

Santo Antonio do Iça, Amazonas, Brazil

October 16, 2025

Mission Month

*"Hope is not a prognosis.
It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart;
It is the ability to work because something is good,
not only because there is a possibility of success...
It is not the conviction that something will turn out well,
but the certainty that something makes sense,
regardless of the outcome."
— Václav Havel*

Dear parish community of San Ignacio, friends:

I send you a big hug during this Missionary Month, hoping you are well. At a time when the world seems to be "upside down," I am surprised—and at the same time touched—by the invitation of the motto that Pope Francis left us for World Mission Sunday 2025: *"Missionaries of hope."*

How can we be bearers of hope in our realities, following Jesus' example?

How does what I experience in the Amazon, with its people and the beings that inhabit it, speak to me of hope?

How can we live from that cry of the heart: *"Who said all is lost? I come to offer my heart."*

God's dream: everything is connected

When I think about hope, I think about God's dream for each of his creatures that he created with such love.

Every day, as he created them, he saw that they were good, and every day he prepared the ground to welcome the new creatures he planted in the garden. All of them connected. All of them intertwined like one big family.

When we visit communities along the river, I see the beauty of this creation, which also speaks to me of hope, of connection, of interdependence, of loving care. For example, the Amazon River—the largest in the world—

It is born and formed from thousands of small drops: ice, glaciers, snow, springs, rain, dew, fog, etc. It is the sum of all these manifestations of water that makes this River of Life possible.

Hope is also like this. And we, as a synodal Church, together with other people of good will, are called to donate and connect our "little drops": charisms, gifts, time, listening... to offer our hearts.

Only in this way does the gift of Abundant Life (Jn 10:10) that God the Father-Mother gave us flow.

The breakup, the disconnection

But here—and surely there too—there are many disconnects. Not everything seems so connected and harmonious.

Rather, it often seems like we are experiencing short circuits.

In August, as a Traveling Team, we participated in the **IV REPAM** (Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network) Human Rights School in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Representatives from six Amazonian countries shared what is happening within their threatened territories: rivers poisoned by mercury and oil, deforestation, territorial invasions, and the criminalization of those whose lives are affected. <https://www.repam.net/es/iv-escola-de-derechos-humanos-de-la-repam/> of defend the

At the beginning of October, in Iquitos, Peru, at the **Water Summit** organized by the Vicariate of Iquitos, Indigenous peoples, peasant communities, Afro-descendants, social organizations, bishops, youth, pastoral teams, missionaries, and civil society institutions, we gathered to listen to the pains and hopes we experience in the Amazon basin and elsewhere. It was striking to realize that, in a region so rich in water (the Amazon concentrates 20% of the world's unfrozen fresh water), many communities still lack access to safe drinking water for human consumption. <https://cumbreamazonicadelagua.wordpress.com/>

How is it possible that in the 21st century we live in such unjust realities?



But in the face of all this injustice, violence, and death, our people sing the praises of hope and life with even greater force. It was heartwarming to see so many people, moved by a profound spirituality, united in the struggle to defend and protect life.

A great diversity trying to find the right pace, to walk together, synodally, and thus, heal the disconnections that affect us... To reconcile and reconnect our little drops of water *that form the great River of Life that rises from the Waters of the Sanctuary and heals all its shores.*

The mission: We cannot and should not do it alone!

From what I've experienced so far, I see that there's something key about this hope: you live with others, not alone.

One of my greatest fears upon returning from my first mission experience in Paraguay, in 1995, was that I would forget what I had experienced or see the reality I had experienced at the Cateura garbage dump in Asunción as "normal." Faced with this fear, a Jesuit friend told me: *"Find others with whom to journey and nurture this dream of God, to share faith, life, and mission."*

This reminds me of some Indigenous peoples I've met in the Amazon, who share their dreams. Dreams aren't just personal. They are nurtured and shared in community, interpreted in groups, and integrated into the collective oral memory. They are part of the spiritual fabric that roots us and unites generations with "vines" of hope, love, and care in a great "forest of life."

It also brings to mind the final Eucharist of the Water Summit. I was invited to share the song *"Te quiero,"* inspired by the poem by Mario Benedetti. It was a deeply meaningful moment. Singing it there, surrounded by so many people fighting for the defense and protection of life, made me feel that God—who loves us deeply—walks with us: navigating the rivers, entering the jungle, walking the streets... and inviting us to join arms, to be a synodal Church on the move, being part of that torrent of hope together. Because *"in the streets, side by side, we are much more than two."*

Martyrdom and Passion: Rooted and Intertwined

But if this were so easy, we would be living in a different situation as a planet. Just as Jesus experienced—and as so many people and communities experience (including us)—we go through critical moments of passion, of darkness, where life seems meaningless.

How can we remain grounded, with hope, in these situations? I'm learning that, especially in these moments, I need to be rooted: in my faith, my spirituality, my family, my culture, my values, my community and pastoral team... All of that sustains me. But it's not enough. No matter how firm my roots are—like the great trees of the Amazon—others can come, cut them down, and tear me down.

I need to be rooted downward (roots), yes, but also sideways (vines). To deepen my roots and weave my vines, which intertwine the trees and form networks that sustain the forest. I, too, need those bonds that connect me to others and help me endure and nurture hope, love, commitment... So do we.

Like Jesus, the dream of life for all, which is not without its storms and nightmares, is always in community, with others. He sought someone to live it with, a community of men and women on the journey (Luke 8:1ff).

The Resurrection: Small Signs, Abundant Life



Life, love, hope are stronger than pain and death.
But they manifest themselves in seeds and small sprouts that emerge in
In the midst of reality. In the midst of so many open wounds, hope continues to sprout.
The resurrection is not just a distant event. It is that "now" that sneaks in and sprouts
in the everyday. Sometimes it manifests itself in small gestures, in processes that
germinate slowly, like tiny seeds.
on good soil.

