

## ***Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* and Ecological Conversion**

This year we mark two important anniversaries that symbolize our response to climate change: Earth Day at 50 years and Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home* at 5 years.

In the late 1960s air and water pollution were an accepted part of life. After seeing the devastating effects of the great Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969 time was set aside to think about global pollution and how to combat it. That event inspired Earth Day, April 22, 1970, and a worldwide environmental movement. Fifty years later pollution and Earth Day's are still with us. Recognizing the need to view the climate crisis from a religious and ethical perspective Pope Francis published *Laudato Si* in 2015 calling all people to recognize that creation was entrusted to our care and that we have let selfishness and short-sightedness lead to its ruin. Through *Laudato Si* Pope Francis challenges us to honestly look at the climate crisis and find the courage to act.

Celebration of these anniversaries was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it remains important to put some time aside to reflect on the climate issues, learn how we can respond as Catholic Christians and act on those new insights.

**Ten Takeaways from *Laudato Si*** by James Martin, S.J., *America Magazine*, 2015

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2015/06/18/top-ten-takeaways-laudato-si>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUs4NHoabvk>

- 1) **Spiritual perspective is now part of the discussion on the environment.**
- 2) **The poor are disproportionately affected by climate change.**
- 3) **Less is more.**
- 4) **Catholic social teaching now includes teaching on the environment.**
- 5) **Discussions about ecology can be grounded in the Bible and church tradition.**
- 6) **Everything is connected—including the economy.**
- 7) **Scientific research on the environment is to be praised and used.**
- 8) **Widespread indifference and selfishness worsen environmental problems.**
- 9) **Global dialogue and solidarity are needed.**
- 10) **Change of heart is required. (ecological conversion)**

### **Ecological Conversion**

Integral ecology is a key concept of [\*Laudato Si'\*](#). It flows from his understanding that “everything is closely related” and that “today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis.”

from “Integral ecology: everything is connected” by Thomas Reese, *National Catholic Reporter*, 2015

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-justice/integral-ecology-everything-connected>

Last year Pope Francis, in speaking about *Laudato Si*, called for an ecological conversion, because “adequate responses to current problems cannot be superficial. Rather, what is needed is precisely a conversion, a ‘turning around’, that is, a transformation of hearts and minds.” “Striving to overcome

problems such as hunger and food insecurity, persistent social and economic distress, the degradation of ecosystems, and a 'culture of waste' calls for a renewed ethical vision, one that places persons at the center, desiring to leave no one on the margins of life."

### **Developing an Ecological Conversion – the Eco-Examen**

The Examen of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, is a daily exercise in which one reviews the day with thanksgiving and gratitude by placing oneself in God's presence, giving thanks, reviewing the day, facing shortcomings, and looking forward to tomorrow. It offers an opportunity to feel God's presence in gratitude, reflect what you have done, ask for forgiveness and look forward to a better tomorrow. Several Jesuits have adopted this practice to help develop an ecological conversion. Here is one to help you discern your climate actions.

#### **Eco-Examen by Joseph Carver, SJ**

- All creation reflects the beauty and blessing of God's image. Where was I most aware of this today?
- Can I identify and pin-point how I made a conscious effort to care for God's creation during this day?
- What challenges or joys do I experience as I recall my care for creation?
- How can I repair breaks in my relationship with creation, in my unspoken sense of superiority?
- As I imagine tomorrow, I ask for the grace to see the Incarnate Christ in the dynamic interconnections of all Creation.
- Conclude with the prayer of Jesus:  
The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

#### **Action Steps**

- **Educate yourself on climate change issues** by visiting
  - [Laudato Si](#) at [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) website
  - [Catholic Climate Covenant \(https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/\)](https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/)
  - [Global Catholic Climate Movement \(https://catholicclimatemovement.global/\)](https://catholicclimatemovement.global/)
- Read *Laudato Si*.  
[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)
- Make the Saint Francis Pledge  
<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/st-francis-pledge>
- **Prayerfully decide to act.**

"Truly much can be done." *Laudato Si*, p. 80.