



Catholic Climate Covenant offers prayerful support this month for the Vatican's Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region. The Covenant is grateful for the Synod's focus on key themes, especially its emphasis on respect for indigenous peoples who live at the epicenter of the global climate and ecological crises, and whose example provides many solutions to these crises.

In imploring the world to listen and respect indigenous peoples, Pope Francis has said:

“It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions” since “for them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best.”¹

“It grieves us to see the lands of indigenous peoples expropriated and their cultures trampled on by predatory schemes and by new forms of colonialism, fueled by the culture of waste and consumerism. How much we can learn from them!”²

“Indigenous peoples are a living appeal for hope. They remind us that human beings have a shared responsibility in the care of the ‘common home.’ And if certain decisions taken thus far have ruined it, it is never too late to learn the lesson and adopt a new lifestyle. It is about adopting a way to move forward which, leaving behind superficial approaches and harmful or exploitative habits, overcomes atrocious individualism, convulsive consumerism and cold selfishness. The earth suffers and the native peoples are familiar with the dialogue with the earth; they know what it means to listen to the earth, to see the earth, to touch the earth. They know the art of living well, in harmony with the earth.”³

We thank and commend Pope Francis for calling this Special Synod for the Amazon and pray that all participants will be filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as they respond to the Pope's urgent appeal “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.” (LS 14)

To help the U.S. Catholic community walk in solidarity and in accompaniment with the Synod for the Amazon, the Covenant offers its 2019 Feast of St. Francis Program, [We Are All Connected: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#), focusing on integral ecology, environmental and climate justice, and lifting the voices of indigenous communities. The program contains prayers, readings, a short video, and suggested activities.

¹ [Laudato Si' 146](#)

² [Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants at the International Conference Marking the 3rd Anniversary of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*](#)

³ [Address to Participants at the IV Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum](#)