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Press Release of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops: Study Seminar “Towards the Special Synod for Amazonia: regional and universal dimension”

Promoted by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, a study seminar was held from 25 to 27 February 2019 on the theme: “*Towards the Special Synod for Amazonia: regional and universal dimension*”, with a view to the special Assembly scheduled for this coming October on “*Amazonia: new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology*”.

Around eighty participants took part in the seminar, including the presidents of the seven Episcopal Conferences of the Amazon area – Antilles, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela – some heads of dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the presidency of the Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network (*Red Ecclesial PanAmazonica - REPAM*), various bishops, priests, men and women religious, laypeople from Amazonia and other geographical areas.

On the first day, some ecclesial and pastoral aspects were studied in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, and on the second day, issues connected to the promotion of integral ecology were considered from the perspective of *Laudato si'*. After each of these reports, which presented the two major themes – *The mission of the Church in Amazonia in the light of Evangelii gaudium* and *Integral ecology in Amazonia in the light of Laudato si'* – there were various further communications, such as a fruitful debate which enabled the participants to intervene with their own reactions to enrich concerted reflection.

The interventions drew an overall picture of the urgent issues in Amazonia and of the Church that lives and works in that immense territory. In this way, the contributions of this seminar will offer a valuable contribution to the Synod process currently underway. Indeed, the seminar has offered a solid foundation in view of the Synod, which is planned as a pastoral reflection open to the acknowledgment of diversities, in listening to the realities of the Amazon area with all its cultural and ecclesial facets. The image of a Church courageous in the proclamation of the Gospel and in defence of Creation and of indigenous populations is the horizon towards which the Synod Fathers – gathered *cum Petro et sub Petro* – will walk, to share an experience of fraternal communion, collegiality and synodality.