

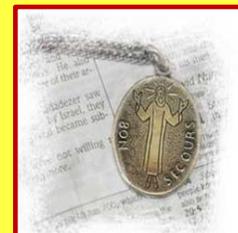
# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



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"The entire People of God, who share in the mission of Christ must be encouraged not to remain indifferent to the region's injustices, in order to discover, in listening to the Spirit, the sought-after new paths."

(Preparatory Document on the Synod for the Amazon)

A special Synod of Bishops will gather in Rome from October 6 – 27, 2019 to reflect on the theme "Amazonia: News Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology." Pope Francis announced in 2017 that the Synod would work to identify new paths for the evangelization of God's people in that region, specifically the indigenous peoples who are experiencing the destruction and exploitation of their natural environment. The Amazon basin with a population of 2.8 million people divided among approximately 400 tribes, includes all or parts of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Venezuela, and Suriname, all countries where most of the population is Roman Catholic.

As you read and pray with this Newsletter, imagine yourself in the Amazon forest walking alongside the indigenous people. Ask God for the grace to see with your eyes and heart the experience of the Amazonian people and all creation in this territory.



**The Amazon Basin** covers more than 7½ million square kilometers and encompasses one of our planet's largest reserves of biodiversity. It contains:

- 30% to 50% of the world's flora and fauna
- 20% of the world's fresh water
- more than 1/3 of the planet's primary forests
- more than 125 species of mammals, 60 of amphibians, 100 of reptiles, 150 of butterflies, and more than 400 species of birds in any four-square-mile patch of its territory
- The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests and produces about 20% of earth's oxygen.

87,000 people from the nine countries in the Amazon took part in consultations, debates and assemblies in preparation for the Synod on the Amazon.

## Reflection

*In what ways would you be affected if these aspects of nature in the Amazon were lost?*

*How can we, in solidarity with our Sisters living in the Peruvian Amazon, help "shape a Church with an Amazonian face"?*

October  
JPIC Days of Remembrance

October 1  
World Habitat Day

October 4  
Feast of St. Francis of Assisi  
World Animal Day

October 11  
International Day of the  
Girl Child

October 16  
World Food Day

October 17  
International Day for the  
Eradication of Poverty

October 24  
United Nations Day

October 24 – 30  
Disarmament Week

## Themes of the Synod

- Listening to the experiences and wisdom of indigenous communities
- Responding to the Ecological crisis
- Deepening interculturality as central to how the Church approaches mission.

• **Living in a community means living in a reciprocal relationship.** An attitude of gratitude for life grows when we freely return the good deeds another person has done for us. This is how we become co-responsible for the continuous inter-connectedness of community, which is renewed each day. This reciprocity is lived out in relationship with Mother Earth, with the Divine, with one's self and with community. A creative movement of life is generated by continuous gratitude.

(Source: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

### Reflection

**In what ways can you incorporate lessons of Andean and Amazonian spirituality into your own life or the Bon Secours family?**



## 2. Ecological Crisis

Ecology, community life, and spirituality are intimately woven together in the Amazon. All three of these aspects of indigenous life in the Amazon face threats from extractive industries (which remove raw materials from the earth), large scale development projects such as hydroelectric dams, road construction, mines, legal and illegal logging, commodification of water and forests, and even conservation projects such as programs to prevent deforestation.

People from the Amazon named threats to their territory from extractive industries as a top concern when consulted in preparation for the Synod.

The threats include environmental contamination, forced displacement and migration, sexual exploitation, human and drug trafficking, and resource revenue corruption – all ways extractive industries often impoverish communities that once lived abundantly on the blessed gifts of the forests. Indigenous leaders who dare to speak out are often criminalized and sometimes assassinated.

(Source: Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

## 3. Deepening Interculturality

"The encyclical *Laudato Si'* invites us to an ecological conversion that implies a new way of life. Our neighbor acquires a central position in our horizon. This involves practicing global solidarity and overcoming individualism, while opening up new paths to freedom, truth, and beauty. Conversion means freeing ourselves from the obsession with consumerism. Purchasing is a moral act, not a merely economic one.



Ecological conversion means embracing the mystically interconnected and interdependent nature of all creation. The Synod calls us to defend life by opposing a throwaway culture, the idolatry of money, exploitation and oppression – a culture of death. To defend life is to defend nature's gifts, the culture of local people, and their right to be heard. This is the new call to mission – a path toward integration with the abundance of life."

Preparatory Document for the Synod on the Amazon



REPAM is an acronym for the Red Eclesial Pan-Amazónica Network. It was set up in 2014 in answer to the grave concerns of Pope Francis and the Latin American Church regarding the "deep wounds that Amazonia and its peoples bear". It embodies the promise Pope Francis made in the Amazon town of Maldonado, Peru, to affirm "a whole-hearted option for the defense of life, the defense of Earth and the defense of cultures".

REPAM is a key advisor for the Synod and its field teams held 45 assemblies across its nine countries in preparation, with indigenous peoples, rural communities, social movements and pastoral workers. Our friend, Cardinal Pedro Barreto, serves as vice president of this organization. **In support of the Synod and our commitment to "defend and care for all creation", the Congregation of Bon Secours made a generous donation to REPAM to further their work in the Amazon.**

### International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

- Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Fran Gorsuch, CBS (USA)
- Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ Co-chair
- Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS (Ireland)
- Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS (USA) Chair
- Sr. Noelia Lara Núñez, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Marguerite Provost, CBS (France)
- Sr. Alice Talone, CBS (USA)
- Sr. Katherine Tierney, CBS (Ireland)
- Sr. Yolanda Morales Valiente, CBS (Peru)
- Sr. Chris Webb, CBS (USA)