The Synod on the Amazon will lead to a "rupture" in the Catholic Church: "nothing will be as it was before." These words were spoken on May 2, 2019, by German Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck, in charge of the organization *Adveniat* which provides Catholic relief for Latin America.

This is a clear confirmation that the revolution which is being prepared is linked to the *Instrumentum Laboris* (IL), the document released in mid-June which will be the focus of the work of the bishops who gather for the Synod in the Vatican from October 6-27, 2019. No document like this "instrument of work" expresses the "new paradigm" of Pope Francis so clearly, bringing to light many of the theses which were already implicit in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Sì.*

Heterodox "Liberation Theology" Forms Basis of Working Document

The "new paradigm of integral ecology" proposed by the *Instrumentum Laboris* (n. 56) finds its metaphysical foundation in the indigenous theology of Latin America, a "post-modern" development of so-called "liberation theology" which was condemned by Pope John Paul II in 1985. The Vatican document actually has its theologian of reference in the ex-Franciscan Leonardo Boff, the theologian who has been most coherent in developing liberation theology into indigenous "eco-theology." Boff, who was born in 1938, became a Franciscan in 1959 after he had joined the most radical wing of liberation theology. He then abandoned his Fransican habit and the priesthood in order to go and live with the Marxist activist Marcia Maria Monteiro de Miranda. In late 2016, he boasted in a German-language interview of having helped Pope Francis write *Laudato Sì*.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* again takes up, in many passages, Boff's slogan that is also the title of one of his books, *The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor* (Cittadella, Rome 1996). The document affirms that the Church listens to the "cry, of both the people and the earth" (n.18), because in the Amazon "the land is a theological place by which the faith is lived. It is also a unique source of God's revelation" (n.19). The Amazon is not only a physical place, but "a reality full of life and wisdom" (n. 5), which rises to the level of a conceptual paradigm and calls us to a "pastoral, ecological and synodal" conversion (n. 5).

With the same words, Boff explains that the Amazon has "an exemplary universal value," since it represents the antithesis of the modern, development model "fraught with capital and anti-ecological sins;" it is "the ideal place to experiment [with] a possible alternative, in harmony with the rhythms of that luxuriant nature, by respecting and enhancing the ecological wisdom of the natives who have lived there for centuries."[1] For Boff, "we need to move from the modern paradigm to the post-modern, global 'holistic' paradigm that offers 'a new dialogue with the universe' and a new form of dialogue with the totality of beings and

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

their relationships."[2]

Indigenous Society and Beliefs Held Up as the Ideal

The point of departure is the failure of Soviet communism, incapable of realizing the Marxist utopia of a society without classes. The only people who historically achieved integral communism are the indigenous peoples of Latin America, who are particularly dense in the Amazon, a territory of about seven million square kilometers, 65% of which is in Brazil, with the remainder including territory of eight other South American countries. The communism of the indigenous peoples is expressed in a conception of the cosmos which includes a conception of society. The indigenist sociology is the consequence of a cosmology according to which there is no difference between people, animals, and plants, but all beings, both living and inanimate, are "citizens of the universe" and bear the same rights. "The new socio-ecological democracy does not only include human beings, but all beings who inhabit the cosmos: it is a "*cosmocracy*,"[3] a new "*socio-cosmic* pact."[4] "The difference between living beings and 'inert' beings is in the degree of thickening of relationships."[5]

In place of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Man, there is to be a declaration of the rights of the earth.[6] The earth is to be considered as a unity, comprising its physical-chemical structure and the living beings who dwell there. It is understood as "an organic macro-system, a living super-organism"[7] and ought to be considered as "the great and generous *Pacha Mama* (great mother) of the Andean culture, or as a living superorganism, the *Gaia* of Greek mythology and modern cosmology."[8] "There is no difference between earth and humanity. They form an organic and systemic whole."[9]

