


ELEMENTS OF VATICAN II FROM THE DOCUMENTS OF SANTARÉM AND MANAUS⁶

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Abstract: This work analyzed, from a missionary point of view, carried out in the Diocese of Óbidos - PA, specifically, in the city of Juruti, where the Nossa Senhora da Saúde parish is located, composed of more than 105 urban, rural and riverside communities, the reception of the Second Vatican Council, above all, from the CNBB Document 100, "Community of communities: a new parish. The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish". This document, released in 2014, rescues the ideals of Vatican II, reflecting, analyzing and proposing the positions of the various parishes in a church-communion, sister-church perspective. It was also possible to identify that the proposals brought by the Brazilian Episcopal Conference have as a "starting point" the ecclesial life of the communities established in the Amazon region, where this is ahead of the other Brazilian regions and the respective Dioceses. In light of Vatican II, Document 100 gave us the impression of being produced from a case study, which was proposed to the other Dioceses of Brazil, still reminding us of the Aparecida Document, released in 2007, where the sub-theme was addressed: "The parish, community of community". With this, it was reflected that the model of Church experienced in the Amazon region, brings concrete and vital elements inspired since Vatican II, and helps to rethink the models of Church in the rest of the country. Having experienced such a context, it can be that the Church in the Amazon demonstrated the possible effectiveness of Vatican II today, opening paths and rehearsing a new model of Church-communion, having as a guiding and systematic thread the Santarém Documents (1972) and Manaus (1997).

Keywords: Vatican II; Amazon; Missionary Church; Santarém; Manaus.

INTRODUCTION

This work aimed to present concrete points, which identify the influence of Vatican II on the pastoral model implemented in the region of Pará, specifically, in the Diocese of Óbidos, in the city of Juruti, where the Parish of Nossa Senhora da Saúde, which was composed of 105 communities, including urban, mainland and riverside communities.

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To study the case in question, Document 100 of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil – CNBB, published in 2014, is the key to reading for a better understanding of the applicability of Vatican II in this Amazon region. We also took into account the Document of Aparecida, launched in 2007, in addition to two other important documents that reflect the deep interest of the bishops of the Amazon in translating Vatican II into the local reality, they are: Document of Santarém (DS), 1972, by occasion of the IV meeting on Pastoral Care of the Amazon, which reflected the “priority lines of pastoral care in the Amazon”, the Manaus Document (DM), 1997 : “Anticipating the Third Millennium, whose sun already illuminates us, with a heart full of hope, we celebrate the VIII Meeting of the Churches of the Amazon, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Pastoral Meeting of Santarém”. This Manaus Document had as its theme: “The Church becomes flesh and pitches her tent in the Amazon”.

1 - Document of Santarém: Incarnation in reality and liberating Evangelization

The Santarém Document, in the year 1972, becomes a vanguard for missionary and pastoral actions, after Vatican II, in Brazil. It is a unique document that contemplates the reality of the place, from the point of view of the local Church and its difficulties and proposals to act as the presence of God in the heart of the Amazon. This Document seeks the face and the local identity, as it recognizes that its demands are not the same as those of the rest of the country, but its peculiarities, and it is necessary to understand the Church in the Amazon as a community of disciples, it is a community of communities inserted for a pastoral conversion. With this, it proposes to be the Church that opens itself to the new, coming from Vatican II, but interpreted according to the face of the Church in the Amazon.

The bishops, gathered in Santarém, sought to interpret the Amazonian reality, bearing in mind the future of this challenging reality that needed a church embodied in the most diverse Amazonian faces, taking into account “the process of tremendous transformation” (DS, n. 1). With this, the prelates present in the Amazonian context opt for a pastoral service of engagement, which must prevail as the first fruit to guide all evangelizing action, the Incarnation of the Word, which requires of all missionaries to convert to this proclamation in order, from there, having pastoral care as an effective program or action capable of enabling effective changes in the lives of the various Amazonian realities.

The basic guidelines that guide this Santarém Document and its pastoral action come from the understanding that one has of “Incarnation in reality and liberating Evangelization”. For an effective action, according to this same document, it is necessary to be in tune with the concrete reality of man and place, in this case, the different Amazonian faces, since the region

is composed of different ethnic groups, whether from different regions of Brazil or from other continents, they are looking to make a fortune in the fertile lands of the Amazon.

