

# THE AMAZON:

## New Paths for the Church and for an INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

PREPARATORY DOCUMENT POPULAR VERSION



**REPAM**  
REDE ECLESIAL PANAMAZÔNICA  
*fonte de vida no coração da Igreja*



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Methodology and Communication Commission.  
Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM)

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Photos: Adveniat /Repam Brasil/REPAM

**E**In October 2019, the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will take place in Rome, they will be reflecting on the New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology Synod means walking together as a community and in the same direction to respond to a reality of great importance for the Church,.

Those pathways of evangelization have to be thought for and with God's people that live in that region, people living in communities and in rural areas, in the cities and big metropolis , people living in the riverbanks, migrant and displaced, and especially for and with native people.

The reflections made at the Synod go further than the ecclesiastical Amazonian sphere because they focus on the universal Church and the future of the whole planet. We start on a specific territory, from where we want to build a bridge to other essential places of our world: the Congo River Basin, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, the tropical forests in the Pacific Coast of Asia, Guaraní Aquifer, to name some.

Listening to the indigenous people and all the communities that live in the Amazon, as the first spokesperson of this Synod, is of vital importance for the Church as a whole.

The preparatory document is divided in three parts according to the “see, judge and act” method. As part of the text some questions are presented that hopefully will permit a dialogue and a progressive approximation to reality and also to the regional expectations of achieving a “culture of encounter” (EG 220).

This “culture of encounter” includes the new paths for evangelizing and implementing a Church that has an amazonic face in every day life, in a “pluriform harmony” (EG 220) and “happy sobriety” (LS 224-225), as contributions to the building up of the Kingdom of God.



An aerial photograph showing a wide, winding river with a light brownish-green hue, meandering through a vast, dense tropical rainforest. The forest is a deep green, with some lighter green patches indicating different types of vegetation or perhaps small clearings. The river's path is highly irregular, with many sharp turns and loops, creating a complex, organic shape. The overall scene is one of a remote, untouched natural environment.

MiThe Amazon!  
The River-Sea, Mother of all the waters.







