

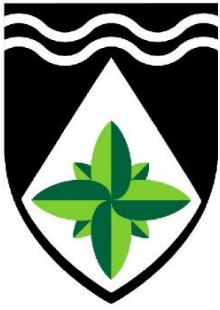


DOMINICAN MONTH FOR PEACE 2023

Committed to the Amazon

from December 3rd , 2023
until January 6th, 2024.





Dominican Month for Peace 2023



Since 2017, the Order has been celebrating the "Dominican Month for Peace", assigning each year a particular country where there is presence of the Dominican Family as a host to raise awareness on issues related to justice and peace of the country. For this year, the Dominican International Commission for Justice and Peace has selected the Amazonia Region for the Dominican Month for Peace and the Master of the Order, Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP. has approved the proposal.

The Dominican Family of Peru, with the support of the Promoter of Justice and Peace of the Region (CIDALC), has welcomed with joy this decision and has organized several commissions to elaborate and offer a material promoting awareness, celebration and commitments based on the 4 challenges of the missions in the Amazon, as answers to the dream of Pope Francis (QA):

1. **The cry of the land:** "I dream of an Amazonia that guards the overwhelming natural beauty that adorns it, the overflowing life that fills its rivers and jungles".
2. **The cry of the poor:** "I dream of an Amazonia that fights for the rights of the poorest, of the original peoples, of the excluded, where their voice is heard, and their dignity is promoted".
3. **A cultural dream - Educational Improvement:** "I dream of an Amazon that preserves the cultural richness that makes it stand out, where human beauty shines in so many different ways".

4. **An ecclesial dream - Volunteering:** "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".

The material contains an informative folder on the four challenges in the Amazonia, a brochure that synthesizes this information, a guide for the celebrations for each Sunday of Advent, some videos that aim to motivate the Dominican Family to join this mission, some guide materials to promote the Amazonian art and others.

For each Sunday of Advent we have assigned the information, reflection and celebration around one of the four challenges mentioned, which can be carried out either in formation and prayer days, or in the liturgical celebrations of the convents and houses of the Dominican institutions, as well as in their different apostolic works (schools, universities, social works, etc.).

May we celebrate the Dominican Month for Peace by dreaming of learning about and evangelizing in the Amazonia.



THE CRY OF THE LAND

Ecology and Environment



THE CRY OF THE POOR

Human Rights and PIACI



A Cultural Dream: EDUCATION



An Ecclesial Dream: VOLUNTEERING



SOLIDARITY PROJECT



The Cry of the Land



"I dream of an Amazonia that guards the overwhelming natural beauty that adorns it, the overflowing life that fills its rivers and jungles".

Amazon Basin or Amazon Region is a hydrological or fluvial concept, since those regions flow into the Amazon River.

The territorial extension of this basin is still variable. The Amazon River is the most important river in the world, with a length of 6,850 km, an average annual flow rate of 230,000 m³/s and a humid temperature in its regular channel of 190 km wide. **It is the largest river basin in the world, with 7.4 million km², equivalent to 4.9% of the continental area.**

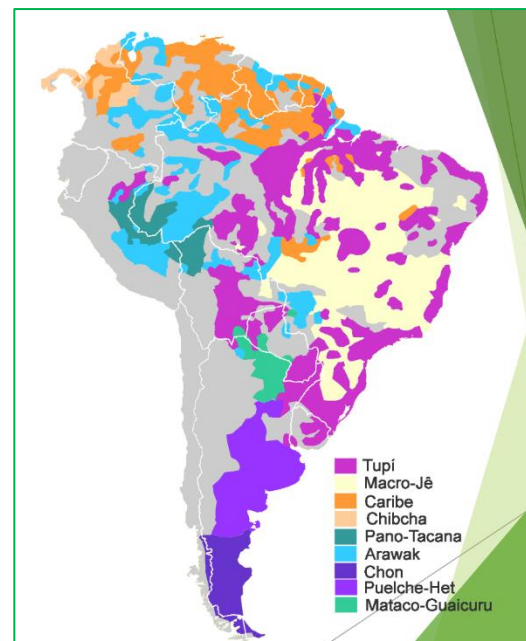
The largest Amazonian extension corresponds to Brazil, which represents 66% of the Amazonia, followed by Peru with 13%. To a lesser extent, the Amazon basin extends into 7 other countries: Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Guyana, French Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela.

The Amazon region is the largest tropical forest, comprising a biodiversity composed of ecosystems, ecological processes, flora, fauna, microorganisms, minerals, landscapes, cultures, among others. The Amazonia is a great and resilient biome.

In terms of ethnic diversity, there are 34 million inhabitants and 420 indigenous peoples. Likewise, it comprises five major linguistic trunks.

