

A reflection on the Synod for the Amazon in the light of Pope Francis' Encyclical "Laudato si"

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The Synod for the Amazon began a profound reflection, which has ancient roots, on the Pan-Amazon region, to which nine different nations refer, thus bringing to the center of attention what is often considered the periphery of the world with respect to the euro – atlantic area, on the contrary considered the center of the world.

As noted by Father Antonio Spadaro S.I., director of La Civiltà Cattolica, in the article 'A Synod for the Amazon - A fresco for the common home (Quaderno 4065, p. 209 - 219, Vol. IV, 2019): “Many have expressed the awareness that everything that happens in the Amazon has an impact on the world. This region is a global sounding board, both biological and political-economic as well as socio-religious. ”. Father Spadaro adds "The Amazon is a testing ground for the world ... Never before indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, fishermen, migrants and other traditional communities in Amazonia have been threatened so hard by deforestation, standardization and exploitation ”.

The Amazonian land proposes a series of global themes and the Synod in approaching them and in accompanying the different ethnic groups that populate it has identified in the word 'conversion' (pastoral, cultural, ecological and synodal conversion) the leit

motiv of His action with particular reference to the theme of ecological respect, connecting in a distinct way to the Encyclical of Pope Francis 'Laudato si'.

In the Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod for the Amazon (I.L. - 91) it is emphasized how with "evangelical audacity" the synodal reflections encourage a journey of collegial discernment of the "voice of the Spirit", aimed at "reflecting on how to structure the local Churches in every region and country, and to proceed with a synodal conversion that indicates common paths of evangelization " .

A "Church with an Amazonian face" (I.L. - 92) needs that its communities, at various levels, be "supported by decentralized organizational structures", which take into account, also with a view to inter-religious dialogue, the different local realities with particular accent. "to the effective participation of the laity in discernment and decision making".

A more careful reflection on the meanings of the synodal dialogue cannot fail to raise a re - reading and consequentially some questions on various aspects of the themes proposed in relation to what the periphery of the world can suggest, directly and indirectly, to the center of the world, with particular reference to the presence and concrete action of the Church.

The path undertaken by the Church with the synod is also, in some respects, symbolic and indirectly highlights that the societies afferent to the center of the world are characterized by a structural complexity comparable to the Amazon forest within which the salvific work of the Church is expressed. It is within this complexity, this

intricate undergrowth, that the Church must move strong with its millenary experience and culture, but also aware of the need to establish a close human dialogue that takes into account the various needs, urgencies and actions of all.

And it is through 'communication', in the broadest sense of the term, that the Church must renew and strengthen the bonds of 'trust and reciprocity' with its faithful.

At the center of the Church's attention there is, as always, the human person in his multiple aspects within the environment, in many respects comparable to the undergrowth of the Amazon rainforest, in which his existence unfolds.

The first question that arises spontaneously is simple and is how it is possible to identify in a certain and immediate way the needs, urgencies and actions of all in this complexity?

The second question relates to what the Church can do to make the various communities of the faithful participate and share responsibility in making her decisions. Does investing the individual faithful in this co-responsibility in decisions make the very responsibility of decisions shareable? In other words, must the responsibility for all the actions that the multitude of faithful and religious undertake always be shared with the Church?

The third question is more subtle and concerns the format of the structures with which the Church and its members act concretely in society and on any reforms, including in terms of responsibility, to be carried out so that the Church remains in step with the times, bearing in mind that His message is meta-historical.

The literary reference to the metaphorical journey that Dante Alighieri takes in *The Divine Comedy* (think in particular of the preface of the work "In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself in a dark forest because the straight way was lost.") is for sure immediate aspects, but it is the 'true way' to which the Synod and the "Laudato si" refer inviting everyone to follow it, all the more so in the darkness of the pandemic which materialized in the various phases of its evolution and in the deep, sudden and lacerating ones of the war in Ukraine, in an evangelical way opening to a constructive dialogue.