Thus, the Santarém Document, n° 4 states:

- a) It requires a total engagement with the concrete reality of man and place (urban or rural centers, new human centers, indigenous communities, marginalized sectors, emergency areas...): and through knowledge (reflection, research, study) and through coexistence with the people, in the simplicity and friendship of everyday life.
- b) It encourages the renewed purpose of overcoming all paternalism, all ethnocentrism (that fits us into a culture or a group), all imported, prefabricated or artificial models of life; fostering a determined pastoral creativity.
- c) It demands a permanent WITNESS: free, on the one hand, from any commitment that is not the Gospel, and, on the other hand, realistic, courageous and full of hope; both in the life of the individual and the ecclesial community and in apostolic word and action.

Being inserted in the real context of each reality, in our case, the Amazon, is essential for an attitude of implementation of Liberating Evangelization, as suggested by the Santarém Document. The proposal is for an evangelization that encompasses every man and all of them, that is, individual and society, without dichotomies or exclusions, but the Amazon as a whole. This evangelizing action seeks its inspiration in the speeches coming from Vatican II, as well as following the spirit and guidelines of Medellín (1968): “it was proposed to overcome the torpor of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples under poverty, injustice and oppression of military dictatorships. Oppression and famine could not wait”⁷.

Taking into account this reality that needs attentive and committed eyes, the Santarém Document is taking into account the signs of place and time, of the different local cultures and ethnic groups, of the local nature and of the man that make up the reality of the region. Amazon⁸. With this, the Santarém Document proposes an evangelical awareness as an indispensable

⁷ <https://www.ihu.unisinos.br/78-noticias/579496-cinquenta-anos-do-documento-de-medellin> . Accessed on: March 24, 2022.

⁸ On the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of this document, Pope Francis sent a letter of encouragement, which I now bring here literally : “*Dear brothers and sisters: With a heart full of joy and hope, I address all the participants of the IV Meeting of the Catholic Church in the Legal Amazon, because it gives me special encouragement to know that we dream together “ with Christian communities capable of devoting themselves and incarnating in such a way in the Amazon, that they give the Church new faces with Amazonian traits ”*”. At the same time, knowing that this meeting recalls the one that took place in that same place 50 years ago, is an occasion of intense thanksgiving to the Most High for the fruits of the action of the Divine Holy Spirit in the Church that is in the Amazon - during these last 5 decades - and how much it inspires. That “Santarém Meeting” proposed lines of evangelization that marked the missionary action of the Amazonian communities and that helped in the formation of a solid ecclesial conscience. The insights of that meeting also served to illuminate the reflections of the Synod Fathers at the recent Synod for the Pan-Amazonian region, as I recalled in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [Querida Amazonia](#) , describing it as one of the “privileged expressions” of the

presupposition for the liberation of man and nature, works of the creator God. In this line proposed by this Document of Santarém, the Document of Manaus takes up the face of the Church in the Amazon in the light of the Document of Medellín (1968), making clear its deep interest in the poor and indigenous, excluded and marginalized.

2 – Document from Manaus: The Church becomes flesh and pitches her tent in the Amazon

This Manaus Document was made to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Santarém Pastoral Meeting, which gave rise to the Santarém Document (1972). As it is well said in the letter of introduction of this 1997 Document, according to the presidencies of the North I (D. Antônio Possamai) and North II (D. José Vieira Lima) Regionals: “This instrument, convening, encouraging, encouraging and inspiring, either to be mystic impulse for all those who live, love and work, with dedication, to build an inculturated Church and life in our Amazon”.

Such documents show the deep interest of Amazonian prelates in planning a church in the light of the guidelines of the Documents of the Ecclesiastical Magisterium, especially from the Latin American and Caribbean perspective, as the Aparecida Document in 2017 well emphasized. Vatican II in the elaboration of the other Episcopal Documents, as well as the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil, through its regional ones, are the signs of a Church that seeks to feel the pain and joys of its people in the most diverse sociocultural realities of the country.