**see**

**IDENTITY  
AND  
OUTCRIES  
OF THE  
PAN-AMAZONIC  
REGION**





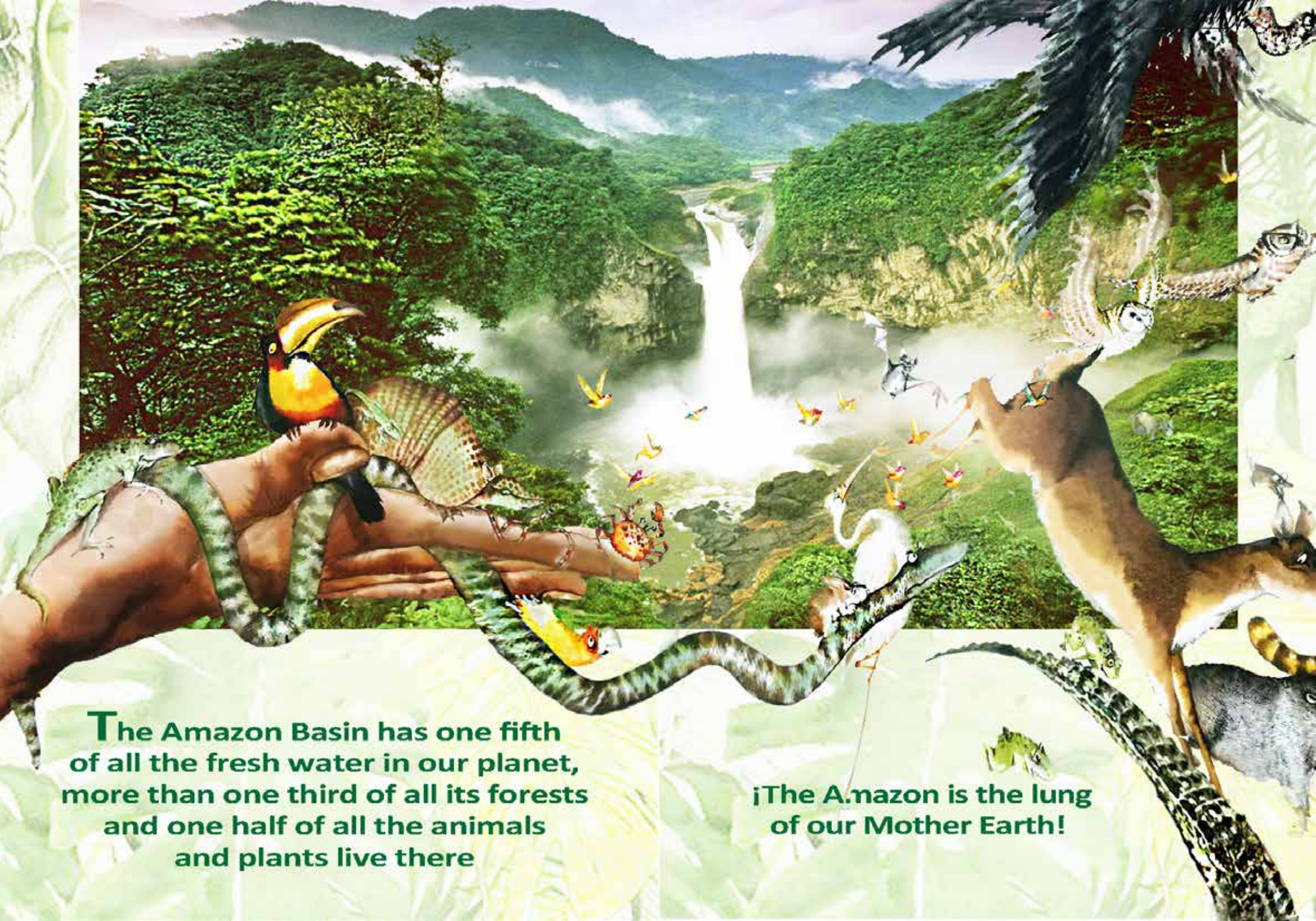
9 countries share this great territory: Brasil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Venezuela, Surinam, Guyana y Guayana. ¡There are more than seven and a half million square kilometers!

TIKUNA YANOMAMI KAYAPÓ XAVANTE TUKANO P  
KUCAMA SHUAR WAORANI ASHÁNINKA SHIPIBO K  
PIAROA KURRIPAKO MOXOS GUARAYO PEMÓN AW  
YAGUA WARAO MUNDURUKÚ KICHWA SATERÉ MAW  
TSIMANÉ AWAJÚN MURA KARAJÁ TSIMANÉ ACHÉ N  
TUPÍ KORUBO OFAIÉ GUARANÍ BOTOKUDO PAYAGU  
KORUBO BANIWA BOTOKUDO CHAMAKOKO CASHIB



MAKIRITARE  
WUITOTO  
N GUAHIBO  
ASHÁNINKA  
CHIRIPÁ  
GUAYKURÚ  
ENOA TUPÍ





**The Amazon Basin has one fifth of all the fresh water in our planet, more than one third of all its forests and one half of all the animals and plants live there**

**!The Amazon is the lung of our Mother Earth!**





**Since 1492, the Amazon Region, like all the American lands, were invaded by Spain and Portugal. Many representatives of the Church were accomplices to this holocaust. There were also some prophetic voices like Antonio de Montesinos y Bartolomé de las Casas who defended the native people.**

**In 1992, 500 years after, the Pope apologized for the scandalous offenses for the history of humanity.**



**Since the conquest, the vast amazon territory was part of the colonial exploitation and later it was shared between the national states . Up to now it continues being a victim of a furious neocolonialism disguised as progress.**

*The native people of the Amazon region have never been threatened as they are now.*

*Francisco in Puerto Maldonado*





**Later, we were chased to be enslaved, we hid in the jungle. Up to now we collect what the jungle offers us, and in return we take care of it, of its waters and its forests.**

**We have inhabited the Amazon region for millions of years .  
Before the colonization, we lived in the river banks and lakes, hunting, fishing and planting crops.**







In the Amazon region there are three million Indians, all of them united by the water of the Great River.

