

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



### Indigenous Wisdom

The wisdom of the original peoples of the Amazon region inspires care and respect for creation, with a clear consciousness of its limits, and prohibits its abuse. To abuse nature is to abuse our ancestors, our brothers and sisters, creation and the Creator, and to mortgage the future.

Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Querida Amazonia

August 9<sup>th</sup> commemorates the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. There are over 476 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population. Indigenous peoples are the holders of a vast diversity of unique cultures, traditions, languages and knowledge systems. They have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their own worldviews and priorities.

As a Congregation whose mission focus is to "defend and care for all creation", we find inspiration in the many indigenous people whose commitment to defend and protect Earth has cost them dearly and in some cases has cost them their lives. This issue of JPIC News will feature our 'indigenous neighbors' commitment to Earth, especially in the Amazon region, and hopefully inspire us as we accompany each other in the pursuit of protecting and defending our common home.

### Indigenous People: Guardians of Biodiversity

For thousands of years, Indigenous communities have been caretakers of the environment, protecting their lands, respecting wildlife and utilizing traditional knowledge passed down through generations. Today, they continue to safeguard some of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. Almost 50% of the world's land mass (minus Antarctica) is occupied, owned or managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities, with roughly 40% of those landscapes labeled as protected or ecologically sound. And though Indigenous peoples comprise only around 6% of the global population, they protect 80% of biodiversity left in the world.

While Indigenous communities continue to step up for the planet, they can't do it alone. Indigenous Waorani leader, Nemonte Nenquimo, reminds us "We are all in this together. We need the world to recognize this. This isn't about Indigenous peoples fighting heroically and risking our lives to protect the land. This is about us all joining together across cultures, races and classes to change the way our global system works."

Source: *The Guardian*



I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.

Pope Francis, Exhortation Querida Amazonia

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August  
**JPIC Days of Remembrance**

August 6 and 9  
**Anniversary of the Bombings of  
Hiroshima & Nagasaki**

August 9  
**International Day of World's  
Indigenous Peoples**



August 19  
**World Humanitarian Day**

August 23  
**International Day for  
Remembrance of the  
Slave Trade & Its Abolition**

August 29  
**International Day  
Against Nuclear Tests**



Indigenous peoples, their languages, values, knowledge systems and "know-how" must all play a role in the global endeavor to find just and sustainable paths forward for the living world and for humanity as a whole.

Audrey Azoulay,  
Director-General of United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

### Indigenous Peoples: Protectors of the Amazon



When the indigenous peoples "remain on their land, they themselves care for it best", provided that they do not let themselves be taken in by the siren songs and the self-serving proposals of power groups. The harm done to nature affects those peoples in a very direct and verifiable way, since, in their words, "we are water, air, earth and life of the environment created by God. For this reason, we demand an end to the mistreatment and destruction of Mother Earth. The land has blood, and it is bleeding; the multinationals have cut the veins of our mother Earth".

Pope Francis, Exhortation Querida Amazonia

Indigenous communities are the first line of defense for the Amazon rainforest, and we all depend on their efforts to protect it. In Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guyana and Suriname, Indigenous nations are working together to confront an immense array of threats caused by unconstrained extraction in their territories— toxic contamination, raging fires, loss of territory and biodiversity, climate change, and, now, infection.

Source: Amazon Frontlines



### Reflection and Sharing

Notice and pay attention to the many ways our lifestyle is connected to multinational corporations that are responsible for destruction of Earth. How can we change this dynamic? For what must we advocate?

How are your/our efforts to "defend and care for creation" supporting the efforts of our indigenous brothers and sisters, especially those in the Amazon?

Are there any ways your/our lifestyle is thwarting their efforts?

Bring to your daily prayer the people of the Amazon. Pray in gratitude for their efforts to protect the "lungs of our planet".

If God calls us to listen both to the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth, then for us, "the cry of the Amazon region to the Creator is similar to the cry of God's people in Egypt. It is a cry of slavery and abandonment pleading for freedom".

Pope Francis, Exhortation Querida Amazonia

### Prayer for the Amazon and Her People

Mary, Mother of life,  
we ask you to reign  
in the beating heart of Amazonia.

Show yourself the Mother of all creatures,  
in the beauty of the flowers, the rivers,  
the great river that courses through it  
and all the life pulsing in its forests.  
Tenderly care for this explosion of beauty.

Ask Jesus to pour out all his love  
on the men and women who dwell there,  
that they may know how to  
appreciate and care for it.

Bring your Son to birth in their hearts,  
so that he can shine forth in the Amazon,  
in its peoples and in its cultures,  
by the light of his word,  
by his consoling love,  
by his message of fraternity and justice.

Mother, look upon the poor of the Amazon  
for their home is being destroyed  
by petty interests.

How much pain and misery,  
how much neglect and abuse there  
is in this blessed land  
overflowing with life!

Touch the hearts of the powerful,  
for, even though we sense that the hour is late,  
you call us to save  
what is still alive.

Mother whose heart is pierced,  
who yourself suffer in your mistreated sons and  
daughters,  
and in the wounds inflicted on nature,  
reign in the Amazon,  
together with your Son.

Reign so that no one else can claim lordship  
over the handiwork of God.  
We trust in you, Mother of life.  
Do not abandon us in this dark hour.  
Amen.

Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation  
Querida Amazonia

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