Like the experience we are experiencing with the **PUAM (Amazonian University Program)**, which was born from a shared dream at the Amazon Synod and is now taking shape in the Sarayaku people of Ecuador. There, knowledge is built through listening. Rather than "transferring knowledge," the conditions are created for the people to
Enlighten and produce their own knowledge, integrating their experiences and expectations into a technical higher education program. <https://puam.org/noticias/programas/2025/07/avances-piloto-derechos-humanos-saryaku-puam>

It's also the mentoring experience we continue to offer volunteers from Spain and other countries through the **VOLFAM-FLORA** program, which focuses on training indigenous leaders from the Sateré-Mawé people and riverside communities in renewable energy, as well as installing these technologies so they can implement sustainable solutions in their territories.

https://www.instagram.com/volunt_flora/

In all this exchange of knowledge, new relationships are created that fill us with hope. Because by getting to know each other, we learn to love and care for each other.



I know there is much I am trying to convey in these lines using this World Mission Day as a "pretext."
But in the end, what I want is to thank you for your company in this mission, as well as encourage you to continue offering your heart, with HOPE, from whatever little piece of the jungle they are in: in the family, at work, in illness, caring for others, in the loss of loved ones, in searching for what I am going to do with my life, what I do in this situation with my children, my grandchildren or in this new stage of life... Trust that our small actions, our little drops, add up to the great torrent of life that God dreams for all.

From these rivers, I send you my grateful hug.
We remain united in prayer and mission,

Marita Bosch

Marita Bosch

(boschmarita@hotmail.com)

"We are Church, we are water, we are life, we are hope in action!"

(Cardinal Pedro Barreto SJ, president of CEAMA,

Closing Mass, Water Summit, Iquitos, Peru, 1-3/10/2025)

Well, the previous one was my "formal" letter about *Missionaries of Hope*. Now I'm sharing the "informal" one, which came to me spontaneously while I was traveling to some communities and, at the same time, writing the previous one:

I woke up sleepy because during the night, at one point I saw that my cell phone was from 100% battery to 0%.

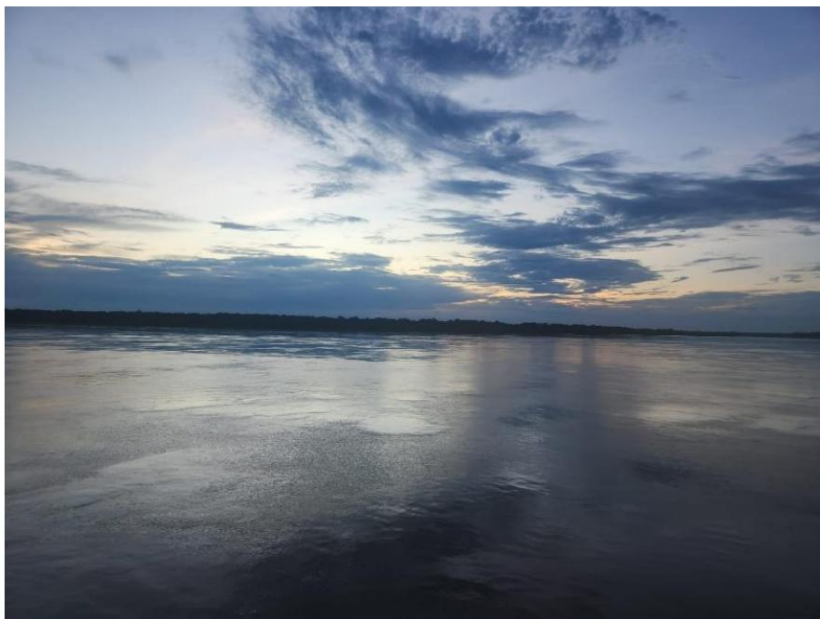
I was sure I'd charged it. And since the alarm was still on, I barely slept. I stayed tuned.

When I went to shower, there was no water, so I didn't. I had breakfast and arrived at the port at 8:30 a.m. because I'd been told I should be there by 9 a.m. But when I arrived, I was told the boat only left at 12 p.m. I waited in line for that long, and then, downstairs, before boarding the boat, they asked us to join another line where they pass dogs to check our luggage. This is in Tabatinga (Brazil), on the border with Santa Rosa (Peru) and Leticia (Colombia). There, the line dissolved, and the hours of waiting were just a nice geometric figure, but not at all orderly. Even so, on the boat, I found a very good space to put my hammock, with people I knew next to it.

When I got to the boat, I realized I didn't have any cutlery. I didn't bring any lunch either. I did bring some hard-boiled eggs that Zeca, Rai's sister, made me. When it was time to get to the port, I had to take a scooter. I put them in my pocket, and they exploded! They were really soft, just boiled. I had also put the money to pay the driver in my pocket, and when I went to pay him, they were all sticky. I cleaned the money and gave it to him.

I had to restart my phone to see if it would work for the battery, which I read in several places recommended as a last resort. It doesn't work. It seems to only work when connected. And when I restarted it, it asked me for "Wi-Fi" to use it.

But, with all this, I want to be grateful. If I didn't have a cell phone, this wouldn't happen to me. If I couldn't travel, I wouldn't have to wait in line either. If I didn't have someone who cared for me and cooked for me, I wouldn't have had to deal with the hard-boiled eggs either... Anyway... I want to be grateful. And, in the background of all this, I'm writing a letter. about hope...from what I see, in practice. That was the motto Pope Francis wrote for this Mission Month: Missionaries of Hope.



I breathe and give thanks as I write against the backdrop of this beautiful sunset over the Solimões River.