**We** are 390 different communities and nationalities with our own cultural identity. And 120 free communities that have decided to live on voluntary isolation, we also live in the river banks, "quilombos" and we are farmers..... some others live in the cities. Some of us are easy to identify, others are "invisible"







**The wealth of the jungle and rivers in the Amazon region are threatened. Its oil, gas, wood and gold are wildly exploited. The forests are destroyed with mega hydroelectric projects, interoceanic highways and industrial monoculture plantations**

**This extractivism has devastating consequences because of indiscriminate logging of forests, contamination of rivers and lakes with toxic agricultural products, oil spills, legal and illegal mining and because of criminal drug trafficking networks.**





**Thousands of indians, river bank inhabitants and afro descendants are forced to leave our land and live undocumented in the cities. Alcohol, drugs and crime, especially among males, and sexual exploitation among females generate constant social conflicts.**

**This economic, social and political violence has been institutionalized along history. Slavery, exploitation and poverty are not only destroying the ecological richness of the Amazon, but also the cultural richness of its millenary peoples.**

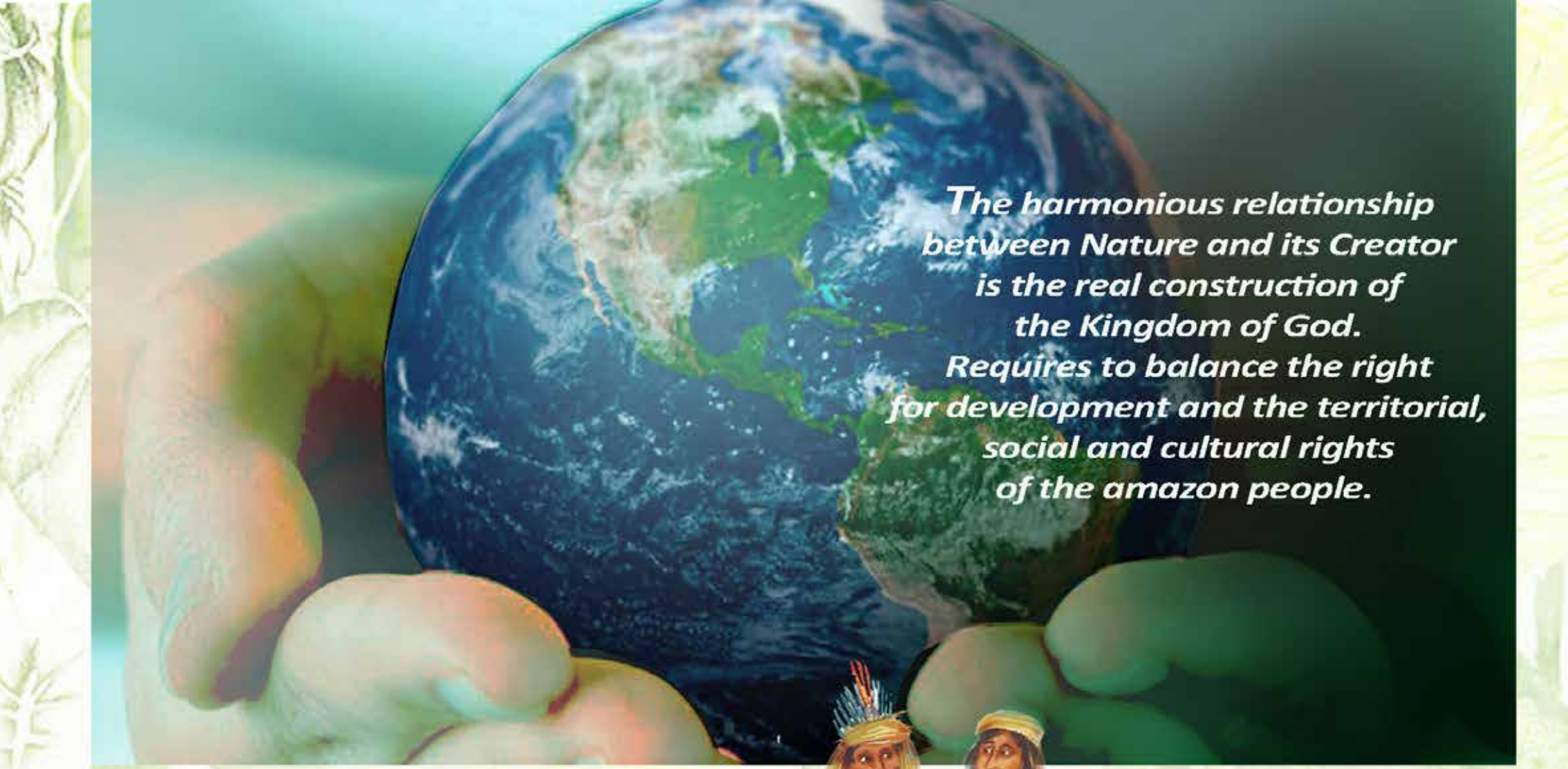




**To face these disasters , the Amazonian communities are organized and we fight for the defense of our cultures, of our territory and rights. We, the indians, are writing our own history and fighting for our auto determination.**

**The missionaries of the Catholic Church are present and committed to the causes of the people of the Amazon area. The Amazon has been a place of concrete evangelical testimony, even of martyrdom many times.**





*The harmonious relationship  
between Nature and its Creator  
is the real construction of  
the Kingdom of God.  
Requires to balance the right  
for development and the territorial,  
social and cultural rights  
of the amazon people.*

**For us, the Amazon region indians,  
Well Being is being in harmony with  
all the living things in the environment.  
God created and gave us the soil and the  
water, the trees, the animals, day and  
night, for it to be our Common House.**



*Their holistic worldview,  
their knowledge, have a  
lot to teach us , the ones that  
do not belong to their culture.*

Francisco en Puerto Maldonado





*The dominant culture of consumption and discating is turning our world into a huge garbage disposal.*

*This model of development is anonymous, choking , obsessed with consumption, money and power idols. The new colonialism is disguised by “progress”.*

*To protect its native communities and its territories is a fundamental ethical requirement and a basic compromise with human rights, and for the Church it turns into a moral imperative that has to be coherent with the the integral ecology approach.*

*The Amazon peoples are a living memory of the mission God has given us: taking care of the Common House.*