The Manaus Document, among so many latent reflections for the context in which it was glimpsed by the North I and II Regionals, becomes aware of its responsibility, in the face of so many aggravations that Christianity caused in the local culture at certain moments in

Church's journey. with the people of the Amazon. In fact, in the well-known “priority lines”, fruits of the remembered meeting, the dreams for the Amazon are outlined, which were reaffirmed in the last synod. I am also happy for the commitment of the Particular Churches of the Brazilian Amazon, through their communities, to carry out the indications of the last Synod Assembly, at the same time witnessing, through the already rooted and beautiful tradition of the meetings of the Local Churches, the experience of synodality – as an expression of communion, participation and mission – to which the whole Church is called. I remember with affection and gratitude the intense participation of those who came from Brazil to Rome, bringing vitality, strength and hope to the sessions of the 2019 Synod. himself in Jesus Christ, and inspires us through the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel with a new commitment and to contemplate the beauty of creation, even more exuberant in these Amazonian lands, where the luminous presence of the Risen One is experienced. As I deposit these vows at the feet of Our Lady of Nazareth, Queen of the Amazon – who never abandons us in the darkest hours – I send you, dear brothers and sisters, with all my heart, my Apostolic Blessing, also asking you, please, to continue to pray for me and for the mission that the Lord has entrusted to me. *Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2022. Franciscus*”. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20220531-lettera-santarem.html>. Accessed: 24 Aug. 2022. This papal letter only reinforces even more the ecclesiological value of this Document and its unfolding in pastoral actions in the light of Vatican II, in the Legal Amazon.

history. Faced with such an awareness, the Church, which speaks through the voice of its prelates, asks God and the Amazonian people for forgiveness:

10 - We ask forgiveness from God, the indigenous peoples and all the poor in the countryside and in the city, for not having been able to overcome attitudes of omission or connivance in relation to the violence and injustices that the peoples of the Amazon have suffered. We do not give sufficient testimony of respect and love for the different cultures and religions present in the region. 11- We recognize that our Churches owe a special debt to women. In this region, where the situation of women is still one of extreme marginalization and injustice and where most Christian communities are coordinated by them, the Church is challenged to review the role of women in mission and to listen to them with greater attention. 12 – We ask God's forgiveness for the aggressions to his creation. In this region, where nature is constantly attacked, we have not yet developed an Amazonian theology of creation and have not clearly defined an ecological pastoral action and spirituality (DM, 1997).

These three numbers (10, 11 and 12) well reflect the principle of charity that permeates the “*mea culpa*”, recognizing the urgency of correcting the mistakes and evils committed, assuming the role of a Samaritan and close church, attentive to the needs of the peoples. . For this, the Church recognizes that establishing dialogue with the Amazonian reality is the way to overcome divisions and tensions, but nourishes the ecumenical spirit and interreligious work, taking into account the religious phenomenon present since the Amazon ancestors.

In this Manaus Document, the Church in Brazil recognizes that the Amazon is made up of many Amazons (n° 40). Recognizing these realities is to give voices and make local diversity a spokesperson for itself, without denying their rights and identities, which affirms them as subjects and protagonists of their Amazonian realities. “There is a very rich cultural diversity. We have, among others: indigenous cultures (over a hundred); culture of blacks and quilombola remnants; culture of rubber tappers, farmers, riverside dwellers, fishermen; culture of migrants, from the most diverse origins” (n° 40).

3 - Community of communities

The CNBB Document, 100: “Community of communities: a new parish. The pastoral conversion of the parish”, is the result of the 52nd General Assembly, held in Aparecida – SP, between April 30 and May 9, 2014. The purpose of Document 100 is to make the Church visible and understandable as a community of community.

The conversion of parish pastoral care (into a community of communities) consists of expanding the formation of small communities of disciples converted by the Word of God and aware of the urgency of living in a

permanent state of mission. This implies reviewing the performance of ordained, consecrated and lay ministers, overcoming accommodation and discouragement. The disciple of Jesus Christ realizes that the urgency of the mission means to get out of the way and go out to meet the brothers (n. 8).

This Document 100 reflects and proposes a more participatory Church and communion between communities, thus forming a great network that sustains, through charisms and missions, the Church as a whole. But for this pastoral conversion of the parish to bear fruit, the bishops' guidelines aim to promote a Church in the light of Vatican II, adapting new elements of contemporaneity, looking at each particular reality, arriving at a renewed and missionary Church, capable of opening its doors to the different faces of the subject and history.

The Document was designed in six chapters: the first, inspired by *Gaudium et Spes*, wants to indicate the signs of the time from the reality of the parish, that is, to work on some parish aspects that need conversion. The second takes up the need to return to the sources in order to understand current communities starting from the first Christian communities. The third chapter makes a brief historical review of the communities, highlighting the points that require greater attention. The fourth chapter works on the ecclesiological foundations based, above all, on the vision of the Church proposed by Vatican II. The fifth chapter highlights the subjects and tasks of parish conversion, giving direction for each subject to assume their mission in the parish. The sixth and final chapter presents the propositions for the realization of a parish as a community of communities.

