



Vatican City, 13 January 2020

Your Eminence, Your Grace, Your Excellency:

The Holy Father is preparing a new Apostolic Exhortation to present the *New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology* as developed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit during the Synod on the Amazon in October last year.

The draft is currently being reviewed and corrected and then needs to be translated. Pope Francis hopes to promulgate it by the end of this month or in early February.

The Exhortation is keenly awaited and will attract great interest and many different responses. Accordingly, as was previously done with *Laudato si'* (2015), *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018) and *Christus Vivit* (2019), the Holy Father would like the local Ordinaries to receive the text directly, before it is published and before the world press starts to comment on it, and join him in presenting the Exhortation and making it accessible to the faithful, to fellow believers and all people of good will, and to the media, the academic world, and others in positions of authority and influence.

With the hope of preparing well, some suggestions are being offered in this first letter. The purpose is not to generate publicity or attract attention. Rather, it is quietly to support you the Ordinary, in communion with Pope Francis, as you prepare to receive the Exhortation and pass it on to the People of God in your jurisdiction. Accordingly, with greatest freedom, please make use of the suggestions insofar as they seem helpful.

A useful way of preparing would be read some of the relevant earlier documents referenced below. In another 10 days or so, you will receive a second letter with further suggestions.

When the day of promulgation draws near, you will receive the Exhortation by e-mail under embargo. On the day itself, there will be a celebratory and communications event in the same Synod Hall where the deliberations took place in October.

You may also want to begin planning a press briefing or a press conference or other event as soon as convenient after the publication of the Exhortation. For example, you may find it opportune to have the Exhortation presented by yourself along with an indigenous spokesperson if relevant in your area, an experienced pastoral leader (ordained or religious, layman or laywoman), an expert on climate or ecology, and a youth involved in peer ministry.

Please keep this letter confidential and share it only with those directly involved in the Diocesan preparation for publication of the Exhortation, not with others or with the media. Please do respect these guidelines. At the same time, please be forgiving if you receive more than one copy of this letter - it seems better to risk duplication rather than fail to reach some dioceses because of poor internet connectivity.

With the sincere hope that this letter has been helpful, let us join in sincere prayer to Our Father of all mercies to bless Pope Francis and all the Bishops in promulgating the Exhortation, and to dispose the People of God in the Amazon and throughout the world to receive it with faith and hope, intelligently and effectively.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cláudio Card. Hummes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, OFM
General Rapporteur of the Synod
President of the Pan Amazonic Church Network (REPAM)

RESOURCES

- Special Synod on the Amazon, **FINAL DOCUMENT**, 26.10.2019
<http://www.sinodoamazonico.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/documents/final-document-of-the-amazon-synod.html>
- Pope Francis, **MEETING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF AMAZONIA**, Puerto Maldonado, 19.1.2018
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180119_peru-puertomaldonado-popoliamazonia.html
- Pope Francis, **OPENING OF THE WORKS OF THE SPECIAL ASSEMBLY**, 7.10.2019
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/october/documents/papa-francesco_20191007_apertura-sinodo.html
- Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, **INTRODUCTORY REPORT** of the General Relator at the Synod, 7.10.2019
<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2019/10/07/0782/01593.html#in>
- Pope Francis, **FINAL SPEECH** to the Synod, 26.10.2019
www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/october/documents/papa-francesco_20191026_chiusura-sinodo.html
- Pope Francis, **LAUDATO SI'**, 2015, especially chapter 5, “Lines of Approach and Action” and chapter 6, “Ecological Education and Spirituality”
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html