

REV. RAFAŁ KOWALSKI

“IT IS INEVITABLE TO SPEAK OF JESUS”:
HOMILETIC INSPIRATIONS FROM THE POST-SYNODAL
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *QUERIDA AMAZONIA*

Abstract. The article is an attempt at analysing the homiletic directives of the Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* of Pope Francis. This is warranted insofar as this document is an attempt by the Bishop of Rome to find answers to problems and challenges facing the Church in South America, as it is eminently pastoral in character, and as proclaiming the Word of God is one of the chief pastoral activities. The author analyses the thought of Pope Francis in three areas: terminology, theology and praxeology. Such a perspective enables a holistic presentation of the exhortation, and allows to extract from it key directives for the preachers of the Word of God. A deeper study of *Querida Amazonia* leads to a surprising observation that the scope of the document is much broader than its title might suggest. In this perspective, the Amazon region becomes a symbol of a world with which the Church attempts to share the Gospel, and its inhabitants — a symbol of the modern hearers of the Word of God.

Key words: proclaiming the word of God; preaching; evangelization; integral ecology; pastoral ministry.

Rev. RAFAŁ KOWALSKI, PhD — presbyter of the Archdiocese of Wrocław, doctor of theology of the Catholic University of Lublin (pastoral theology in the field of homiletics), assistant professor at the Department of Religious Communication at the Institute of Social Sciences of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, lecturer in homiletics and communication theory, Director of the Department of Social Communication of the Wrocław Metropolitan Curia, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Wrocław; address for correspondence: ul. Katedralna 15, 50-328 Wrocław, Poland; e-mail: rkowalski@libero.it. ORCID: 0000-0002-1062-1762.

Ks. dr RAFAŁ KOWALSKI — kapłan archidiecezji wrocławskiej, dr nauk teologicznych KUL (teologia pastoralna w zakresie homiletyki), adiunkt Katedry Komunikacji Religijnej Instytutu Nauk Społecznych Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu, wykładowca homiletyki i teorii komunikacji, Dyrektor Wydziału Komunikacji Społecznej Wrocławskiej Kurii Metropolitalnej, rzecznik prasowy Archidiecezji Wrocławskiej; adres do korespondencji: ul. Katedralna 15, 50-328 Wrocław; e-mail: rkowalski@libero.it. ORCID: 0000-0002-1062-1762.

The synod of bishops for the Amazon, which took place between the 6th and 27th of October 2019, caused quite a stir, not only in the Catholic world. Commentaries on its proceedings intensified after the final document had been published, under the title “New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology.” The very fact that the previous, so-called special sessions which had taken place during the papacies of both John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and which had been dedicated to pastoral activities in various regions of the world, never caused such a commotion, indicates a special significance of the synod taking place in the seventh year of Pope Francis’s pontificate. This serves as an inspiration to contemplate this papal document, which is a summary of sorts of those proceedings.

The other reason for this is the target audience of the *Querida Amazonia* (QA) exhortation, indicated by the Bishop of Rome himself. The principles expounded by Pope Francis in his document do not appear to be restricted only to the issues discussed during the synod, and the document itself is dedicated to “the People of God and to all persons of good will.”

As stated in the Code of Canon Law: “The synod of bishops is a group of bishops who have been chosen from different regions of the world and meet together at fixed times to foster closer unity between the Roman Pontiff and bishops, to assist the Roman Pontiff with their counsel in the preservation and growth of faith and morals and in the observance and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline, and to consider questions pertaining to the activity of the Church in the world.”¹

One should therefore conclude that the guiding principle of the institution of a synod is pastoral in nature, and that an exhortation will focus in its perspective mainly on pastoral elements. This means one should not expect a full and systematic exposition of relevant topics. Rather, the priority is to propose practical suggestions concerning the fulfilment of the Church’s mission in the “here and now” of a particular community.

This too allows one to formulate some expectations as to the language employed in the document, which should have the hallmarks a pastoral utterance, rather than a normative and legal one. This however, does not mean an omission of the theoretical background of relevant matters; one can however expect it to give way to matters of praxeology. In the context of our considerations this seems to be more of an advantage than an objection, as the Church must at all times strive to find new ways of reaching people,

¹ *Codex Iuris Canonici* (henceforth CIC), can. 342.

entangled as they are in the trappings of their time, with the Gospel. It seems then all the more worthwhile to consider the homiletic suggestions provided by the *Querida Amazonia*.