Bearing these proposals in mind and in heart, it is noted that the Diocese of Óbidos, specifically the city of Juruti, in the parish of Nossa Senhora da Saúde, seeks to live the reality of a parish that privileges the experience of community of communities in the light of Document 100. The more than 120 communities organize themselves in the form of collective efforts among themselves, favoring conservation, preserving their identities, in addition to working for economic, ecological and community resources issues, in order to promote, in the community, an integration of all. The religious principle, formed within Catholicism, is the awakening of the awareness that the united and gathered community has more strength than isolated and fragmented individuals.

The rural and urban pastoral councils help to better understand the realities of the parish, because they do not aim at uniformity, but at the real conjuncture of the different realities that each area requires, since the demands of the city are not always the same as those of communities on dry land. or riverside communities, etc. The proposal of Vatican II is being highlighted, as the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* claims: "intimate union of the Church

with the entire human family", in its joys and hopes, sadness and anguish of today's men, especially the poor. and of all those who suffer (GS, nº 1). The Aparecida Document (2007) in its number "5.2.2 The parish, community of communities" already brought this desire for a Church as the fruit of living cells, where the idea of communities being houses and schools of communion was encouraged (DAp . no. 170).

Effectively, in the region of Pará, in the experience lived in the city of Juruti, we can identify the Church as active in the most diverse spaces of society, a reality of engagement that contemplates the different Amazons within the Amazon. Pastoral actions are daily conversions through local emergencies, remembering the annual floods of rivers, the environmental impacts of countless multinationals, from the extraction of bauxite to the large construction of hydroelectric plants.

Faced with the ever-increasing demand, communities organize themselves through their coordination, whether led by men or women (there is a large presence of women in community, liturgical, municipal, ecclesiological councils, etc.), they foster their faith, in Sunday celebrations , especially when faced with the difficulty of priests who only visit communities twice a year, when they can - through meetings and training, generating a lively and authentic community participation of the local church in life as a whole. Of the institutions trusted by the community, the Catholic Church has this primacy, according to the speech of some leaders, because it became aware of forming its people for life as a whole, demanding their rights and duties for the transformation of reality as one all.

These elements offered by the reality of the Church in the Amazon, especially by the community members of the Nossa Senhora da Saúde Parish, in Juruti/PA, remind us of what CNBB Document 105 said: "The unity of the Church is realized in the diversity of faces, charisms, functions and ministries (...). The criterion of action is the building up of the community (1 Cor 14:12) (n. 93) as a community of communities.

Conclusion

The present text reflected the evangelizing actions of the prelates and their effectiveness in the life of the Amazonian communities, specifically, those present in the city of Juruti, Diocese of Óbidos/PA. We know, from practical experiences, that the entire Second Vatican Council was not and still is far from being applied to dioceses as a whole, but we perceive considerable signs of its applicability in many dioceses in Brazil, such as the receptivity in the Diocese of Óbidos/PA, as well as in the Amazon region. But this is the result of the persistence of the CNBB Regionals who fight for the permanence of a Church that is always alive and

missionary, which is concerned with the life of its people, seeking the practice, the experience of the Incarnation in reality and a liberating Evangelization, because it proposes to know the face of its people, asking for forgiveness when necessary, and acting in the most diverse needs of the Amazons present in the Amazon.

Persistence in turning the great community, that is, the parish, into living communities is an effort that requires evangelical spirit. The obstacles to disapproval of the seeds of Vatican II and other documents of the Church or of the local conferences are enormous, as there are forces that fight against, and choose to maintain the disorder as order, that is, the increasingly hungry poor, the unemployed in situations of misery and fragility, the helpless fed by welfarism or paternalism promoted by systems of exclusion or multinationals that deplore and bleed the Amazon without awareness of “*mea culpa*”.

Looking at the reality of the Amazon, based on the Documents of the Church and its Councils, is to be able to understand that the Kingdom of God urgently needs to happen, so that the reign of deforestation, violence against the natives, religious intolerance, pollution of rivers and enslavement of peoples be denounced and extirpated. This kingdom of evil needs to give way, but for that, a faith that denounces evil and inhuman capitalism needs to bear witness.

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