the peoples and communities who together are the main responsible parties, that we MUST return to those who live and wait in the territory. Bringing back what they have entrusted to us with their lives, hopes, cries and joys, to continue weaving together now that that which is most important begins. The final phase, and the most important of the Synod, is just beginning now, and it is up to all of us together to carry on.

It is the new wine that requires new wineskins to be able to mature little by little and know that the Kingdom and the possibility of another world is there, that we must fight for it, and that death does not have, nor will it ever have the last word. It is a true experience on the way to Easter, to the resurrection. It is about assuming the living and hopeful fires of our peoples and communities, which can extinguish and suffocate the other destructive fires of desire to accumulate, desire to destroy, the rejection of other ways of life. We must discover in the Amazonian peoples, with their own weaknesses, the teachings for a possible path to good living and a more harmonious relationship with everything, with the cosmos.

III. The Horizons of the Synodal Road

The Synod expresses four essential conversions that will be the NEW ROADS for reform and the new stage for the Church in the Amazon and, perhaps, also for the entire Church.
- New paths of Pastoral Conversion.
  o Church in Missionary Outing
  o Missionary Disciples in the Amazon

- New paths of Cultural Conversion - acculturated and intercultural.
  o The face of the Church for the Amazonian and indigenous peoples
  o Paths for an acculturated and Intercultural Church
- New paths of Ecological - Socio-environmental- Conversion.
  o Towards an integral ecology from the Encyclical Laudato Si’
  o A Church that takes care of the common home in the Amazon

- New paths of Synod Conversion.
  o Missionary synodality in the Amazon Church
  o New paths for ecclesial ministry
  o New paths for ecclesial synodality

IV. In communion and on the path with our brother Pope Francis, the Church and the Amazon

Since the PATH is actually the EXPERIENCE itself, and Jesus and his call to be co-creators in the Kingdom who indicate the direction to us, it is important to know that this Synodal process is a privileged means of accompanying Pope Francis. On this path, the Amazonian indigenous peoples have called the Pope their brother and one of them, the one who understands them best, the one who is taking a brave option to defend life and their territories, their ally, and the one who is perceived to be in need of community because he seems to be alone at times. The best way to navigate these waters with him is to undertake the commitments of this Synod, regardless of what is on the paper, in other words, looking at what is in our life experience and at what has transformed inside ourselves and has brought renovation. They are available seeds with the certainty that there is much to be done to sow the earth which we have prepared and which others in the future will receive as a gift.

Recognizing these new commitments, we hear the calling to take them to our territories, called to participate and transform our particular ecclesial realities by putting our lives – lending a hand - and waiting for the Pope to discern everything he has heard from us in these two years (and in these three weeks of Assembly) to return his word and guidance in the possible Apostolic Exhortation, or some other type of document, that could come in March next year. Let's be patient in waiting for our brother Francis to give us his learning after listening to us.

The final document of this Synod will be a very important instrument, but it is not the document that will determine the new paths. We feel invited to not be trapped by those who do not want to change anything and want things to end here, and also beware of prophets of calamities that express that none of this has made sense, due to the view from their own self referencing categories. In both cases they refuse to see and stop others from seeing that this is the precise moment, a critical moment that continues to flow as a river of living water that cannot be stopped for what has already been achieved, for what already is and is deemed new and that which inevitably will serve to open new horizons for the Kingdom.
“With the diverse peoples of this Amazon, O Lord of the incarnation, Jesus of the delivery until the tragic death for the injustices of yesterday and today, and Christ of the certainty of the new life in the unstoppable resurrection, that we may know how to recognize Your truth in the diversity of each culture in those lands. May we know how to discern the truth of your call in the voice and in the life of the peoples and communities that live in harmonious relationship with the earth, with others, and with divine strength.”

Fragment of the prayer of consecration of the Amazonian Synod to Saint Francis of Assisi

Card. Claudio Hummes, OFM   Card. Pedro Barreto Jimeno, SJ   Mauricio López O.
President               Vicepresident           Executive Secretary

Red Eclesial Panamazónica -REPAM