



WORCESTER, MA (April 4, 2017)—Peter H. Raven, Ph.D., a leading botanist and advocate of conservation and biodiversity, will discuss Pope Francis's 2014 Encyclical "*Laudato si'*"

, a powerful call of attention to the enormous challenge of global climate change, in his lecture, "*Laudato si': Saving Creation, Saving Ourselves.*"

Dr. Raven will speak on Monday, April 24

at 7 p.m. in the Salon of Assumption's La Maison building, located at 500 Salisbury Street.

According to Dr. Raven, the world has changed profoundly during the Christian era, with a rapidly increasing 7.4 billion individuals, sharply divided between rich and poor, consuming far more potentially sustainable resources than the world holds. "With a billion people in 1815 or so, we were already cultivating or grazing about a third of the world's surface, our numbers growing rapidly to 3.5 billion in 1970 and more than doubling since then," said Dr. Raven. "By the 19th century, the accentuation of social inequality prompted much concern among thinking people with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 Encyclical *Rerum novarum* signaling serious concern many on the part of the Church."

Dr. Raven added that by the time Pope Francis released his Encyclical in 2014, "climate change had been increasingly obvious for a half century, but our historical greed – for ourselves, our families, our tribe, and our nation – was seriously limiting chances of dealing with it before it ruins the prospects for any but the most limited and damaged life on earth." Dr. Raven said that although Pope Francis has followed in his predecessor's environmentally-conscious footsteps, but whether humans are up to the challenge to address their relationship with the environment, remains to be seen.

Dr. Raven is president emeritus of the Missouri Botanical Garden; George Engelmann Professor of Botany Emeritus at Washington University in St. Louis, MO; and a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. Dr. Raven studied at the University of California, Berkeley, before completing his Ph.D. at UCLA. He has held both Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships during the course of his career. He is a recipient of numerous awards, including the National Medal of Science, the highest award for scientific accomplishment in the United States, in 2001. Dr. Raven is a trustee of the National Geographic Society and chairman of the Society's Committee for Research and Exploration. He also serves as chairman of the board for the Center for Plant Conservation.

This event is the last installment of the College's 2016-17 Presidential Lecture Series, a public forum in which important ethical, spiritual and human issues are illuminated and examined within the Catholic intellectual tradition. All events in the President's Lecture Series at Assumption College are free and open to the public. RSVPs are encouraged due to limited space. To RSVP, please call Sharon Mahoney at [508.767.7322](tel:508.767.7322) or e-mail shmahone@assumption.edu