This cosmovision denies the value of any reality, placing them all in interconnection with each other. "All beings live in a story of relationships. Outside of relationship nothing exists," Boff affirms.[10] In his philosophical-religious vision, "the universe is made up of an immense story of relationships in such a way that each exists and lives by means of the other, for the other, and with the other; the human being is a node of relations facing in all directions; Divinity itself is revealed as a pan-relational Reality."[11] As for Boff, so also for the *Instrumentum Laboris*: everything is interconnected. The Amazon is the land where "everything is connected" (IL, n. 20); everything is "constitutively related, forming a vital whole" (IL, n. 21). The Church must heed "the Amazon peoples" (IL, n. 7), because these people are able to live in "intercommunication" with the entire cosmos (IL, n. 12). But if everything is relationship and nothing exists outside of itself, the secret of reality is nothingness, because relationship has meaning only as a function of the reality which it connects: relationship cannot connect what does not exist. The pendulum of indigenous cosmology swings between an absolute nihilism and an equally absolute pantheism.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

Boff, Teilhard de Chardin, and Pantheism

Leonardo Boff seeks to defend himself from the accusation of pantheism, defining himself as "panentheist." Panentheism (from the Greek πᾶν "everything", ἐν "in", θεός "God") is the theological position which maintains that God is immanent in the universe but at the same time transcends it. The word was first proposed by Karl Christian Frederick Krause (1781-1832), a student of Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel. Panentheism denies the existence of a God Who creates the universe *ex nihilo* as something distinct from Himself, instead proposing a creation that is continual and "processual." God is the "self-conscience" of the universe, the universe which as it evolves becomes aware of its own evolution. He (God) "emerges from the global process of the world in evolution and expansion"[12]; "he is immanent in the world, participates in its open process, there he reveals himself and enriches himself."[13]

Boff refers to Teilhard de Chardin, who "saw in the Omega point the great Force of attraction which calls the universe to reach its supreme height in the theo-sphere."[14] Boff explains, "We are not talking about placing God and the world each facing each other, as was classically done, but rather of placing God within the process of the world and considering the world within the process of God.[15] "Nature is the result of a long cosmic process. It is cosmogenesis."[16] According to Boff, the majority of the peoples of South America were predominantly panentheist, as were the ancient cultures of Southeast Asia. "The universe in cosmogenesis invites us to live the experience that underlies panentheism: in every slightest manifestation of being, in every movement, in every expression of life, of intelligence and of love, we find ourselves dealing with the Mystery of the universe in progress (cosmogenetic process)."[17]

Pagan Polytheism Lauded

The religious model closest to the ecotheology of liberation, according to Boff, is pagan polytheism, "with its rich pantheon of divinities populating all of the spaces of nature."[18] Boff accuses Christianity of having "slipped, for reasons that are not always identifiable, into a sorrowful separation between God and nature," thus depriving nature of its "magic" and "sacramentality." "However we want to interpret it, we ought to recognize that the pagans had this extraordinary thing: they could see the presence of the gods in all things. In the woods, Pan and Sylvan, in the earth *Terra Gais Demetra* (Mother Earth) or Ceres, in the sun Apollo and Febo and so forth."[19] In fact, primitive man, explains Boff, lived in a "mystical union" with nature.[20] He adored as divinity the rocks, the plants, the animals. Witchcraft and shamanism are expressions of this spirituality. "The shaman is one who enters into contact with the cosmic energies, he knows how to control the stream of energy within

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

himself and even only with his presence or through gestures, dances, and rites he makes those energies beneficial for human needs in his search for equilibrium with nature and with himself."[21]

The same polytheist and pantheist spirit characterizes the *Instrumentum Laboris*, in which we read:

> "The life of Amazon communities not yet influenced by Western civilization is reflected in the beliefs and rites regarding the actions of spirits, of the many-named divinity acting with and in the territory, with and in relation to nature. This worldview is captured in the 'mantra' of Francis: 'everything is connected' (LS 16, 91, 117, 138, 240)." (IL, n. 25)

According to the Vatican document: "The Creator Spirit which fills the universe (cf. Wisdom 1,7) is the Spirit that for centuries has nurtured the spirituality of these peoples even before the proclaiming of the Gospel and spurs them onto accepting it, from the base of their [own] cultures and traditions" (IL, n. 120). Hence,

