



4th Sunday of Advent





ECCLESIAL DREAM: VOLUNTEERING

*"I dream of Christian communities
capable of generous commitment,
incarnate in the Amazon region,
and giving the Church new faces
with Amazonian features."*

Papa Francisco



Contemplate

"I dream of Christian communities capable of giving themselves and becoming incarnated in the Amazonia, to the point of giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features".

With the words of Pope Francis, we want to invite all of us who make up the great Dominican Family to dream and be encouraged to be part of the missionary community in the Amazonia of the Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado in Peru.

These missions have their roots in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1895) of Leo XIII, which denounced the rubber boom that brought to the jungle the most abominable slavery, razzias, the purchase and sale of women and children, and ethnocide. The Peruvian church, through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, felt the call to apply the principles of the Encyclical to the Amazonian reality as well.

Around 1898, the Peruvian government approved the entry of religious missionaries to the jungle, and two years later three apostolic prefectures were created:

- 1) San León del Amazonas (northern zone) entrusted to the Augustinian Fathers on the Marañón and Amazon rivers.
- 2) San Francisco del Ucayali (central zone) entrusted to the Franciscan Fathers.
- 3) Santo Domingo del Urubamba (southern zone) entrusted to the Dominicans, which has now become the Apostolic Vicariate of Urubamba and Madre de Dios with an area of 150,000 km².

As interlocutors and actors of an enculturated evangelization". Initially, the Apostolic Vicariate was directed by Rev. Ramon Zubieta, OP, who began this adventure as Apostolic Prefect, together with several friars of the Province of San Juan Bautista del Perú. In 1906, the Province of Spain decided to take charge of the missions in Peru.



The first task of the missionaries was to explore the extensive territory entrusted to them and, together with the native communities of the Matsigenka, Campas, Piro-Yine, Amahuacas, Ashaninka, Mashcos, Guarayos, Amarakaeris, Saras, Yaminahuas, Mastanahuas, Culinas and Huachipaeris ethnic groups, they consecutively founded the 16 mission sites:

1. Santo Domingo de Chirumbia (1902).
2. Asunción del Ccosñipata (1902).
3. Yahuarmayo (1902) en la confluencia del Yahuarmayo con el Inambari
4. San Luis del Manu (1908)
5. San Vicente de Malankiato (1909)
6. San Jacinto de Puerto Maldonado (1910)
7. Santa Rosa del Tahuamanu (1916)
8. San José de Koribeni (1918)
9. Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Pantiacolla (1922)
10. Santa Rosa del Lago Valencia (1931)
11. San Miguel Arcángel de Shintuya the great deed of Fr. "Apaktone" among the feared mashcos whom he appeased and called them "my princes and princesses" and they with the same affection would call him Apaktone; old father
12. Quincemil (1944).
13. El Pilar. Nuestra Señora del Rosario en Sepahua (1947).
14. Puerto Esperanza del Purús. (1952).
15. San Pedro Mártir de Timpía (1953).
16. La Inmaculada del Picha - Kirigueti (1957).



Contemplate

The Church, through the Popes, has always invited all lay people to participate in "missionary volunteering" to help in this proclamation of the Good News to every corner of the world. This is a call to be light in the midst of all peoples, not only as Dominicans or as baptized Catholic Christians, but as parts of one body, where we all have a part to play in the care of our common home. During the last General Chapters of the Order of Preachers, the scarcity of not only financial but also human resources has been pointed out. In this sense, the GC of Tultenango, in 2022, has urged us to seek and find both human and financial resources to support this mission of the Church entrusted to the Order, specifically in the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado. (141 ACG). .