1. TERMINOLOGY

Our hypothesis of a homiletic character of language employed in the document, as opposed to a normative or legal one, is proved by the very terminology used by Pope Francis to describe preaching the Word of God. It would be pointless to seek clear distinctions between respective units of homily based on the context in which they might be delivered or the themes they might touch upon. Neither will we find here any special significance accorded to homily, as clearly pointed out by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council or various authors of post-conciliar texts.² This does not however change the conclusion one is drawn to: namely, that the Bishop of Rome understands “proclaiming” as giving a “public, official testimony of Jesus Christ through the living Word.”³ No doubt, Pope Francis sees preaching the Gospel as an important part of the Church’s pastoral mission.

The most common designations for such a ministry are: “preaching”⁴ and “proclaiming,”⁵ indicated as the main task of the Church as a whole. It seems noteworthy to point out the differences in various translations of the exhortation into different languages. These indicate that those terms are used interchangeably. What in Polish is expressed singularly as “przepowiadanie,” in the English version is denoted by two terms: “to preach” and “to proclaim,” as mentioned above.⁶ The German version on the other hand, makes use of

² Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, in *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje, dekrety, deklaracje. Tekst polski. Nowe tłumaczenie* [Second Vatican Council. Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations. Polish Text] (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), 48-78 (henceforth SC) 52, Sacred Congregation of Rites, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Polish edition: *Ogólne wprowadzenie do Mszału Rzymskiego. Z trzeciego wydania Mszału Rzymskiego Rzym 2002* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2004) (henceforth GIRM) 65, CIC 767.

³ Gerard SIWEK, *Blaski i cienie współczesnego przepowiadania: Przewodnik dla kaznodziejów i homilistów* [The Ups and Downs of Modern Preaching: A Guide for Preachers and Homilists] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2007), 209.

⁴ Cf. FRANCIS, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (QA) 6, 61, 64, 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 72, 89.

⁶ FRANCIS, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, Holy See, accessed 17 Feb. 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20200202_querida-amazonia.html.

the term “Die Verkündigung” (for both preaching and proclaiming), and in Italian again we see the use of synonymous words: “la predicazione” and “l’annuncio del Vangelo.”⁷

This observation is important in that it is difficult to identify the ministry of the Word of God, as described by Pope Francis, with delivering a homily in accordance with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council as part of liturgy itself, and as reserved for deacons, presbyters or bishops. It is all the more important, since the Pope lists proclaiming the Word of God (“proclaim God’s word,” “das Wort verkünden,” “annunciare la Parola”) among the tasks of lay people, especially in view of a scarcity of clerics.

We will deal with the subject of preaching more extensively at another point. Here however, it might be useful to suggest that the document does not make a clear distinction between tasks reserved for ordained members of the priesthood. One indication of this might be in the statement that the celebration of Eucharist belongs to the most specific of clerical duties which cannot be delegated to people who have not received Holy Orders.⁸ It is in the context of homily as part of liturgy in accordance with the respective normative documents,⁹ that an interpretation can be made: namely that the author of *Querida Amazonia* makes no mention of preaching of the Word in a liturgical context when speaking of ministry. Although he is aware of the particular significance of homily, one must assume he sees ministry of the Word in its broader context as an evangelizing act, or even part of so-called pre-evangelization.

We can sense here an echo of the *Evangelii Nuntiandi* exhortation of Pope Paul VI regarding evangelization in the modern world, which contains a suggestion that preaching should be interpreted as: “proclaiming Christ to those who do not know Him.”¹⁰ This becomes especially clear in *Querida*

⁷ FRANCESCO, Esortazione Apostolica postsinodale *Querida Amazonia*, La Santa Sede, accessed 17 Feb. 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20200202_querida-amazonia.html. Cf. FRANZISKUS, Papst. Nachsynodales Apostolisches Schreiben *Querida Amazonia*. Der Heilige Stuhl, accessed 17 Feb. 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_2020_0202_querida-amazonia.html.