*The defense of this land has no other purpose than to defend Life itself.*

*¡This is not an orphan land! ¡It does have a Mother!*



# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

The purpose of these questions is to listen God's Church about the New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology in the Amazon region.

The Spirit speaks through God's people.

When we listen to them we can identify the challenges, hopes and discover the new ways God is asking the Church for this territory.

The questionnaire was structured in three sections: see-judge-act.



1. What hurts the most talking about your community: life itself, territory, culture?
2. What characteristics does your territory have referring to flora, fauna and human and culture diversity?
3. How does the Church face these diverse characteristics?
4. Thinking about the essential message of the Gospel, how should we be as a society and how can we get there?
5. What is the most important thing that the Amazon people contribute from their culture to the Church and the world?
6. How do we build a Church that has an Amazonian face taking these contributions in account?
7. How should the Church accompany the communities' organization in their identity and the defense of their territories and rights?
8. How should the Church accompany the communities that live in the cities in the Amazon region?
9. In case we have Voluntary Isolation communities near, how can the Church defend their life and rights?



The background of the slide is a lush, green tropical scene. On the left side, there are several large, vibrant green leaves, including a prominent Monstera leaf with its characteristic splits. To the right, the background is a soft-focus collage of various tropical plants, including palm fronds and other broad-leafed species, creating a dense and naturalistic feel. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green, from deep forest greens to bright, sunny yellows and light greens.

# **DISCERN**

**TOWARDS  
A  
PASTORAL  
AND  
ECOLOGICAL  
CONVERSION**



## Announcing Jesus's Gospel in the Amazon region

God, who created humankind in His own image and likeness, entrusts us the custody of creation, the Common House. To this harmony between God, humankind and the cosmos, sin, the rejection of the other, the curse of the soil and even fratricide are opposed. But God does not abandon the work of His hands'. The history of salvation culminates in the person and the mission of Jesus

*JESUS ¡I proclaim God's Kingdom !  
¡Blessed are the poor, because they will stop being so!  
¡Blessed are the ones who cry, and the hungry,  
because they will laugh and will*



## A biblical-theological dimension

Once they were determined in the following documents, in Latin America these words were interpreted as an option and liberation by the poor (Medellín 1968), participation and grassroots communities (Puebla 1979), insertion and enculturation; (Santo Domingo 1992), mission and service of a Samaritan Church that looks after the poor. (Aparecida 2007).



