

The Amazon and its people

This year, the Vatican is gathering bishops for an extraordinary month-long conversation on the Amazon and its people. *You can learn more about the synod on the [resources page](#).*

Although the global gathering of bishops takes place in Rome in October, the synod is a months-long process of reflection and discernment that takes place Catholic communities around the globe. The spirit of engagement is key to bringing life to the synod.



You are called to respond by addressing climate change, which threatens the Amazon and all creation. Whether your community is located near or far from the Amazon, your policies can play a part in protecting it.

What's happening?

Climate change is likely to alter rainfall patterns in the Amazon. This has much bigger consequences than the number of rainy and sunny days.

The water system is finely tuned. Rain falls, is absorbed by the soil or rivers and used by plants, and then evaporates or passes through plants' leaves. **When less rain falls, domino effects begin.**

The rainy season in the southern Amazon now [starts later](#) than it did in the past. If the rainy season becomes much shorter, the Amazon may begin to turn from forest to grassland, drastically changing the lives of its animals and people.



The causes of shifting rainfall patterns are complicated, but it's important to note that both climate change and deforestation may play a role. In parts of the Amazon, these two problems are related, as

some industries linked to climate change—such as oil extraction and large-scale beef ranching—are also linked to deforestation.

What's predicted and why does it matter?

The decrease in rain combined with other actions, such as deforestation, may lead to the forest becoming woodland savannah. **The death of trees in the Amazon spells trouble.** The Amazonian rainforest provides oxygen and absorbs carbon for the entire planet, and many foods, medicines, and other products are produced there.



The Amazon rainforest is more rich in species than any other biome on Earth. If we lose whole sections of, or if forest changes to savannah, we lose species. As Pope Francis says, “we have no such right.” (Laudato Si’ 33)

Hundreds of communities of indigenous people call the Amazon home. By and large, these people have not caused the problems they now suffer from.

More about indigenous Amazonian spirituality is in the small group discussion on the [resources page](#).

The indigenous people of the Amazon, and all the people of its local communities, deserve to live in safety and dignity. **These are the faces of our brothers and sisters.**
(photos credit: REPAM)