⁸ QA 87.

⁹ QA 137–138. Cf. CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS. *Homiletic Directory* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014), 4-15; GIRM 65; SC 52; CIC 767; SC 44.

¹⁰ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (henceforth EN), Polish edition, Opoka, accessed 18 Feb. 2020, https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/pawel_vi/adhortacje/evangelii_nuntiandi.html, 17 and 18.

Amazonia, where Francis states that Christians who have encountered Jesus “must inevitably speak of Him and bring to others his offer of new life.”¹¹ This task belongs to the entire Church however, and it is the Church, without distinguishing between lay people and clerics that—according to Francis—is supposed to in a way draw closer and “to journey alongside the people of the Amazon region.”¹² It is hard to miss the repeated references to the document of Paul VI, who as the first stage of evangelization mentions an evangelization “from within,” by giving testament to Christian life, and proclaiming the Word that then becomes an explanation for it, as well as an answer to questions regarding how the faithful should act in the world.¹³

It is also worthwhile to point out the emphasis the Pope lays on the so-called first proclamation¹⁴, also described as the “missionary appeal,”¹⁵ directed also to the entire Church. The bishop of Rome contrasts such efforts with moral teaching and communicating a doctrinal code or limiting one’s efforts to imparting a social message. He states directly that peoples have the right to hear the Gospel of God, who has boundless love for every human being. This kind of proclaiming rather resembles a sharing of the wondrous news of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ.¹⁶

The term that makes multiple appearances in the text is *kerygma*, defined as the principal proclamation that should be repeated again and again, and which should be “expressed in a variety of ways.”¹⁷ Francis clearly states that without proclaiming God who has revealed his love in the crucified and risen Christ “every ecclesiastical structure would become just another NGO,” or would fail to follow the call of the Lord: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.”¹⁸

In this context one cannot fail to notice that Francis not only speaks of the necessity of preaching, but indicates it should take the form of an impassioned proclamation.¹⁹ Only when it is passionate, ardent and enthusiastic, as expressed in other languages, can it fulfil the missionary command bestowed upon the Church by Christ.

¹¹ QA 62.

¹² QA 61.

¹³ Cf. EN 20–21 and 40–41.

¹⁴ QA 61 and 64.

¹⁵ QA 63.

¹⁶ QA 63–64.

¹⁷ QA 64.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

2. THEOLOGY

From a theological perspective it is noteworthy to clearly underline that the task of evangelizers lies not as much in teaching about Jesus, as in proclaiming Jesus as present and active in the world. It proposes to forsake an explanatory and instructing style of preaching, and to pay close attention to interpreting the lives of the listeners in the context of the Word of God.

The author of *Querida Amazonia* invites us to seek out “paths of encounter” and “dialogue” with those who listen to the Gospel.²⁰ Especially valuable seems to be the instruction: “Others must be acknowledged and esteemed precisely as *others*, each with his or her own feelings, choices and ways of living and working.”²¹ Without this, according to Francis, all missionary activity, and thus also any proclamation of the Word of God, will only remain “a plan drawn up by the few for the few.”²² Such an attitude also guards preachers against relying only on their own perspective and imposing unfair generalizations or formulating simplistic arguments.²³

It is hard to miss here the esteem accorded to the listener with all his or her experiences as an active subject of the process of proclaiming the Word. The recipient of the Gospel is not just a recipient of arbitrary instruction who is only expected to nod, or to thoughtlessly accept every teaching. The Pope sees a “growth” of the Church in the environment in which it proclaims the Gospel as the main factor of effective preaching, and listening to and dialogue with persons, as well as the reality and history of a particular territory, as necessary actions which must precede any open preaching.²⁴ At this point, getting to know the listener, and to know what makes up his or her life becomes a directive, and is certainly not left to the sole discretion of a preacher of God’s Word.

This seems to echo Francis’s *Evangelii Gaudium* exhortation on proclaiming the Gospel in the modern world, and especially his call for courage in proclaiming the Gospel in a way that allows for its expression in categories particular to the culture in which it should be preached.²⁵ Going further, the Pope cautions against a mono-cultural and uniform Christianity, and makes

²⁰ QA 26.