In the Peruvian Amazon alone, there are 12 ethnolinguistic families, 60 ethnic groups and approximately 1,800 native communities.

Indigenous peoples are defined as descendants of populations that inhabited the country from the time of the Conquest and that preserve all their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions (ILO-Convention 169). On the other hand, according to anthropological criteria, Indigenous peoples are referred to as cultural structures in traditional territories and economic systems.





Perhaps it is not entirely correct to say that the Amazonia is the "lung" of the planet, or at least this "lung" is bluer (because of the oceans) than green (because of the forests). However, this in no way detracts from the enormous environmental importance of the Amazonian ecosystem for a number of reasons:

- For its biological and cultural diversity.
- And because it plays a particularly important role as a climate regulator: first, because it is an enormous reservoir of carbon and a generator of humidity that produces cooling; and second, because the Amazon biomass is so enormous that burning releases a large amount of carbon into the atmosphere.

Potentially, the Amazonia may be the world's largest natural carbon emitter, in other words, it may be the largest pollutant on the planet.



On the other hand, the conquest process, capitalist expansion and globalization processes in the Amazonia have had both positive and negative effects; some of them, such as the concession of territories to multinational hydrocarbon and forestry companies that apparently allowed a greater presence of services in both education and health, however, what we see now are only increases in morbidity rates due to the emergence of new diseases and the decline in the educational levels of indigenous schools.

Despite the immense importance of its constitution as an Amazon Region, it faces numerous significant threats, such as deforestation due to agricultural expansion, illegal mining, dam construction and natural resource extraction, as well as human activities that put at risk many unique species and ecosystems that depend on them for their survival.

Conservation efforts include the creation of natural reserves, the implementation of sustainable management policies and the collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations and local communities.



The Cry of the poor



"I dream of an Amazonia that fights for the rights of the poorest, of the original peoples, of the excluded, where their voice is heard, and their dignity is promoted".

We Dominicans have been working uninterruptedly for 123 years in the jungle of the Peruvian Southeast. The fundamental objective of this presence has always been **the defense of the land, life and dignity** of the Indigenous peoples that reside there.

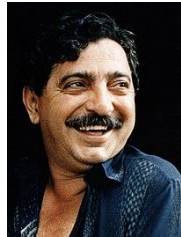
The UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) support this fundamental objective. Art. 1. *"Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law."*

Right to Land:

"We are not owners of the oil, we are not owners of the gold, we are not owners of anything, we are only here on earth. the sacred duty that our Father left us was to be guardians and to take care of all this."

Seventy-two percent of the Peruvian Amazonian territory is covered by hydrocarbon exploitation concessions, further accentuated by social inequity, conflicts between power groups and marginalized groups such as Indigenous producers and farmers. Militarization strategies, expansion of illicit crops and illegal mining activities.





Right to Life:

"If water is the source of Life, the Amazonia contains more than 20% of all fresh water on the planet".

The exploitation of natural resources in the Amazonia has already caused hundreds of deaths, especially of leaders and defenders of the land. More than a hundred were killed between 2016 and 2021. By the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, there have already been sixty deaths in the Brazilian, Colombian, Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazonia, due to a police brutality that is absolutely condemnable and for which the government does not want to answer.

Right to Dignity:

"The Amazon has always been a unit: a geographical unit, a biological unit, and a cultural unit. "

The Pan-Amazonian empire are unconquered peoples, with an enormous capacity to cope with the multiple transformations experienced throughout its history. Populations with a lifestyle in full harmony with nature, which they have cared for and love as their own body, as their own mother. These small societies, which are unique millenary cultures, are being seriously threatened by the invasion of their lands with predatory greed, due to deadly viruses such as generalized corruption, exclusion in the negotiation of their own resources, abuse due to ignorance and their own needs, as well as the recruitment of children and adolescents by human trafficking agents, who, with absolutely repudiatory expressions, usually say to the missionaries: "Give me a little native".



PIACI



Who are they?

They are the Indigenous peoples in isolation and initial contact (PIACI), which are found in several South American countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay and Venezuela. According to Law No. 28736 *"Law for the Protection of Indigenous or Native Peoples in Isolation and in Initial Contact"*, Peru recognizes 25 indigenous peoples, with 5,200 inhabitants in voluntary isolation and 2,260 in occasional contact.

To Protect or to Exploit?

