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**A leading voice for women in the RC Church**

### **QUERIDA AMAZONIA: Papal Exhortation 12th Feb, 2020**

Post-Synod Document following the Synod of the Amazon, 2019.

**Catholic Women's Ordination expresses profound disappointment that Pope Francis today rejects the diaconate for women in the Amazon who already serve unofficially as such, claiming that such recognition would "clericalize" them.**

Pope Francis's Exhortation, effectively his own thoughts on his bold and imaginative Synod of the Amazon, held in Rome in October 2019, is to be strongly commended for the depth of understanding that it shows towards the absolute environmental, ecological and cultural importance of the Amazon, and its recognition of the terrible dangers faced by that region today.

However, at the Synod, 250 bishops recognised that the "majority of Catholic communities are led by women" there, and a large number of their consultations requested that those women now be ordained deacons.

In this Exhortation, sadly, the Pope has once again shut the door against our hopes. This was his opportunity to officially recognise and sacramentally grace the immense work that women do in our Church, where 80% of all church workers are female.

He claims, however, that such recognition will "clericalise" women, and diminish their contribution. At the same time, he calls upon the bishops of South American to be more generous in sending male priests to the Amazon region. This is a circle that cannot be squared: **what is it about ordination that would cause women to become "clericalised", but not men?**

This unilateral decision on his part also ignores the evidence already presented to him that tens of thousands of women were validly deacons in the first millenium. Catholic Women's Ordination will continue to work, hope and pray for a Church which values women and men alike, expressed in a renewed and equal priesthood.

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