## Announcing Jesus's Gospel in the Amazon region

Evangelizing is making God's Kingdom present in the world. Is having a compromise with our brothers and sisters, is fighting against the social inequalities, is promoting social justice, solidarity, compassion and caring for one another and creation. This means we attentively listen to the outcry of the poor and of Mother Nature.  
¡ A Samaritan Church!

*Today the call of the amazon people is similar to the yelling of His people in Egypt, when they were accused of crime for protesting to defend their land. Or when they witnessed the destruction of the tropical rainforest, or when its rivers are filled with death rather than with life.*

## Social Dimension





# Announcing Jesus's Gospel in the Amazon region

**A an Integral Ecology means  
integrating the the links between  
social and environmental issues.**

**Everything is interrelated.  
The Integral Ecology implies also an  
individual conversion, a profound  
change of heart evident in personal  
habits and a structural change  
expressed in social habits and  
a different economy.  
¡We need to change our path!**

*In the Amazon region  
we have the biggest biodiversity  
of our planet and it is also the place  
where the most ancestral world views  
of history survive. Today all this natural and  
cultural patrimony is being threatened  
by a consumerist vision  
of humankind.*

## Ecological Dimension





## Announcing Jesus's Gospel in the Amazon region

The celebration of the Baptism invites us to see water as the fountain of life, the river as a fountain of purification, like we find it in the ancestral wisdom of the amazon people.

The celebration of the Eucharist invites us to rediscover in bread and wine, fruit of the earth and the work of women and men, a cosmic love, in which humankind gives thanks to God for the new life of the Risen Christ.

*The universe is developed in God, who fills it all. There we find the mystic in a leave, in the pathway, in mist, in a poor's face.*

## Sacramental Dimension





**I wanted to come to visit and listen to you, to be close in the Church's heart, share its challenges and all together reaffirm a sincere option to defend life, defend the soil and defend culture.**

**We have come to listen to you, to be next to you in the heart of the Church and to participate in the building of such so it will have a more Amazonian face each time.**

## **Ecclesial - missionary Dimension**



**La amazonía es fuente de vida  
en el corazón de la Iglesia**



# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION



1. What hopes does the presence of the Church offer the amazon communities for life, the territory and culture?
2. What does living a Integral ecology in the Amazon mean, as it says in the Laudato si chapter 4?
3. In your Church , in what way is Jesus Good News in life, in the family, the community and the amazon society?
4. How can the Christian community give answers to situations of social injustice, iniquity, poverty, violence, drug abuse, human trafficking, violence against women, sexual exploitation, discrimination against indigenous people and migrants and exclusion in the Amazon region?
5. If we want to announce the Gospel in cultural diversity , how can we take in account the own, specific features of each and every community?
6. How can we incorporate the specific characteristics of each community in the sacraments?
7. How does the community of believers participate in the services that give life to the Church in the Amazon region?



The background of the image is a lush, tropical forest scene. On the left side, there are several large, vibrant green palm fronds. In the center and right, there are large, heart-shaped leaves with prominent veins, possibly from a Philodendron or similar plant. The lighting is bright and dappled, suggesting sunlight filtering through the canopy. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green, from deep forest green to bright, almost yellow-green highlights.

