



"The world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise."
Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #12

Recovering the Gift of Creation
A Fifth Anniversary Symposium on *Laudato Si'*

July 7-9, 2020
Saint Joseph's College of Maine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Saint Joseph's College of Maine to Host Symposium Honoring the Fifth
Anniversary of *Laudato Si'***

(STANDISH, Maine)- On July 7-10, 2020, Saint Joseph's College of Maine will host a three-day symposium commemorating the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. Twelve speakers--among some of the foremost Catholic thinkers in the United States, a representative from the Vatican, and some of the founding members of the *Laudato Si'* International Institute in Granada, Spain--will serve as catalysts for fertile exchanges among the symposium participants about this landmark Church document, particularly the distinctive contribution of Catholic theology to contemporary ecological discussions. The anniversary of this document also coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day.

Laudato Si' contains a timely message for a world that is increasingly concerned for the natural environment: Creation is a gift of God that should inspire gratitude, contemplation, and stewardship. However, in the public square, this message is often diluted amidst many competing messages about our common home. In many cases, often because of its own members, the outside world reduces the Catholic Church to an agent for moral conviction and social change regarding ecological concerns, but its

essential message is lost. Even within the Church, the message of *Laudato Si'* can be limited to one particular practical or political cause, losing its theological weight and importance. This event is designed to attract participants from around the country in order to provide opportunities for authentic contemplation, reflection, sharing, and education on the truths in *Laudato Si'*. An important question that this gathering will seek to address is: what new light does the Catholic tradition shine on the environmental awareness that has developed over the last half-century and the initiatives that are underway around the world?

As St. Paul observed, "Ever since the creation of the world His eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things He has made" (Rom 1:20). Catholic teaching on Creation, from the simplicity of St. Francis to the profundity of St. Thomas Aquinas, is marked by the dual insight that it is truly a gift. Creation is both separate from God, with its own freedom and integrity, and also hides God present within it. While cautioning us against the presumption that we can fully decipher and control every aspect of the natural world, the Catholic tradition also instructs us on our covenantal responsibility towards all of Creation. The appreciation of this metaphysical dimension, otherwise rarely considered, gives Catholic thought profound insights into every dimension of Creation - humankind's role within it, as well as the challenges its rightful stewardship presents - from the technical, to the economic, the political and the social, through to the ethical dimension of our everyday actions and our most dear relations of marriage and family.

Featured speakers include

- Archbishop Javier Martínez Fernández, Archbishop of Granada (Spain), President of the Laudato Si' International Institute
- Tebaldo Vinciguerra, Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Vatican
- Joseph Capizzi, President, Center for Integral Human Development, Catholic University of America
- David C. Schindler, Communio International Catholic Review and the Pontifical John Paul II Institute (CUA)
- Nick Healy, Communio International Catholic Review and the Pontifical John Paul II Institute (CUA)
- Larry Chapp, Communio International Catholic Review and DeSales University
- Aaron Riches, Laudato Si' International Institute and Benedictine College
- Mary G. Taylor, Laudato Si' International Institute and Communio International Catholic Review

- Fr. Ildefonso Fernández-Fígares, Laudato Si' International Institute and the Major Seminary of Granada
- Pablo Martínez de Anguita, Laudato Si' International Institute and the Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid)
- Maria Angeles Martin, Laudato Si' International Institute the Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid)
- Sr. Damien Marie Savino, Laudato Si' International Institute and Aquinas College

More information about the symposium, including information about registration, can be found at

<https://www.sjcme.edu/about-us/center-for-faith-and-spirituality/recovering-gift-creation/>.

About Saint Joseph's College of Maine

Founded in 1912 by the Sisters of Mercy in Portland, Maine, Saint Joseph's College is Maine's Catholic liberal arts college in the Mercy tradition. We are inclusive of all faiths, including no faith. The 474-acre campus, located on the shore of Sebago Lake in Standish, Maine offers more than 40 undergraduate programs and a Division III athletic program to a population of approximately 1,000 on-campus students. A pioneer of distance education since the 1970s, the College also provides online certificates and undergraduate and graduate degrees for thousands more working adults who reside in more than 20 other countries. In 2015 the College was selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to receive its Community Engagement Classification, highlighting the College's focus on community service throughout its mission and daily interactions within local, regional, and global communities. In 2018, Princeton Review recognized SJC as one of its "Green Colleges" for its sustainability initiatives. Learn more at www.sjcme.edu.

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