²¹ QA 27.

²² Ibid.

²³ QA 32.

²⁴ QA 66–67.

²⁵ EG 129.

a clear distinction between unity and uniformity, indicating that this cultural diversity poses no threat whatsoever to the unity of the Church.²⁶

It should be mentioned that the document in question also contains scattered references to the goal the preachers of the Gospel should always keep in mind. Speaking of the necessity of predicating *kerygma*, and proposing it as the corner stone of Christian life, the Pope suggests that it is a basis and a deepening of all Christian formation. The main goal of preaching then, according to Francis, is to guide towards a personal encounter with Jesus and towards brotherly love. Such a juxtaposition of those two aspects of Christian life on the same level is in a way a novel approach. *Kerygma* and brotherly love, the Bishop of Rome argues, constitute a great synthesis of the Gospel, which the Church is obliged to share with the Amazon region.²⁷

It is in this light one should also see the necessity of including social problems into preaching. The Pope calls for radical attitudes and for courage in calling out evil. He also cautions against social indifference and calls for greater sensitivity in people of the Church, so they might be able to recognize different forms of exploitation and react appropriately. One could even get the impression Francis has no doubts that the credibility of the Church, and of the prophetic mission it tries to accomplish, is constantly verified by its attitude towards those who are shunned, exploited or crushed. In the spirit of loving one's neighbour, the Church must protect the weak and the destitute, because it is these people that Jesus Himself identified with. Preaching the Gospel then, as argued by the Bishop of Rome, must go side by side with promoting man and with a commitment to social justice.²⁸

In this context, one must conclude that social issues should not be omitted from preaching the Word of God. Francis seems to go even further, and puts forward the necessity of interpreting the current phenomena occurring in the world, its social relations and economic processes, from the perspective of the Gospel. In a way, those issues determine the substance of what is taught.

It is the perspective of the love of God and of fellow man that should also serve as a beacon for the Church in tackling ecological problems. The Pope—in a way that resembles his statements from the *Laudato Si* encyclical—stresses that one cannot reduce those issues to simple technical considerations. He indicates it is essential to pay attention to a person's formation, and to enhance an awareness of the consequences that follow every decision

²⁶ EG 117. Cf. QA 68–69.

²⁷ QA 65.

²⁸ QA 75. Cf. QA 15–19 and 26.

and that influence others, as per the principle: “all things are connected.” The greatest challenge facing the Church in that regard is not a scientific or a technological one, but one of changing the mentality of modern man, and of persuading him to adopt a less greedy life style, one more marked by respect and a sense of brotherhood. The Pope’s voice turns the attention of the readers of his exhortation to the human heart which, when left empty, will seek things to possess and to consume, and that this must inevitably lead to a culture of rejection, guided by the principle: “use, then cast aside.” This heart can only be effectively filled by God, and that is why matters of the environment are integral to the process of evangelization.²⁹

Not without significance is also the fact that Francis acknowledges the “indigenous mysticism” of the region’s populace he addresses in his exhortation, which in his mind “possesses certain features of popular Catholicism.” The Holy Father discerns in this spirituality i.e. a sacral admiration for nature, which dwarfs the human with its abundance of life. He also points that the Church is faced here with an extremely important task, that is “to turn this relationship with God present in the cosmos into an increasingly personal relationship with a *Thou* who sustains our lives and wants to give them a meaning”³⁰: a God that knows and loves man.

It would be difficult to find in the exhortation a direct statement regarding the clergy’s privileged role in the mission of preaching the Gospel. Nevertheless, there are hints of such reasoning both in the previously mentioned statement regarding specific tasks of the priesthood, as well as in the call to all bishops to send forth missionaries who might, with proper preparation, perform missionary service in the Amazon region.³¹ This does not however change the Pope’s assessment: in the light of a scarcity of ordained priests, part of the responsibility for promoting an encounter with the Word of God must be taken up by the laity. In this regard, Francis recognizes the enormously important role of women, who have made it possible for the faith to survive for a very long time in many communities, despite the absence of a priest.³²

²⁹ QA 41–60. This perspective is not a new one in Pope Francis’s thought. In his teachings on corruption, as its main reason he indicates a corrupt heart which sees only itself as point of reference. Cf. FRANCISZEK (Jorge Mario Bergoglio), *Zepsucie i grzech* [Corruption and Sin], trans. Lidia Wrona CM (Kraków: Esprit, 2013), 18–19.

