

**DECLARATION OF THE CREATION OF THE PAN-AMAZON ECCLESIAL NETWORK ~  
REPAM**

**“Pan-Amazonia: source of life in the heart of the Church”**

**Brasilia (Brazil), September 12, 2014**

***“ The Church is not in the Amazon like someone with their bags packed ready to leave after exploiting it. She has been there since the beginning with missionaries, religious congregations, priests, laity and bishops, and her presence is decisive for the region”*** (Pope Francis in Rio de Janeiro, 07.27.13)

At a meeting held in Brasilia (Brazil) September 9-12, 2014, participants from eleven countries came together like the confluence of many rivers; hope flowed freely and, like Jesus, we wanted “to give life and to give it in abundance.” Pan-Amazonia offers many complex challenges. We took them on, trusting in Him who “loved us first” and who has called us by name. In this spirit, and building on meetings in Puyo (Ecuador – April 2013), Lima (Peru – June 2013) and Manaus (Brazil – October 2013), we took one more decisive step in our Gospel commitment to announce the Kingdom of Life. We are privileged witnesses to the official establishment of the Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network - REPAM.

This initiative has emerged through the action of the Holy Spirit who has guided and continues to guide the Church in the process of incarnating the Gospel in Pan-Amazonia. This portion of the Earth is a biome where life is present in its mega-diversity as a gift of God for all. However it is a land that is increasingly devastated and imperiled. Big extractive projects, monocultures and climate change are all creating grave risks for the environment. They threaten human dignity and the self-determination of peoples, and above all offend the incarnate Christ present in the indigenous peoples, in those who dwell along the rivers, in rural workers, in those of African descent and in those who live in cities. The situation demands urgent pastoral action.

The Pan-Amazon region is a “source of life in the heart of the Church,” where ancestral cultures express the harmony that exists between people and nature. In this same perspective, Pope Francis offered some very specific advice: “our

vocation is to care for all of creation, for its beauty, as the book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi shows us. We must have respect for all of God's creatures and for the world in which we live" (03.19.2013). It is upon this pastoral mandate that REPAM has been founded. It is a response to the urgent need to care for life in harmony with nature, building on the ample and diverse presence of the Church in Pan-Amazonia.

Through REPAM we declare our commitment to respond in an effective and integral way to the cries of today's world. We accept as our mission: *"To create in the Americas an awareness of the importance of Amazonia for all humanity. To create in all local churches of the Amazon basin an integrated pastoral approach with specific priorities in order to promote a model of development that privileges the poor and serves the common good"* (Aparecida Document 475).

This process has been driven by the Department of Justice and Solidarity of CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Conference) and by the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon of the CNBB (Episcopal Conference of Brazil), under the joint leadership of Cardinal Claudio Hummes and Bishop Pedro Barreto. Important as well was the involvement of the leadership of the Caritas Secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean (SELACC); of the leadership of Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Men and Women Religious (CLAR); and of the missionaries who have dedicated their lives to the work in Pan-Amazonia. The ecclesial dimension of this project has been further highlighted by the active presence of Caritas Internationalis, of CIDSE and of fraternal collaborators from the Church in Europe and North America, who have for decades been committed to the evangelizing mission in Amazonia. We also value the presence of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

We were strengthened by the inspiring message of Pope Francis, which arrived through the mediation of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State. It noted that REPAM is "a true experience of fraternity, a journey of solidarity and a holy pilgrimage." This is our mission and our ecclesial commitment in "Pan-Amazonia: source of life in the heart of the Church."