
The second post-Synodal season with Repam and Ceama. Card. Barreto: “Complementary relationships for evangelization”

The “changing of the guard” of Monday, November 9, marks the conclusion of the reorganization process of the Pan-Amazonian Churches, also in structural terms, fruit of last year's Synod. Cardinal Pedro Barreto, Peruvian Jesuit, Archbishop of Huancayo, was appointed President of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network ([REPAM](#)) while Brazilian João Gutemberg Sampaio, from Brazil, took office as Executive Secretary at Manaus. REPAM will interact with the new “creature” proposed by the Synod, the new Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Conference (CEAMA), which held its assembly in the past few days, chaired by former REPAM President Cardinal Claudio Hummes from Brazil. Cardinal Barreto took stock of the “post-synodal” challenges for the Churches and the peoples of the Pan-Amazon region with SIR, following the ninth Pan-Amazon Social Forum (FOSPA), attended also by REPAM.



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REPAM Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network is faced with three major and urgent challenges. First, to support the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Conference (CEAMA), a recently established, standing and permanent ecclesial body tasked with delivering on the recommendations of the Synod for the Amazon, held in Rome in October 2019. As a network active throughout the territory of the Amazon, REPAM is called to concretize CEAMA pastoral guidelines. Since its creation in September 2014, REPAM has accompanied the Amazonian peoples in various ways. Today, in continuity with the Synodal process, it collaborates with CEAMA for the implementation of its guidelines in the region. It should be noted that CEAMA is an unprecedented initiative in the history of the Church, for it is an ecclesial - hence not only Episcopal - body, and because it is Amazonian. It is therefore a token of the Church's love and service to the 'dear Amazon' ('querida Amazonia'), as is titled the Post-Synodal Exhortation. Second, REPAM must intensify its mission of closely supporting the indigenous peoples and those along the riverbanks in Amazonia, listening to their cries and to the clamour of the earth. REPAM is an elaborate space for the Church's evangelization process. It therefore offers CEAMA a communication channel to connect with the local community and hence with the indigenous peoples. Third, together with CEAMA, it strengthens its coordination with the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), the Latin American Conference of Men and Women Religious (CLAR), Caritas Latin

America, as well as other groups of indigenous peoples and partners residing in the Amazon region. **Several people who played an important role in REPAM now hold positions of responsibility in CEAMA. What will be the difference between REPAM and CEAMA? Isn't there a risk of creating a dual structure?** In fact, the Executive Secretary, Mauricio López, left REPAM for a natural renewal process after six years of service. Similarly, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, President of REPAM since its foundation on September 14, 2014, was elected President of CEAMA on June 29. Both Cardinal Hummes and Mauricio López accomplished commendable results in the organization and consolidation of REPAM, in the service of comprehensive pastoral ministry and in fostering the preparation of the Synod for the Amazon. *CEAMA is a fruit of this synodal process. Therefore, the relationship between CEAMA and REPAM is complementary to improved and greater Evangelization service in the Amazon.* As a standing and permanent ecclesial structure, CEAMA is tasked with establishing and clarifying the directions of the Synod, whereas REPAM coordinates activities throughout the territory, incorporating CEAMA's recommendations and seeking to put them into practice in the territory of the Amazon region. **How is the Synod's reception progressing among the Amazonian peoples?** The Synod's reception is progressing significantly. Token of this is the fact that CEAMA, as a special fruit of the synodal experience carried out with pastoral zeal, is the first established project. This is a fundamental step in the history of the Church due to fundamental reasons: it is the first standing and permanent ecclesial collegial body which the baptized, that is, the bishops, priests, religious and laity, actively participate in. Furthermore, it is the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon, that is, of a specific region, the Amazon basin that comprises nine countries: Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana. *CEAMA marks the first reception of the Synod. Essentially, it constitutes a pastoral positioning of the Catholic Church in her evangelizing mission in the Amazon region.* The guidelines and commitments set out in the Synod will be pursued by CEAMA with the decisive support of REPAM's established presence at territorial level. **In times of pandemic, the Amazon remains in the throes of an attack... on healthcare, the environment, and major mining projects. In your opinion, is this an intentional attack? What worries you the most?** *The Amazon region has been severely affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.* Based on the latest figures, about one and a half million people were infected and 34,500 died in the Amazon region. In addition to this tragedy for our brothers living in the Amazon region, there is the clamour of the earth, due to continuing environmental damage caused by advancing deforestation in the region and by forest fires, many of which are man-made. This period of pandemic has not prevented the continuation of mining activity without due environmental care affecting people. These circumstances are a consequence of today's economic system, which prioritizes profit to the detriment of human dignity. Until the economic conception of all productive activity, especially mining, that sees land as a resource to be exploited and not the habitat of humanity, is reconsidered, limited progress can be made to restore the dignity of the human person and the care of our natural ecosystem. The territory of the Amazon rainforest is an important repository of natural resources and, for this reason, it reawakens the greed to exploit them, with devastating consequences for the people and the natural environment. **Conversely, what are the signs of hope?** As in any extreme situation, there are always signs of hope. *The Catholic Church is rendering visible those who society previously regarded as "invisible" and "insignificant"* In this context, we are all required - the population, businesses and the State - to ensure human dignity and unconditional respect for people's rights and territory. The positive effects of proximity, friendship and coordination of experiences fostered by REPAM in the Amazon region since its inception in September 2014, are undeniable. This process gained momentum when Pope Francis visited the Amazon city of Puerto Maldonado (Peru) on January 19, 2018. However, a significant experience of human fraternity and social friendship occurred during the preparation for the Synod for the Pan-Amazon region, with more than 45 territorial assemblies attended by 85,000 participants. The ripe fruit of this synodal process was the Synod in Rome (October 2019), in the presence of Pope Francis and with a large group of brothers and sisters representing the native peoples. *The Final Document*

of the Synod and the Post-Synodal Exhortation "Querida Amazonia" are two official documents of the Church that exhort us to continue on our journey together. The waters of the Amazon River continue to flow unabated. Similarly, on her journey in the Amazon region, the Church transmits the Gospel of Jesus, "the living water springing up unto eternal life." A clear sign of joy and hope is the process that sees the Church with an Amazonian face, a process that raises awareness on the importance of the Pan-Amazon region for the world. It is our response to the requests of the representatives of the native peoples: that the Church be their ally in their struggles to protect their individual rights, their cultures and the natural environment.

**Journalist at "La vita del popolo"*

Bruno Desidera*