**ACT**

**NEW  
PATHS  
FOR A  
CHURCH WITH  
AN  
AMAZONIAN  
FACE**



# A church that has an Amazonian face

*The Amazon region reminds  
me the words that God said to  
Moses: Take your sandals off because  
you are stepping on a holy ground*

**The Synod should respond to the situations of injustice in the region, like the neoliberalism of the extractives industries, the infrastructure projects that damage its biodiversity, and the imposition of cultural and economic models that are foreign to the life situation of native peoples.**

**The missionary, local Churches find in their own surroundings privileged evangelizing experiences. There they encounter the marginalized, the fugitive, the refugees, the desperate and the excluded.**





# Prophetic Dimension

*It is necessary that we allow them and their cultures , to evangelize us. It is necessary to let them use our voice in their causes, be their friends, listen to them.*

*Their teachings set the priorities of the Church in the Amazon.*

**An ecological conversion implies a new style of life , a global solidarity that is greater than individualism, and to be happy only with what is really necessary.**

**This is something that the western cultures should learn from us, the Amazon cultures.**

**We need to agree on a minimal agenda: the all-round and sustainable development, drinking water for everybody, sustainable agriculture and livestock raising, energy production without contamination, respect to the identity and rights of the native people.**





# **Ministries of the Church that have an Amazonian face.**

***The Amazon Church shouldn't be frightened. We need to make the native people the main spokesmen in the pastoral, social and environmental issues.***



**The Church still has little presence in relation to the extension of the Amazon region and its cultural diversity. We need to review contents, methodology and attitudes to achieve an embodied pastoral.**

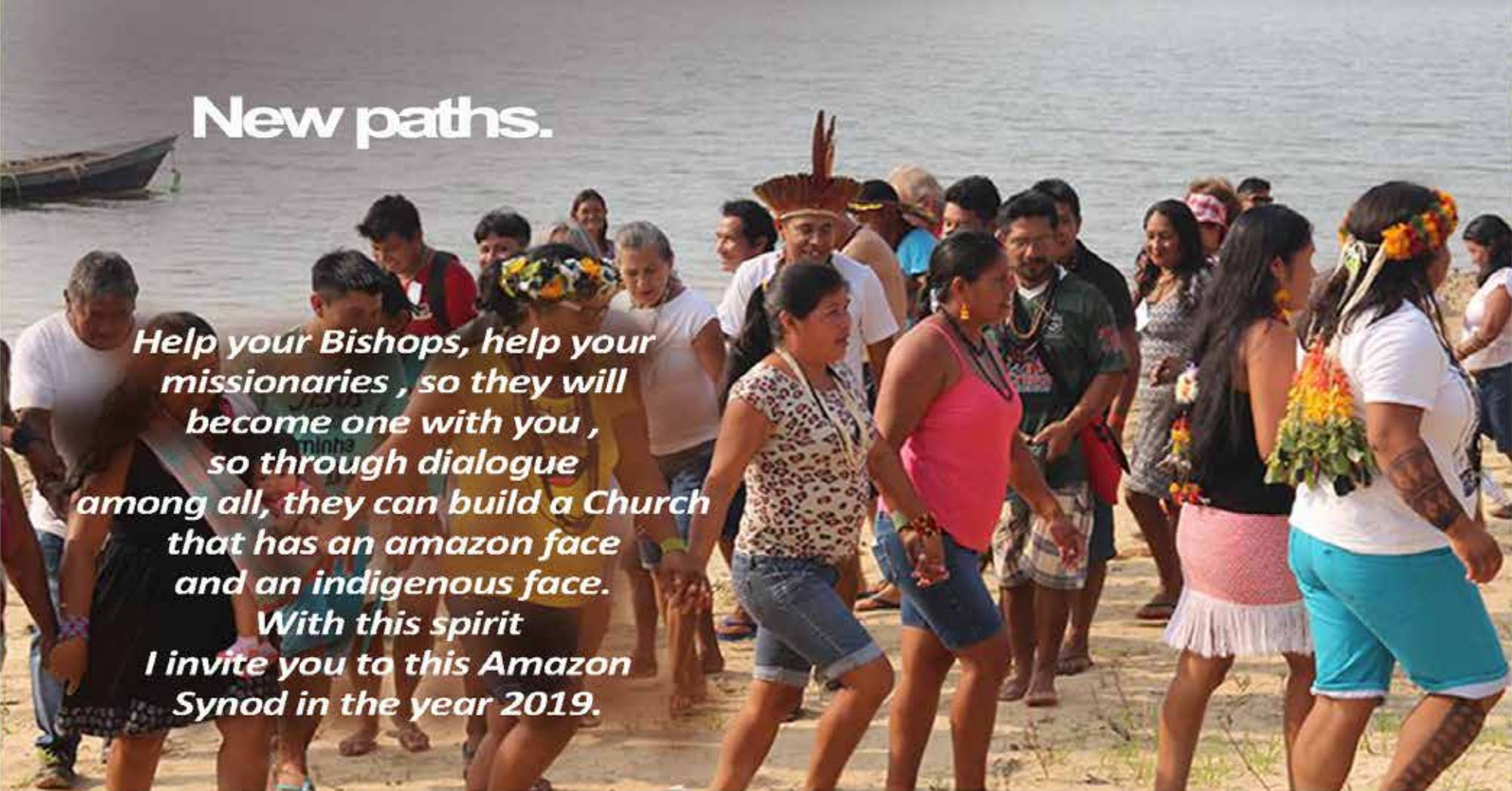
**We also need new ministries for pastoral agents.**