Not only religious and/or clerics are needed, but it is also necessary the presence of lay people and young people who can help with their own professions and/or skills in the various mission centers. In this sense, the General Chapter of Bien Hoa, in 2019, makes the exhortation and affirms the importance of having young people to work as evangelizers (Bien Hoa 147 -148, ACG); Likewise, in the General Chapter of Tultenango in 2022, it again declares and exhorts the different branches of the Dominican family to work together and to set up preaching teams to help in the missionary work in their territory. (Tultenango 131, ACG)

One of the main motivations for volunteering is that it allows people to express their values related to altruism and concern for others through their work; they are often influenced by personal experiences, values, interests and individual circumstances. Some of them are Humanitarianism, comprehension, social adaptation, skills development, protective function,

BE PART OF THE MISSION IN THE AMAZONIA

Volunteering

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This Sunday's Gospel recounts the Angel's announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God's incarnated, who comes to save his people. From this text we want to make a reflection, applying it to the Amazon, by making the following statement: An Amazonian fruitfulness of the Dominican Family is necessary to give life to the Global Mission of the Order in the mission it has received from the Church.

On this topic, we recall the words of Pope Francis to the Church: "I dream of Christian communities capable of giving themselves and becoming incarnated in the Amazonia, to the point of giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features". (QA. N° 7)

When we received the news about the Dominican Month for Peace for this year that would be in Peru, was going to be dedicated to the Missions in the Amazonia, we thought about how we could carry it out. The first meetings with Friar Miguel, CIDALC's promoter of Justice and Peace, showed us the first guidelines; however, it was still difficult to fully grasp the idea and, above all, what we needed to communicate.

At the "Amazonia Missions Meeting" of the Order in the Region in Puerto Maldonado, convened by the Master's socii, Friar Juan Manuel and Friar Florentino, where representatives of the various branches of the Dominican Family and especially the promoters of Justice and Peace, and Social Communication Media attended, we reflected on the history of the mission in Puerto Maldonado and the challenges that the Order faces in the future. We learned that this mission is not only the task of one Province or two, but of the entire Order.

We took this challenge as a new announcement of the Angel to Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son...". This announcement has been updated in recent events at the Church level: the creation of REPAM - the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (2014), the Visit of Pope Francis to Peru - Puerto Maldonado (2018), Special Synod for the Amazon (2019), Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon - CEAMA (2020) and the Synod of Synodality (2021 - 2024). We take on this challenge with hope, "Rejoiced and full of grace". God accompanies us in history and in our daily activities as Dominican Family throughout the world, a family that was born to be preachers and missionaries.

As part of the Dominican family, we fraternities feel invited by God to "not be afraid" to "conceive" in our hearts a missionary vocation. We feel the call to let ourselves be guided by the Spirit that accompanied Bishop Ramón Zubieta, OP, Blessed Ascención Nicol, OP, Fr. José Pío Aza, OP and Fr. José Alvarez OP, "Apaktone". Like Maria, we pondered how that might be, not in an effort to find excuses to say no, but to accept the challenge. It is a mission that is presented as "a golden opportunity and a shining example of synodality in the life and mission of the Church" (Cf. ACG 2022, Tultenango N° 140)



This Sunday's invitation is "fear not", "nothing is impossible for God". Like Mary, we open ourselves to God, we trust, and we say: "Here we are, the servants of the Lord, let it be done to us according to your word.". We are ready for this call, for this mission. Today, God asks our Dominican Family for FRUITFULNESS, to be able to accept the call and the challenge for this mission. To be fruitful, to accept this challenge, it is necessary to enjoy freedom and detachment, to be empty in order to be filled with God's grace, ready to know how to listen and to make commitments.

One of the challenges of this mission to which we are invited is the "inculturation" of the Gospel, taking into account the words of the Pope: "A culture can become sterile when it "turns in on itself and tries to perpetuate outdated ways of life, rejecting any change and discussion about the truth of man". (QA 38). It implies learning from the native peoples to contemplate the Amazonia, to love it, to feel intimately united to it, considering that the Amazonia is ours, like a mother. Because "the world is not contemplated from the outside but from the inside, recognizing the connections with which the Father has united us to all beings". (QA 55). Let us ask the Holy Spirit to cover with his presence the whole Dominican Family to fertilize the Amazonian vocation, so that voluntary missionaries with an Amazonian face may be born. "Nothing is impossible for God", neither for those who trust in him. As Dominican laity, let us allow the Spirit to guide us towards Amazonia. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to make us respond like Mary: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word".

