



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

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Yes to “Querida Amazonia,” the Beloved Amazon

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns gratefully welcomes “Querida Amazonia,” Pope Francis’s Exhortation in response to the Synod on the Amazon. It is an exciting step on a new pathway toward becoming a “missionary Church.”

“Despite the disappointment that some may feel concerning the pope’s silence on the possibility of ordaining elder married men, we see much to celebrate in his response to the Amazon synod,” said Susan Gunn, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. “The Holy Father is speaking the Maryknoll language when he emphatically urges ‘the people of God and all persons of good will’ to pursue a culture of encounter and dialogue and to work for justice for the people of the Amazon region and the precious Amazonian ecosystem. Encounter, dialogue and social justice for those who have been ‘discarded’ by society are essential aspects of the Maryknoll mission experience.”

Above all, Pope Francis proclaims the need for a renewed “missionary Church” that journeys alongside the people of the Amazon region. He names two Church actors dear to the Maryknoll missionary experience – pastoral workers and Christian base communities – as well-positioned to preach the Good News of God’s love and work for “justice and dignity” for all people. Ultimately, the experience of encounter and dialogue will allow for mutual transformation and a “Church with an Amazonian face,” the pope says.

“Pope Francis repeats Saint Pope John Paul II’s teaching that our faith does not have simply one cultural expression,” Gunn says. “Living and working with marginalized communities in more than 25 countries, Maryknoll missionaries know the transformative power of discovering and sharing God’s love and compassion across languages and cultures. We say ‘No’ to fear and ‘Yes’ to our baptismal call to discover and share God’s love and to work for what Pope Francis calls a ‘Beloved Amazonia’ – a society based on justice, the love of God and a commitment to living in peace with each other and all of creation, especially the irreplaceable Amazon rainforest.”

The two-year Synodal process, culminating in this document, has been a welcome step toward a “listening” Church which amplifies marginalized voices. As the Synod took steps to include the voices of women from the Amazon region, so the Exhortation calls for more opportunities for women in the Church in the Amazon.

Likewise, the Synod engaged the indigenous peoples of the region, especially those targeted by extractive industries, celebrating their “ancestral wisdom” of ecological practice and spirituality. We are grateful for Pope Francis’s affirmation of the wisdom of indigenous communities, whose spirituality of *buen vivir* (“good living”) – or harmonious relationship between Creator, creation and all people – is deeply connected to the call to ecological conversion.

We join Pope Francis in praying that “God [may] grant that the entire Church be enriched and challenged by the work of the synodal assembly.”

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missionaries, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missionaries serve.

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