

## **Rejoice in the Lord**

**By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark**

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### **Pope Francis Urges Us to See the Face of Christ in Our Brothers and Sisters**



In his Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon), Pope Francis calls our attention to the various ways in which our Church must be “incarnational.” The pope insists that “Everything that the Church has to offer must become incarnate in a distinctive way in each part of the world, so that the Bride of Christ can take on a variety of faces that better manifest the inexhaustible riches of God’s grace” (QA #6).

The consistent image used by our Holy Father in this exhortation and throughout his writing and preaching is of “faces.” He has told us that Jesus is the face of mercy, the image of God’s inexhaustible love and forgiveness. He has also reminded us that we are the body of Christ and, therefore, must show his face to everyone we encounter. Finally, in *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis tells us that the Church must let the peoples of the Amazon region see that we recognize in them the face of our Lord. We must be the face of Christ incarnate and, at the same, we must recognize his face in our sisters and brothers—in the Amazon and “in each part of the world.”

This powerful teaching has important implications for our ministry to the people we serve here in northern New Jersey. Last month, in the January 31 issue of this newsletter, I offered some reflections on “unity in diversity” and I shared with readers some significant statistical information about what might be called “the face of our Archdiocese.” We are truly a diverse community of faith—56.8% white, 27.6% Hispanic and/or Latino, 19.5% Black or African American, and 10.9% Asian. Do we recognize the face of Christ in each other? Are we sufficiently incarnational in our institutions, structures and pastoral practices?

In *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis dreams of a Church that reflects the face of Jesus whose compassionate love for us takes as many different forms as there are individual men, women and children made in God’s image and likeness. The Holy Father shares with us his four dreams for the Amazon region. As I noted in my statement in response to this post-Synod apostolic exhortation (see below), the pope’s vision for this particular region of the

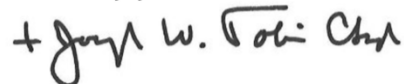
world corresponds to the experience of missionaries in every area of the globe. It also resonates with the opportunities and challenges we face right here in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties.

As missionary disciples here in the Archdiocese of Newark, whether we are clergy, consecrated religious or lay faithful, we must 1) love the people we serve, 2) respect their traditions, customs and life experiences, 3) help build up local communities and reject all efforts to exploit our people or their resources, and 4) be the face of Jesus incarnate in their midst. This is the call to be the face of Jesus and, at the same time, to recognize him in the faces of the people we serve.

There is no room for clericalism, elitism or a patronizing attitude in our ministry among the diverse people and cultures and histories of this Local Church. We are all members of the one Body of Christ and, as I've said before, our differences should enrich us, not divide us.

I urge all members of our archdiocesan family to read *Querida Amazonia* and to ask how its powerful message applies to the mission and ministries of our Archdiocese, our parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations. Do we recognize the face of Christ in everyone we serve—whether here at home or far away? Are we sufficiently incarnational in our institutions, structures and pastoral practices?

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Tobin" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

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## **A Warm Welcome to Our Three New Auxiliary Bishops**

I am delighted that Pope Francis has named three new auxiliary bishops for the Archdiocese of Newark. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to Bishops-Elect Elias R. Lorenzo, O.S.B., Michael A. Saporito, and Gregory J. Studerus, E.V, as they begin their new ministries here in northern New Jersey.

Heartfelt thanks are due to Pope Francis who has shown his special concern for the life and the mission of the Archdiocese of Newark. In selecting Msgr. Studerus, Abbot Lorenzo and Father Saporito for service as bishops, the Holy Father gives new impetus to this local Church as we continue to walk forward in faith. I am delighted to share my responsibilities with these three dedicated missionary disciples.

Auxiliary bishops support the archbishop in the pastoral care of the archdiocese. Together with Bishop Manuel Cruz, each of the new auxiliary bishops will have responsibility for the

life and mission of Church in one of the four counties that comprise the Archdiocese (Bergen, Hudson, Essex, and Union).