The PIACI live in permanent risk of disappearing due to external factors that threaten their life and health as well as their territorial integrity. There are several laws and regulations to protect these Indigenous peoples, but they are simply ignored by the organizations and their powerful allies, who prefer to exploit rather than protect the Amazonia. The background to this situation is directly related to the national debate on the right of indigenous peoples to be consulted when extractive activities are carried out in their territories (Prior Consultation Law) and is further accentuated by the particular consideration that these peoples, being considered "uncontacted", do not have legal status and therefore do not have the right to their own territory. A clear result of this extractive activity is that in September 2022 liquefied gas exports from the Peruvian Amazon increased by 85% compared to the previous year.

To disappear or to merge?

If biology affirms that, due to the lack of mixing, a population of less than 600 people is bound to disappear in a few generations, what is the future of these populations, if they fail to interact?
The population's rejection of the family planning plans imposed by the AISPED (Minsa) group, who supposedly gave them injections to avoid diseases, and after a few months the women of Montetoni themselves reported that they realized that they had received contraceptives without knowing or wanting it. (2011).

Health, intercultural and bilingual education cannot be denied, because it is the best defense against the current "colonization" that only wants their lands and the richness of their soils or to build roads to extract wood, gold, gas and to bring in alcohol consumption, individualism and consumerism.

As Pope Francis says in his encyclical Fratelli Tutti (107): *"Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country."*



A Cultural Dream: Educational Improvement

Education evangelizes, promotes social transformation, empowering people with a holy critical sense. *"A good school education at an early age lays seeds that can produce lifelong effects"* (LS 213).

The educational mission has always been a priority for the Dominicans in the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado. For many years, the schools were run independently, until 1953, when the Ministry for Education authorized the operation of the "Grupo Móvil de Educación Fundamental de la Selva", which would later be called "Red Escolar de la Selva del Sur-Oriente Peruano" (School Network of the South-Eastern Peruvian Jungle, RESSOP).



The RESSOP serves more than 4,300 students from 47 native communities, primarily Amazonian communities that are difficult to access due to their dispersion, demographics, exclusion and extreme poverty, in which 79 educational institutions operate, grouped into three sub-networks: Madre de Dios (Tambopata and Manu), Cusco (La Convención) and Ucayali (Atalaya).

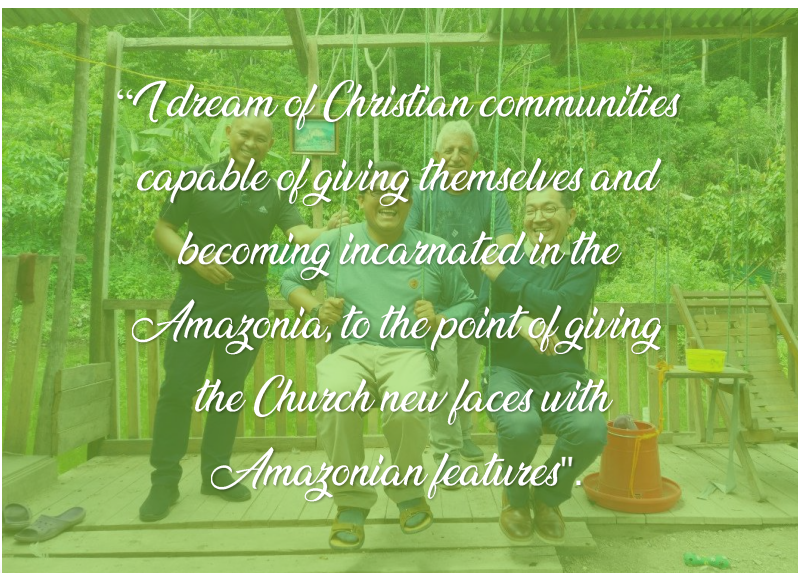
The schools that are part of RESSOP belong to native peoples such as Asháninka, Kakinte, Matsigenka, Amahuaca, Yine, Yaminahua, Nahua, Juni Kuin, Madijá, Chaninahua, Mastanahua, Sharanahua, Ese-eja, Harakbut, Shipibo, Kichuaruna and Quechua. These peoples speak 11 native languages, with a predominance of the Matsigenka and Yine Languages (MINEDU, 2018).

In spite of all the efforts to promote education in a cultural and linguistic context, the educational quality is still deficient and even more worrisome is the frequent school dropouts, especially among girls, as well as the shortage of teachers due to the difficult access to transportation to the most distant communities.

The RESSOP has been making all possible alliances to ensure the sustainability of the educational mission, however, the low budget and corruption in both national and local governments impede progress towards quality education to increase the learning levels of children and youth in our Amazon region.



An Ecclesial Dream: Volunteering



The Amazonian missions have their roots in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) 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.

In 1898, the Peruvian government approved the entry of missionaries into the jungle and established the Apostolic Vicariate of Urubamba and Madre de Dios, with an area of 150,000 km².

