

*All praise be yours my Lord,  
Through our Sister Earth,  
Who sustains and governs us  
And who produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.*

*Laudato si*

Amazonia around the World

“Almost five years ago, Pope Francis published the Encyclical *Laudato si*. In this Encyclical the Holy Father expressed his concern about the “cracks in the planet” that are caused by human beings (LS 163). The purpose of the Encyclical was to open a dialogue among all inhabitants of our planet and aimed at stopping the degrading of the environment and launching global action for the good of our common home” (From the letter on the Study guide for the *Laudato si*).

Last October 2019, in a prayerful and fraternal environment, the Synod for the Amazon was celebrated in Rome at the invitation of Pope Francis. “All participants expressed an acute awareness of the dramatic situation of destruction that affects the Amazon. This means the disappearance of the territory and its inhabitants, especially of indigenous peoples.” (Final Document). The Synod and the scientific community warn of the reality and risk of deforestation, which is almost 17% of the total Amazon forest. This threatens the survival of the entire ecosystem, endangers biodiversity, and changes the vital water cycle.

The social and economic reality of the Amazon is alarming. Consider the pain that is experienced by displacement of indigenous and peasant people who are expelled from their homes and whose final destination is usually the poorest and worst urbanized areas of the cities.

For these reasons, in preparation for our 3<sup>rd</sup> International YouFra Assembly, and as a fraternal gesture of communion and solidarity with the cry of Mother Earth and our brothers and sisters of the Amazon region, we propose the following; that every national fraternity of YouFra organize a project of planting trees in their own country and complete the project by June 30, 2020. We propose the following steps to accomplish this goal.

1. National fraternity will find the way how to realize this idea. It can be that you will organize one meeting where you will plant the trees together or you can animate every local fraternity to do it in their environment.
2. How many trees do you need to plant? As you know, almost 17% of the Amazon has been destroyed. We do not believe we will be able to plant that many trees, but it will help to plant as many as we can. Even if your fraternity can plant only one tree as a symbol of solidarity, that is alright too.
3. We are asking you to take a few photos or videos during your country’s tree planting and send them to us by June 30, 2020. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> International YouFra Assembly these photos and videos will be presented.

4. The photos and videos need to be sent to three email addresses: [andrea.odak@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.odak@gmail.com), [coordination@youfra.net](mailto:coordination@youfra.net) and [emanuelson.matias@hotmail.com](mailto:emanuelson.matias@hotmail.com). If you have any questions in this regard, please contact us using one of the three email addresses.

Working together we can do a lot for our communities and the world. I hope we are aware of how important our Mother Earth is and how important it is to take care of her.