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Pope Francis has chosen Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes to serve as relator general of next year's Synod of Bishops on the Amazon. The cardinal is pictured in Washington March 23, 2017. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)

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Pope Francis has chosen Brazil's Cardinal Cláudio Hummes to serve as relator general of next year's Synod of Bishops on the Amazon.

The nomination of the 84-year-old retired Archbishop of Sao Paulo was announced at the Vatican on May 4. The relator is responsible for providing a comprehensive outline of the synod's theme at the beginning of the meeting and for summarizing the speeches of synod members before work begins on concrete proposals for the pope.

Scheduled for Oct. 6-27, the synod will focus on "Amazonia: New paths for the church and for an integral ecology."

Hummes currently serves as president of the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network, a Catholic organization founded by Caritas Internationalis that "promotes the rights and dignity of people living in the Amazon."

The Vatican also announced that Pope Francis had chosen two special secretaries for the synod.

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The secretaries who will assist at the synod are Bishop David Martínez De Aguirre Guinea, the apostolic vicar of Puerto Maldonado, Peru, and Jesuit Fr. Michael Czerny, undersecretary of the Migrants and Refugee Section of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

When he announced the synod in 2017, Pope Francis said it would seek to identify new paths of evangelization, especially for indigenous people who are "often forgotten and left without the prospect of a peaceful future, including because of the crisis of the Amazon forest," which plays a vital role in the environmental health of

the entire planet.

The Amazon rainforest includes territory belonging to nine countries in South America and has experienced significant deforestation, negatively impacting the indigenous populations in the area and leading to a loss of biodiversity.

This story appears in the **Synod for the Amazon** feature series. View the full series
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