³⁰ QA 73.

³¹ QA 87–90.

³² QA 93 and 99.

3. PRAXEOLOGY

Practical suggestions regarding the process of preaching the Word of God offered by the Pope revolve around two matters: the aforementioned *kerygma* and a broadly understood compassionate ministry.

In this context, one needs to consider a key statement by the Pope: “Nor is there room, in the presence of the poor and forgotten of the Amazon region, for a discipline that excludes and turns people away, for in that way they end up being discarded by a Church that has become a toll-house. Rather, ‘in such difficult situations of need, the Church must be particularly concerned to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned by the very Mother called to show them God’s mercy.’ For the Church, mercy can become a mere sentimental catchword unless it finds concrete expression in her pastoral outreach.”³³

Such a style of ministry involves a necessity to pay attention both to the content of what is taught, and to the style of presentation. The kerygmatic dimension of homily, with its goal of instilling an increased awareness among the recipients of homily of God’s life-giving love offered through Jesus Christ, seems rather self-evident. However, an inclusive style of ministry, marked by mercy in all its aspects, including preaching, seems to remain a rather novel theme. This might seem strange, since leading people to encounter Jesus Christ should not be separated from getting to know Jesus in His entirety, without considering the characteristic of God’s boundless love for man. Thus we come back to the stipulation of paying close attention to the style of presenting the Gospel, as many listeners are put off not by the teachings of the Church themselves, but rather by the way of their presentation.

In *Querida Amazonia* Francis proposes a method of evangelization used by St. Paul in Athens, as described in Acts of the Apostles.³⁴ Despite his dismay at the polytheistic beliefs of the inhabitants of the city, when asked to speak in public, Paul did not start by condemning pagan practices. On the contrary, he recognized the religiousness of the Athenians, he appreciated it, and on this basis tried to tell them about Jesus Christ.

³³ QA 84.

³⁴ Cf. Acts 17:16–31.

Although in his document the Pope makes no reference to St. Paul specifically, one can discern this characteristic of religious ministry in his call for an attitude of full respect and love in trying to understand the people who receive the Word of the Lord. He also emphasizes that people of the Church should accept the multiple particular ways of striving for holiness, which need not be an emulation of particular models coming from elsewhere.³⁵ Furthermore, Francis directly points to the necessity of tapping local myths, ‘charged with spiritual meaning’, instead of condemning them as pagan errors. In religious practices, ceremonies, and activities, he sees a space which might become a stepping stone for proclaiming Christ. He also steadfastly opposes exclusion, suggesting the initiation of a process of their purification and sophistication on the path to a belief in the only Lord and God.³⁶

A similar practice in preaching the Word of God has already been proposed by Pope Benedict XVI, who invoked an image from St. Basil the Great. This Father of the Church from the fourth century in referenced the words of the prophet Amos, who described himself: “I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees.” (Am 7:14), explaining that a sycamore tree bears many fruits, but before the harvest those fruits should be incised to make them mature within several days. Without this, they would lose all flavour, as they only acquire it when their juice pours out. Pope Benedict XVI made a comparison between the sycamore tree and all pagans, who are many, but without flavour. They have to be “incised by the Logos.”³⁷ Just as in the case of the fruit of a sycamore tree, the occurring change does not destroy its substance and the fruit still remains a fruit, so an ‘incision’ of the modern world by the Word of God might lead to a necessary purification and lead to a refinement, to healing and ultimately, to an encounter with the living God. This intervention however, must come from outside. It requires from the preachers of the Word of God not only sufficient knowledge, a familiarity with said fruit and its process of maturation, experience and patience, but most of all that they do not stay “outside” the modern world. Rather, they should have an understanding of ongoing processes, and should notice dangers and possibilities, both hidden and open.

³⁵ QA 77–78.

³⁶ QA 79–80.