Lay Dominican Fraternities





Amazonic Procession

Materials: Altars, Candles (optional), Songs, an Ample space, Flags.
An image of Saint Dominic, Amazonian motifs

INITIAL COMMENTARY

This year, the Order, in harmony with the universal Church, has listened to the cry of the Amazonia, and has looked at the difficult situation of its peoples and the environmental damage that has been caused. For this reason, these last four Sundays of the now traditional Dominican month for peace, we have been meditating and reflecting on various situations that the peoples of the Amazonia are experiencing. On this fourth Sunday, we reflected on the subject of volunteering, a very important mission that the Order carries out in the Amazonia, but which nevertheless needs a greater response from us in order to respond to the needs of this region

For this reason, we are going to carry out a procession that will allow us to reflect on the situation of the Amazon region and to make a commitment to it, a commitment that will lead us to support life, the humanity of the indigenous peoples and the defense of the environment. We ask our brothers Friar Ramón Zubieta y Les OP, Sister Ascensión Nicol y Goñi OP and Friar José Álvarez Fernández "APAKTONE", OP to help us in the mission entrusted to us, to encourage us to go out of ourselves and to intercede before God, so that we too may focus on the current needs of the Amazonia.

INITIAL PRAYER

Holy Spirit enlighten the Church, the society and all communities, so that we may all be able to respond with courage to the tragic situation of pain that the Amazonia and its peoples are experiencing. We pray for all rulers and decision-makers, may they have a heart that is sensitive to the suffering of the people and the damage caused to the environment. We also pray for all the members of the disciple and missionary Church in the Amazonia, especially for the members of the Dominican family present in this region, so that they may continue to respond with charity and apostolic dedication. Amen.

IMPLEMENTATION

A path should be prepared, preferably in an open public environment such as a park or street, where 10 altars should be placed along the route where stops will be made. The first altar will represent the Dominican family and the remaining nine will represent an Amazonian country each. Each altar representing an Amazonian country of the region can be decorated with a small flag of the country assigned to that altar and with some elements allusive to the Amazonia and/or problems that have been described in the previous weeks.



Celebrate



Ecclesial dream: Volunteering

The order of the countries can be chosen at your discretion; however, the following is suggested: Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guyana, Suriname, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru; in such a way that it forms an imaginary geographical circle. For countries outside the Amazonia region, the starting point can be an altar that represents the Dominican Family from that place. In the case of countries that are part of the Amazonia Region, the starting point can be an altar that represents the Dominican Family in the world.

The procession starts at the first altar that symbolizes the OP and that should have the image of Saint Dominic of Guzman. At this altar a petition or prayer will be made asking God, through the intercession of St. Dominic, that we may have an open heart to respond with Dominican missionary vocations to the call of the Church in the Amazonic Region. Afterwards, the image of our Father Dominic will be carried in procession, accompanied by a candle, to the altar of each country with Dominican and/or missionary songs.

In each altar of the Amazonian countries a petition will be made for some need that the Amazonian region has and a thanksgiving because we have the mission to go to that place with volunteers and/or missionaries.

At the end of the procession, it will end at the same altar where it began, giving thanks to God and making a commitment from the celebrating community to support the Amazon region. An Ecclesial Dream: Volunteering

At the conclusion of this celebration, we pray our Mother Mary and our Father Dominic, asking for their intercession for the Amazonia, so that it can be freed from the evils that afflict it and we also ask for each one of us, so that encouraged by their example and always feeling their company, we can carry out the commitment made today





The great challenge on this fourth Sunday of Advent is that you can help us with your **prayers** so that more members of the Dominican family **join the** Amazonia mission through the **volunteer work** of the laity.



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"Committed to the Amazon"