**We need to identify the type of ministry entrusted to women, taking in account the role that they have in their communities.**

**We also need to promote indigenous priesthood, the one that is born in its territory so that God's people feels a Eucharist that is closer to them.**



# New paths.



*Help your Bishops, help your missionaries, so they will become one with you, so through dialogue among all, they can build a Church that has an amazon face and an indigenous face. With this spirit I invite you to this Amazon Synod in the year 2019.*

**All of God's people are called to enter this new ecclesial path with an open heart.**

**All of us are called to share with the communities and commit to defending their lives, love them and their cultures. A spirituality Jesus style : simple, human, open to dialogue, Samaritan.**

**We must strengthen the protagonism of the Amazon people.**

**We require an intercultural spirituality to incorporate the diversity of its traditions. It is necessary to know their languages and their cultures.**

**Only this way the Church will be present in the huge Amazon territory**



# QUESTIONS FOR REFLEXION



1. What kind of Church do we dream for the Amazon region?
2. What do you think is a Church that has an Amazonian face and what characteristics should it have?
3. One of the challenges in the Amazon is the impossibility to celebrate the Eucharist around the whole territory. What can we do about it?
4. What is the role that the laymen and women should have in the catechetical and liturgical pastoral and in the defense of the Common House?
5. How should the Church respond to injustice in the Amazon?
6. What characteristics should the people that transmit the Good News in the Amazon region have?
7. What are the services and the ministries that the Amazon has in its ecclesial jurisdiction and what are their characteristics?
8. What are the services and the ministries that the Amazon that you consider should be implemented and promoted?
9. How can the consecrated life contribute with its charisms in the building of a Church with an amazon face?
10. How can we recognize and value the role women play in our dream of an amazon Church ?
11. How does the popular religiosity contribute to create new possibilities in the amazon Church ?
12. How could the mass media and the different ways of communication that are available in the region promote a native Church?





## METHODOLOGY SUGGESTED

REPAM has been assigned to develop a territorial consulting process through this Preparatory Document.

Forty five Territorial Assemblies will be carried out in the 9 Amazonian countries. The results will be sent like a contribution to the territories to be considered in the working document.

Many groups, organizations , communities and parishes that will have this document in their hands will want to carry out this dialogue and consulting process.

We can only assure that these consulting processes get to the sistematization before the Working Document once the answers to the questions SEE, JUDGE AND ACT get to us through the following format:



1-Detailed list of the participants : Name, place of origin, group to which they belong which can be indigenous , farmers, if they live in the riversides, quilombo inhabitant, urban..., institution to which they belong (if it applies) and if possible sex and age. That way we will have an statistical registry at the end of each Assembly. It must also state the place and date of such Territorial Assembly.

2- Consolidated report according to this methodological guide.

Turn in a synthetizing chart for each question. Preferably a maximum of 3 considerations for each question.

If there are others that are also important include them.

#### **Consideration**

Precise, clear, synthetized, in order of priorities.

#### **Argument**

To support what is stated .  
Give an example that will broaden the understanding .

The results of these Assemblies and Consultations will be received by the REPAM maximum until January 30th 2019.





Everything must be sent to the following  
mail address:

**[sinododelamazonia@redamazonica.org](mailto:sinododelamazonia@redamazonica.org)**

For more information:

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