³⁷ Joseph RATZINGER, *W drodze do Jezusa Chrystusa* [On the Way to Jesus Christ], trans. Jarosław Merecki SDS (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Salwator, 2004), 49.

This is exactly Francis's message when he underlines that the Church "requires the stable presence of mature and lay leaders endowed with authority and familiar with the languages, cultures, spiritual experience and communal way of life in the different places,"³⁸ and explains that the main challenge the Amazon presents before the Church is a necessity to intensify actions that would allow the Word of God to become present in all places.³⁹

What is interesting, is that in accordance with the pedagogy of St. Paul, Francis presents a very wide spectrum of elements which might become a starting point for preaching the Gospel. He underlines an authentic striving by the indigenous peoples of the Amazon for "good living" and their "personal, familial, communal and cosmic harmony."⁴⁰ At the same time, he points out that the inhabitants of the regions he refers to: "know how to be content with little; they enjoy God's little gifts without accumulating great possessions; they do not destroy things needlessly; they care for ecosystems."⁴¹ In his opinion, a missionary should appreciate this and take it up in the process of evangelization. Thus, a double movement occurs in evangelization. The Church becomes something more than just the sharing party — a recipient of what the Holy Spirit has already sown in a particular community and its culture.⁴²

What requires a separate consideration, is the call for a merciful spiritual ministry, and for such a planning of pastoral actions that they do not lead to exclusion but, on the contrary, that seek ways of including others. Although the Pope only hints at this matter in the document under discussion, when considering the entirety of his current thought one should emphasize that an inclusive pastoral ministry has been one of the hallmarks of his pontificate.

In this context, there is no better example of the Pope's teaching than his *Amoris Laetitia* exhortation. In it, the Bishop of Rome reminds us that people of the Church (that is, also preachers of the Word) should adopt a "logic of integration" in their pastoral activity (which no doubt includes the ministry of the Word), which would allow everyone to experience the Church "as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life."⁴³ He suggests

³⁸ QA 94.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ QA 71.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² QA 20–22 and 68.

⁴³ FRANCIS, Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (henceforth AL), 299 and 296, Holy See, accessed 18 Feb. 2020, https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazioneap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf.

letting go of judgements that fail to take into account the complexity of many situations and the suffering many people experience because of the circumstances they find themselves in. The Holy Father stresses that pastoral ministry should “help each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesial community, and thus to experience being touched by an ‘unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous’ mercy,”⁴⁴ and proposes that the Church be “particularly concerned to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned.”⁴⁵

This statement is just one step away from a stipulation that preachers of the Word of God should use an inclusive language—one which does not discriminate, but which conjoins. This is not a new motif in theology. It has been elaborated in the works of rev. Henryk Sławiński, who elaborated on the development of homiletics in the United States after the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁶ In his characterization of such an inclusive language, rev. Sławiński described it as “containing words that affirm the equality and dignity of every person, regardless of race, gender, religious faith, potential or skills.”⁴⁷

He invokes the document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops dedicated to preaching the Word of God during Sunday’s Eucharist.⁴⁸ In this document, American bishops point to the large diversity among the faithful who attended mass. The attendants include “men and women, the young and the elderly, successful and unsuccessful people, the merry and the lonely, the ardent and the tepid, the strong and the weak,” they state.⁴⁹ This requires a sensibility on the part of the preacher as to how his words might be perceived by his listeners as potentially excluding a particular group from the community. In practice, this involves a choice of words, images and symbols that are close to different groups of believers, paying attention to

⁴⁴ AL 297. In the same passage of the *Amoris Laetitia* exhortation Francis points out that in the case of people who flaunt their sin one should not give up on proclaiming the truth of the Gospel and on calling for repentance. But he states: “Yet even for that person there can be some way of taking part in the life of community.”

⁴⁵ AL 49.