> "It is necessary to grasp what the Spirit of the Lord has taught these peoples throughout the centuries: faith in the God Father-Mother Creator; communion and harmony with the earth; solidarity with one's companions; striving for 'good living'; the wisdom of civilizations going back thousands of years that the elderly possess and which influences health, life together, education, cultivation of the land, the living relationship with nature and 'Mother Earth', the capacities of resistance and resiliency of women in particular, rites and religious expressions, relationships with ancestors, the contemplative attitude, the sense of gratuity, celebration and festivity, and the sacred meaning of the territory." (IL, n. 121)

One can only imagine what St. Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, would say in response to such incredible statements, he who wrote in his Epistle to the Romans concerning pagan peoples:

> "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice: Because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

> seen, being understood by the things that are made. His eternal power also and divinity: so that they are inexcusable. Because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God or given thanks: but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness: to dishonour their own bodies among themselves. Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Rom. 1:18-25)

Church Must Don "An Amazonian Face"

The Church, the *Instrumentum Laboris* further affirms, must divest itself of its Roman identity and adopt "an Amazonian face." "The Amazonian face of the Church finds its expression in the plurality of its peoples, cultures and ecosystems. This diversity requires an option for an outward-bound and missionary Church, incarnated in all its activities, expressions and languages" (n.107). "A Church with an Amazonian face in its multiple nuances, seeks to be an 'outward-bound' Church (cf. EG 20-23), which leaves behind a colonial mono-cultural, clerical and domineering tradition and knows how to discern and adopt without fear, the diverse cultural expressions of the peoples" (n.110).

Preparing for Battle

Pope Francis's advisers for the Synod on the Amazon met secretly near Rome at the end of June in order to lay out their strategy, in a manner analogous to what the progressive theologians of Central Europe did on the eve of the Second Vatican Council. But the conservative group which opposed itself to them then was disorganized and unaware, with a few exceptions, of the maneuvers which were in progress. It took two years for them to constitute the *Coetus Internationali Patrum*, which united the anti-progressive bishops. Today, the group which unites those Catholics faithful to the perennial Magisterium of the Church is organized and combative.

Cardinal Walter Brandmüller has affirmed that the *Instrumentum Laboris* "contradicts the binding teaching of the Church on decisive points and thus it ought to be qualified as heretical," and, given that the document places the very fact of divine revelation up for discussion "we ought also in addition to speak of apostasy." The *Instrumentum Laboris*, concludes the cardinal, "constitutes an attack on the foundations of the faith, in a way in which was not thought possible until now. And thus it ought to be rejected with the

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

maximum firmness."

We also, like our adversaries, are preparing ourselves for battle in October with the intention of rejecting the Amazon project with the greatest firmness.

Translated by Giuseppe Pellegrino.

The articles and conferences by Professor Roberto de Mattei can all be found online at https://www.patreon.com/lepantofoundation.

---

[1] Leonardo Boff, *The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. For a cosmic ecology,* Cittadella, Roma 1996, p. 183

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 26-27.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 234.

[4] Leonardo Boff, *Ethos mundial. Um consenso minimo entre os humanos*, Letraviva, Brasila 2000, p. 116.

[5] Boff, *The cry of the earth*, p. 100.

[6] Boff, *Ethos mundial*, pp. 89-90; con riferimento a *La Carta de la tierra: valores y principios para un futuro sostenible*, San José, Costa Rica, 1999.

[7] Boff, *Ethos mundial,* p. 25.

[8] Boff, *The cry of the earth*, p. 27.

[9] Boff, *Ethos mundial,* p. 27.

[10] Boff, *The cry of the earth*, p. 61.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 45.

[12] *Ibid*., p. 248.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 259.

[14] *Ibid*., p. 253.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 353.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[20] Boff, *Ethos mundial*, p. 104.

[21] Boff, *The cry of the earth*, p. 277.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.