



## Laudato Si On Care for Our Common Home

As part of our ongoing discussion of Pope Francis' Encyclical, these inserts share conversations with prominent Catholic thinkers. Today's insert is discussion among Dr. Carolyn Woo, Fr. James Martin, SJ, and Archbishop Thomas Wenski.

### **What do you think the legacy will be for Laudato Si'?**

**Martin:** Well, I think two things. First, it brings climate change into the Church's rich tradition of social teaching. Interestingly, at the very beginning of the document, he says something like, "With this document I now add this to the body of Catholic social teaching." So it's very clear how he perceives the document.

It also brings the Church into the discussion—the worldwide discussion. And so the Church is now [part and partial] of the larger discussion.

**Wenski:** I think the legacy is also a challenge to all of us to do what we can. And so the Pope cites the value of small efforts, of turning off light switches for example, or looking at our own patterns of consumption and looking to see what we can change for a more simple lifestyle.

In this sense, Laudato Si' is telling us that each person can be part of the solution and that we're challenged to rise to that challenge, to that task of being part of the solution. And we don't have to be great scientists, we don't have to be politicians who enact very

complex policies. We can do our own share in our own neighborhood, in our own homes, and in our own parishes.

I know, for example, in the Archdiocese of Miami, my apartment building is working with parishes as they remodel and update things to make sure that they do what is the greenest option. In fact, one of my newest churches built, dedicated this past December, is LEED certified. Even the construction debris was recycled.

So all of us can do something, and all of us can make a difference no matter how small that something might be.

**Woo:** Anticipating some of the comments from Father Jim and Archbishop Wenski, I'm going to put my highlighter on a separate topic. And that is the science of climate change. Clearly, the encyclical said this is not a scientific document, but what it does is that it allows decades of climate science and other research which has been done to move into the mainstream.

There are a lot of people who reject climate science and said this is just manipulated. And the fact that the Pope says, "If you want to hear the cry of the poor, let science talk to you." And I think it is important to address this issue: understanding the science of what causes climate change and how warm are we now and what are the consequences, and whether you can see it in the data. And I think that he allowed—he legitimizes I think—the decades and the huge body of scientific work which has been done on climate change.

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