⁴⁶ Henryk SŁAWIŃSKI, *Między ciągłością a zmianą: teoria homilii w Stanach Zjednoczonych po II Soborze Watykańskim* [Between Continuity and Change: The Theory of Homiletics in the United States after the Second Vatican Council] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2008).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴⁸ BISHOPS COMMITTEE ON PRIESTLY LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing. The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (Washington: USCCB Publishing, 2002).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

the style of preaching, and to the differences in social status of the hearers, their political persuasion, as well as their belonging to different ethnic, cultural or social groups. The preacher should make use of a language that conveys respect towards every participant of the liturgy, an acceptance of their dignity, and one which betrays no prejudice towards particular persons or social groups.⁵⁰

An inclusive language as a means of fulfilling the pastoral mission seems to be the only way for the Church in the Amazon region, whose inhabitants display a great sense of community. Thus, the only way of reaching them with the Gospel lies in seeking “paths of encounter.”⁵¹

CONCLUSION

In analysing the tasks set by the Code of Canon Law before the synod of bishops we have assumed it might be difficult to expect to find in the *Querida Amazonia* exhortation a full and systematic exposition of the issues under consideration. Therefore, in attempting to draw homiletic inspirations from this document one should first of all expect to find some practical conclusions which would enable the realization of Christ’s call: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” in the modern world, without determining the degree of their juridically binding character.

Querida Amazonia is an important document, in that it is a notable addition to existing documents concerning the preaching of the Gospel in the modern world, first of all because it considers the determinant factors, the limitations and the chances of fulfilling the task a preacher faces in the 21st century.

However, it would be an error to think the title of the exhortation suggests the mandatory papal directives are restricted only to the area of South America. In reading and analysing individual directives, one can get the

⁵⁰ H. SŁAWIŃSKI, *Między ciągłością a zmianą*, 138–141. Cf. Luis Antonio Gokim TAGLE, *Ludzie Wielkiej Nocy* [Easter People], trans. Marek Chojnacki (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2014), 64–65: “None of those gathered should feel lonely, isolated or ignored. One of the signs of the power of Jesus’s name was a deep sense of belonging that was characteristic of his disciples. The kindness the first Christians showed each other during their gatherings fostered the good will of many people, which led to the constant growth of their community [...]. In times when so many people feel lonely and abandoned, the Church should be witness unity that connects and breaks through isolation.” (Translator’s rendition).

⁵¹ QA 20 and 26.

impression that the Amazon is just around the corner. Although some practical solutions might be different depending on the region in which the Church attempts to fulfil its mission, the various methods and pastoral strategies seem to be of a universal character, and the exhortation might easily have the title: *Querida Ecclesia* — “The Beloved Church.” There would be no risk in saying the “peoples of the Amazon” can be considered a symbol of a modern listener of the Word of God in Europe, and that the pastoral strategy presented by Francis is an attempt to answer questions regarding the Church's present situation in the modern world.

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„NIE MOŻNA NIE MÓWIĆ O JEZUSIE”:
HOMILETYCZNE INSPIRACJE POST-SYNODALNEJ ADHORTACJI
APOSTOLSKIEJ *QUERIDA AMAZONIA*

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest próbą analizy homiletycznych wskazań adhortacji apostolskiej „Querida Amazonia” Papieża Franciszka. Wskazany kierunek badań wydaje się uzasadniony, ponieważ dokument jest próbą znalezienia odpowiedzi przez Biskupa Rzymu na problemy i wyzwania stojące przed Kościołem w Ameryce Południowej, co w związku z jego duszpasterskim charakterem ukazuje głoszenie Słowa Bożego jako jeden z głównych duszpasterskich aktywności. Autor artykułu analizuje myśl Papieża Franciszka w trzech obszarach: terminologii, teologii i prakseologii. Taka perspektywa umożliwi całościowe ujęcie napomnienia i pozwala wydobyć z niej kluczowe wskazania dla głosicieli słowa Bożego. Pogłębione badanie „Querida Amazonia” prowadzi do zaskakującej obserwacji, że zakres dokumentu jest znacznie szerszy, niż może sugerować jego tytuł. W tej perspektywie Amazonia staje się symbolem świata, z którym Kościół próbuje dzielić się Ewangelią, a jego mieszkańcy - symbolem współczesnych słuchaczy słowa Bożego.

Słowa kluczowe: głoszenie słowa Bożego; przepowiadanie; ewangelizacja; ekologia integralna; duszpasterstwo.