



International Symposium on Laudato sì Ecology

“Care for Our Common Home, a Necessary Conversion to Human Ecology”

The most important international, academic and ecological event of the year

The International Symposium on Laudato sì Ecology “*On Care for Our Common Home, a Necessary Conversion to Human Ecology*,” organized by the Vatican, is one of the most important academic events of the year, addressing the topic of sustainable development and climate change on our planet. Pope Francis himself takes a keen interest in the development and results of this meeting.

The activity is organized by the Catholic University of Costa Rica with the support of Joseph Ratzinger - Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation, which enjoys great global prestige for its academic and theological contributions. The foundation is currently presided by Father Federico Lombardi, who served as spokesman of the Holy See from 2006 to 2015.

The Foundation holds this type of event on an annual basis. This will be its seventh symposium; the previous events were held in Bydgoszcz, Poland (2011); Río de Janeiro, Brazil (2012); Rome, Italy (2013 and 2016); Medellín, Colombia (2014) and Madrid, Spain (2015).

This year, the event will be held for the first time in the Central American and Caribbean region. Unlike the previous events, which addressed theological/dogmatic topics, this year's symposium focuses on practical theology, addressing a topic that is of global and common interest to everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs, political affiliations or nationalities, given that climate change and the protection of our planet concerns everyone.

The symposium will foster dialogue between reason and faith, bringing together theologians and scientists to discuss inevitable situations such as climate change, the health of our planet, and our legacy for future generations.

The Ratzinger Foundation has selected the Catholic University of Costa Rica, a higher-education center of the Episcopal Conference, to host this symposium. This will be a Vatican's organization most relevant academic event ever carried out in our country, making it an unprecedented occasion. This decision places our country on the Vatican's academic map and demonstrates that Costa Rica is recognized as a country that plays a fundamental role in ecological and environmental matters.

The event will gather highly prestigious speakers from the Vatican and some of the best universities around the world, including:

- His Most Reverend Eminence Cardinal Claudio Hummes O.F.M. Prefect Emeritus of Sacred Congregation for clergy and Amazonia Commission President
- His Most Reverend Eminence Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education



- Dr. Gonzalo Tejerina Arias O.S.A., Dean of the Theology Department of the University of Salamanca
- Dr. Tomás Insua, Research Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School- Executive Director of the Global Catholic Climate Movement
- Rev. Augusto Zampini, University of Durham, Department of Theology and Religion, member of CAFOD
- Dr. Michael Green, Executive Director of Social Progress Imperative
- Dr. Roberto Artavia Loría, President of VIVA Trust
- Mons. Fernando Chica Arellano, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to FAO
- Father Josafá Carlos de Siqueira, S.J., Dean of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The symposium will be held from **November 29 to December 1, 2017, at Wyndham Herradura Hotel** in San Jose, Costa Rica.

In attendance will be the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís, who has stated that this is an **event of public interest**.

The event will include the presentation of a tool for measuring the development of countries around the world, based on the environmental indicators proposed in Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* encyclical letter. The ***Laudato si' Observatory*** of the Catholic University of Costa Rica will also be inaugurated. The objective of the observatory will be to conduct environmental and social monitoring for the planet, by collecting data to feed the development index as well as disseminating the results of each measurement and any related studies.

The Catholic University will join the short list of academic centers with an observatory capable of generating relevant information for the benefit of countries around the world.

Some of the topics that will be discussed during the symposium are:

- Why did Pope Francis write the *Laudato Si'* encyclical letter?
- The ecology of man: the voice of Benedict XVI
- Peace, justice and development for a sociology of the integral ecology of human beings
- *Laudato Si'* applied to our territory: challenges and perspectives
- The current situation of our common home, from a social standpoint. The status of social progress in 2017
- Presentation of the humanist integral model for global measurement
- Custody of creation and the integral ecology of human beings at the center of Catholic education
- Care for our common home: the importance of the Amazon rainforest

Close to 400 people are expected to attend the event, including academics, scientists, businesspeople, priests, seminarians, students from different areas, religious people, educators, government officials, and other participants interested in the care for our common home.