At the beginning, 16 mission sites were created, which were staffed by Dominican friars, Dominican Missionary Sisters of the Rosary and lay missionaries from Maldonado (MISEMA).

Since the arrival of the missionaries to the first native communities, they have tried to fulfill the basic need to take care of education, health, organization, culture and others.

The Dominican missionaries have not ceased in their efforts to continue promoting works already built and to maintain these communities over time without losing territory, language and culture; however, the decrease of human resources makes it difficult to provide quality services to many remote native communities.

Currently, there are 17 missionary friars and 12 Dominican missionary sisters in 6 different mission sites, more than half of them are elderly and with some illness. This situation leads us to turn our gaze to the whole Order, recalling the words in the voice of some natives who spoke to Pope Francis during their meeting in Puerto Maldonado: *"Holy Father, thanks to the "Apaktone", we are alive, and we continue to resist. The spirit of our ancestors accompanies us. We ask you to remain among us, to support and defend us"*.





The Church has always encouraged everyone to participate in missionary volunteering and during the last General Chapters of the Order of Preachers, the scarcity of not only financial but also human resources has been pointed out.

For several years, Selvas Amazónicas of the Province of Hispania has been responsible for the financial and human resources. Approximately, the budget invested in a mission in the Amazonia is equivalent to USD \$524,432.00 per year.

Currently, more than 80 projects are being carried out annually and they have more than 20 volunteers per year, in various mission sites: Dominican Republic and Cuba, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina, Equatorial Guinea and Peru.

The projects financed in entities in Peru are dedicated to housing, pastoral care, culture and radio and TV stations, infrastructure, scholarships and health care.

As mentioned above, not only religious and/or clerics are needed, but also the presence of lay people and young people who can help with their professions and/or skills in the various mission places.

The Amazon Rainforest Mission Volunteering seeks that those who embrace this way of life not only perform a series of tasks, but also look, listen and be there. It is certainly an opportunity to get to know the reality, but it is also a way to transmit and share the faith. There are 3 types of volunteers:

- Institutional: who is actively involved in lay organizations.
- On-site: who collaborates on-site with aid projects.
- Professional: who voluntarily provides advice, guidance and professional solutions to specific needs.

For this, it is also essential for volunteers to be trained, which is why they must attend 5 training sessions: Dominican Missionaries-Amazonian forests, Dominican family; World reality, human rights and a look at the world; Interculturality; Health, Affectivity, Security and missionary sending and finally the fruits of the experience of the missionary volunteering and accompaniment upon return.

This ecclesial dream requires an urgent response from our missionary and Dominican beings: according to our latest statistics, we need about 8 friars, 4 religious' sisters, 5 lay people and 1 missionary fraternity for our 7 mission projects in the Peruvian jungle.

Our father Dominic left his land to evangelize and ardently desired to go on mission among the peoples of Northern Europe. *Will we be able to renew this evangelizing drive that our order envisioned as itinerant preachers? Will we as Dominican laity be able to give our time to the service of the Amazonian peoples?*





AMAZONIAN COLLABORATION PROGRAM

*"...They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor,
which was actually what I was eager to do."*

(Gal 2,10)



DOMINICAN MONTH FOR PEACE
2023

Educational project: "Amazonian University Program"

1

Adequacy and improvement of infrastructure for the operation of the Community Learning Center at the pilot site in Puerto Maldonado.

2

Equipment and implementation of a computer lab for 30 students to allow the use of learning and academic management platforms.

3

To develop an introductory program for PUAM students at the pilot site in Puerto Maldonado.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Dominican charism, having reflected on the challenges of the missions in the Amazonia, we encourage you to echo and take a fresh look at these Amazonian faces.

Therefore, we present the Educational Project: "Amazon University Program", which aims to achieve the implementation of a community learning center and develop a preparatory program in the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado by 2024, in order to ensure and promote quality education that will allow young people from the various native communities to access a higher education programs at the national level.

The implementation of the program comprises 5 stages, and we are currently in stage 3, which involves an approximate value of 100,000.00 US dollars (USD), an amount that we have not been able to reach due to the shortage of economic and human funds that the missions are currently experiencing.

In this sense, the Dominican family of Peru joins and encourages this collaboration during the Dominican month for peace 2023 to achieve our goal, allowing the successful completion of this educational project.

How to Contribute?



To the account of: PROVINCIA DOMINICANA DE SAN JUAN BAUTISTA DEL PERÚ
Banking Institution: BANCO CONTINENTAL
SWIFT Code: BCONPEPL
Type: CHECKING ACCOUNT
N°: 0011-0661-0100070388-62
Address in Peru: Jirón Carabaya N° 842. Cercado de Lima.



You can also make your donation with PAYPAL using the following code:

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