I invite all members of the archdiocesan family to join me in thanking the new bishops-elect for their generous response to the Holy Father's call. May the prayers and intercession of Mary, Mother of God, sustain them.

Full biographies and photographs of the Bishops-elect and facts about the Archdiocese of Newark are available at [www.RCAN.org](http://www.RCAN.org).

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**Statement of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., on Querida Amazonia, the Post-Synodal Exhortation of Pope Francis  
February 16, 2020**



During my years of service to my religious community, the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists), I had the privilege of visiting with missionaries in more than 70 different countries throughout the world. What I learned in the process was that every missionary is called to 1) love the people he or she serves, 2) respect their traditions, customs and life experiences, 3) help build up local communities and reject all efforts to exploit their natural resources, and 4) be the face of Jesus incarnate in their

midst. Where missionaries are able to accomplish these objectives, their ministry flourishes, seeds are planted and communities survive and grow even in the face of enormous obstacles.

After many months of prayer, attentive listening and careful reflection on the discussions of the Special Synod of Bishops held in Rome from October 6-27, 2019, on the challenges and opportunities posed by ministering with the peoples of the Amazon region, Pope Francis has reaffirmed these four essential elements of missionary discipleship. He has called our attention to the Gospel imperative to share the light of Christ with all peoples the world over including our beloved sisters and brothers in Amazonia.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “The Amazon region is a multinational and interconnected whole, a great biome shared by nine countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela and the territory of French Guiana. Yet I am addressing the present Exhortation to the whole world. I am doing so to help awaken their affection and concern for that land which is also ‘ours,’ and to invite them to value it and acknowledge it as a sacred mystery.”

The “great biome,” which is the Amazon region, is “ours,” the pope tells us. But it is not ours in any exclusive or proprietary way. First and foremost, it belongs to the peoples who are native to this region. Their sad history of displacement, exploitation and abuse cries out to the whole world. Our response must be one of compassionate solidarity, and we must commit ourselves to walking with our brothers and sisters as they work to preserve the natural beauty of the region and, wherever possible, to restore the riches that are threatened by gravely mistaken ideas of economic and cultural “progress.”

The Holy Father recommends to us all the Final Document of the Special Assembly of Bishops for the Pan Amazon Region last October, *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*. Here we will find robust discussions about the Church’s responsibilities and the different possible approaches (some controversial) toward effective ministry among the peoples of the region.

Pope Francis’s objective is broader, and deeper, than the media reports and expert commentary suggests. He asks all of us to be missionary disciples who 1) love these brothers and sisters of ours, 2) respect their human dignity, 3) care for our common home as stewards of God’s creation, and 4) be the face of Christ incarnate in our people, our institutions and in our commitment to proclaim Gospel joy.

As a missionary, and as a bishop, I welcome the wisdom, passion and zeal that Pope Francis shares with the whole world, and each of us, in *Querida Amazonia*. I have visited areas of Amazonia a number of times since 1985, witnessing the stunning beauty and tragic injustice that the Holy Father treats so thoroughly in this exhortation.

May this beautiful and challenging exhortation from our Holy Father compel all people of good will the world over to see the people of the Amazon, to hear the cry of the poor and marginalized—there and everywhere, and to act justly and lovingly to care for them and for our common home.

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## **A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope**



Everything that the Church has to offer must become incarnate in a distinctive way in each part of the world, so that the Bride of Christ can take on a variety of faces that better manifest the inexhaustible riches of God’s grace. Preaching must become incarnate, spirituality must become incarnate, ecclesial structures must become incarnate. For this reason, I humbly propose in this brief Exhortation to speak of four great dreams that the Amazon region inspires in me.

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

I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features (*Querida Amazonia* #'s 6 & 7).

To read the full text of the Apostolic Exhortation, click [here](#).

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### **My Prayer for You**

With all my heart, I pray that the face of Christ will be seen in the faces of all members of our distinctive community of faith. I also pray that we will be united, not divided, by the diverse ethnic, racial, cultural and economic perspectives that we bring to the table of the Lord each week. †

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