This is an activity of common interest that transcends the Catholic Church, given that it is a practical theology symposium that addresses a topic of global relevance.



Additional background information:

About Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* encyclical on care for our common home:

Pope Francis presented his *Laudato si'* encyclical to the Church on May 24, 2015, on the day of Pentecost. The document, which has been added to the body of the Church's social teaching, presents a vision of authentic human ecology to all persons, not just Christians. Its meditation is founded on the Universal Magisterium while also enriching it with the reflections of bishops from different parts of the world, such as the Philippines, Africa and Latin America.

In this document, the Pope addresses a number of topics. Among other things, the document presents the current situation of our common home and of the poor; reminds readers of the gospel of creation, as God's project; details the human roots of the ecological crisis; perceives ecology in an integral manner; and proposes different lines of action and guidance on this topic, concluding with a discussion of education and ecological spirituality.

About the *Laudato si'* Observatory

The *Laudato si'* Observatory will be inaugurated during the symposium and will be located at the Catholic University of Costa Rica. The observatory will be responsible for conducting environmental and social measurements of the planet, based on the criteria set forth in the *Laudato si'* encyclical.

Why Costa Rica was chosen to host this event

Costa Rica is globally recognized as a country that protects the environment, boasts a wealth of protected areas, uses clean energy through hydroelectric systems, uses solar energy, etc.

About the Joseph Ratzinger Vatican Foundation

The objectives of this foundation are to promote the publication, dissemination and study of the works and thoughts of Professor Joseph Ratzinger; organize and hold cultural and scientific conferences of high value; and give prizes to scholars that have stood out for specific merits, whether for their publications or their scientific research.

The foundation was established on March 1, 2010, in accordance with the Canonical Law Code, the Fundamental Law of Vatican City State, and the statutes of the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation.

About the Catholic University of Costa Rica

The Anselmo Llorente y Lafuente Catholic University of Costa Rica (UCAT) was founded in May of 1993, at the initiative of the bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Costa Rica. The university, which belongs to the Costa Rican Catholic Church, is run by the Catholic University of Costa Rica Foundation. This legal entity is civilly liable for the University, and executes its duties through the Administrative Board.



The President is the highest academic and administrative authority of the University. Since its foundation, UCAT has had 5 presidents. Dr. Fernando Felipe Sánchez Campos has held this position since September of 2015. The university also has three General Vice-presidents (in the Academic, Financial/Administrative and Student Life, Extension and Internationalization areas), who constitute the channel through which the President exercises his authority. The Vice-presidents serve as the President's immediate collaborators, and form part of the Council of Rectors.

The university currently offers 39 bachelor's and licentiate programs of studies approved by the National Council for Private Higher Education (CONESUP), as well as 13 postgraduate programs (several master's programs and one doctorate). Some of these programs of studies are certified by the National Accreditation System for Higher Education (SINAES).

The symposium is also supported by:

Organization of Catholic Universities in Latin America and the Caribbean (ODUCAL):

ODUCAL is a Regional Association of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). It contributes to the progress of knowledge and to the development of a more just and humane world in the light of Christian faith and thanks to the spirit of the Gospel (Article 2 of the IFCU Statutes).

International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU):

IFCU was established by a Decree of the Holy See in 1948 and recognized by Pope Pius XII in 1949. The federation collaborates actively with the Congregation for Catholic Education and has had a privileged relationship with the Pontifical Council for the Laity since the council was created in 1976. IFCU comprises more than 219 Catholic universities and higher education institutions in more than 103 countries.

The President of IFCU, Father Pedro Rubens Ferreira Oliveira S.J., as well as several other members of the federation, will be participating in the symposium.

Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM):

CELAM is an organization of the Catholic Church in Latin America, which seeks to foster channels for communion, reflection, collaboration and service among local churches, as a sign and instrument of the bonds of collegiality, in communion with the universal Church and its head, the Roman Pontiff. The organization was created in 1955 and its headquarters are located in Bogotá, Colombia.

Additional information:

We are currently setting up a webpage for the event, where you will find more information very soon. Click the following link: <http://www.symposiumratzinger2017.com>