



4. November 2019

**“The Amazon Synod”
(Part 2)**

Today's reflections will only be comprehensible if the reflections of 3 October are taken into account.

I ask all listeners to be patient, but this issue needs a certain deepening, because this is a significant ecclesiastical matter which may not be properly perceived in its explosiveness.

We have to face the serious situation whether acts of idolatry actually took place on 4 October 2019 and in the following days during the Amazon Synod, thus insulting God.

In any case, this was the view of two men who carried out several figures of the Pachamama from the church of Santa Maria in Traspontina and threw them into the Tiber. They recorded this process with a camera and it was also made known through the internet and through the social media. It is not unimportant how they justified this action:

"This was done for only one reason: Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother, and all who follow Christ are attacked by members of our own Church. We do not accept that! We will no longer remain silent!"

As a result, this action was assessed differently: from an act of temple cleaning to the disrespect of the Indians from the Amazon region, corresponding voices were heard.

The decisive factor is the assessment of what has happened. Was it an act of trying to enculturate the gospel, or was it an idolatry and thus a distortion of the Gospel?

We hear the voice of Auxiliary Bishop Eleganti from Switzerland:

In a Facebook update, the bishop also reminds us that the controversial figure of Pachamama is not the Virgin Mary, the mother of the church. *"That one kneels on one's forehead in front of her in the Vatican gardens and that she stands prominently and is carried around wherever the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe would be better venerated and shown (an unmistakable and at the same time present enculturated image of the Virgin Mary with indigenous features and symbols), is incomprehensible. It is incomprehensible to the viewer that the openly demonstrated veneration of Pachamama at the Amazon Synod should not be idolatry. And even if it were, the scandal would remain that it looks at least after it and that the rock of Peter does not worry about it, but rather protects the well-documented rituals in the Vatican gardens*

and beyond, which are foreign to Christianity, and the violent but understandable reactions, on the other hand, mourned."

Bishop José Luis Azcona, Emeritus Bishop of Marajo in the Amazon region, condemns the pagan rites as demonic sacrileges that cause annoyance. He confirms that the "Pachamama" is a pagan deity. He clarifies: *"these celebrations depend on the spirits that are evoked and it is evident that this is witchcraft, from which the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians warns us, in chapter 5, verse 29, when he denounces the sin of idolatry that is incompatible with the Gospel and with mission."*

Kath.net, an Austrian internet portal, on the other hand, reports on Bishop Krätler, who was one of the heads of the Amazon Synod:

Erwin Krätler, the controversial Austrian bishop, has defended the controversial Pachamama depictions from the Amazon region as an "expression of the indigenous people" that can be "integrated into our liturgy". This is what Krätler said during a lecture in Bregenz, as reported by the "Tagespost". "There are people who think that Pachamama is a goddess," Krätler explained.

Obviously Bishop Krätler had a great influence on the bishops of the Synod, as Cardinal Schönborn pointed out. Kath. Net reports: Schönborn said in an interview a few days ago: *"He (Bishop Krätler) enjoyed a very great appreciation among the bishops and the laity at the Synod – and I was very pleased about this – and is seen as a pioneer."*

Bishop Voderholzer from Regensburg, Germany, said in a sermon on 31.10. in the Basilica of St. Emmeram on this subject:

"Inculturation always happens in connection and breakage at the same time. Origenes, a theologian of early church history, pointed out in his interpretation of Israel's exodus from Egypt, for example, that the Israelites took with them the golden vessels and statues of their previous host country with their pharaoh's cult and the fixation on the afterlife, but they did not use them as such, but melted and reshaped into the sacred instruments for worshipping the God of Israel. He is the God of the covenant with men and gives them orientation for a life pleasing to God in the Ten Commandments. Bonifatius, the apostle of Germany, did not adopt the cult of the Germans one-to-one. Bonifatius did not dance and hug the Donar Oak, the cult tree of the Germanic world of gods, but he fell the tree and made a cross out of its wood and built a chapel of St. Peter. This is wonderful picture for the implantation of the novelty of the Gospel in continuity and discontinuity with what has been done so far! (...) Without a certain break with the past, the novelty of Christ cannot be won."

We cannot therefore speak of a successful inculturation in relation to the ceremony in the garden of the Vatican. This takes place when cultural elements are integrated, which are completely liberated from the former pagan meaning and in no way can threaten believers. In no case can any possibility left open which allows demons to use such idols in order to exert their influence on men. There must be a clear discernment of the spirits.

However, the Indian Pachamama-cult is still alive and not liberated from its pagan elements. Even if one wants to see only one fertility symbol in the statues used, it is not possible for Catholics to pay special homage to such statues. In this respect, the events in Rome are very serious.

Pope Francis has publicly apologized for throwing the statues into the Tiber. He himself confirmed that the statues are the Pachamama, not the Virgin Mary. In the context of our serious question if the adoration or veneration of the statues were an act of idolatry, the Pope said that the statues had not been introduced with idolatrous intent.

We have to come back tomorrow in reflecting this serious questions and I ask the audience who might expect spiritual teachings for patience. I will come back to this after this burning themes touching the holiness of our beloved church.