

## Feminist Theologian to Speak on American Empire and the War Against Evil Feb. 25 at UC San Diego

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Rosemary Radford Ruether, a Christian feminist theologian at the forefront of scholarly efforts to diagnose major social problems in American society, the churches, and the world, will speak at 8 p.m. Feb. 25 in Pepper Canyon Hall at the University of California, San Diego.

Ruether's lecture, *American Empire and the War Against Evil*, is based on her latest book, *America , Amerikkka: Elect Nation and Imperial Violence* (Equinox, 2007). The lecture is one in an ongoing series presented by UCSD's Eugene M. Burke Lectureship on Religion and Society. It is free and open to the public.

In *America , Amerikkka*, Ruether shows how the idea that the United States is an elect and messianic nation has encouraged the country's ruling elite to abuse the rights of others, both foreign and domestic. In it, she celebrates the prophetic American voices from Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson to Martin Luther King Jr.

Ruether is senior adjunct professor of Theology, Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate University. In more than 40 books, 600 articles and 1,000 speaking engagements she has earned an international reputation as a distinguished feminist thinker, public intellectual, and religious reformer.

Her goal, she writes, is to help us "understand how we got into the horrible distortions of anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, international militarism, imperialism and ecological devastation so that we can begin to imagine how we can get out of them." With an expertise rooted in ancient Christianity, Judaism, and other Mediterranean cultures and a clear focus on contemporary circumstances she seeks to identify "what resources we have in our traditions" to move us forward toward "a better world of partnership with each other and with the earth."

Ruether graduated from La Jolla High School and earned a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy from Scripps College, a master's degree in ancient history and a Ph.D. in classics and patristics from Claremont Graduate School. She taught at Howard University School of Religion and at the Methodist Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Northwestern University and held visiting appointments at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Prior to her current position at Claremont, she was Carpenter Professor of Feminist Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

In the 1960s Ruether wrote a critique of the Catholic Church's ban on artificial contraception which was included in the book, *Contraception and Holiness*, distributed to the bishops and theologians at the Second Vatican Council. As a columnist for the *National Catholic Reporter*, she has continued to be a leading voice for reform in the church.

Liberation theology was central to her teaching at historically black Howard University and her book *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (1972) expands upon such thinking. She has extended liberation theology to women and developed alternatives to sexism in a series of books, including *The New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (1975, 1995); *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (1992); *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (1998);

*Goddesses and the Divine Feminine in Western Religious Thought* (2005), and *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* (2005).

Parallel to her critiques of sexism and racism was *Faith and Fratricide: The Image of the Jews in Early Christianity* (1978) which exposed the roots of anti-Semitism in early Christian theology. Ruether also co-authored books on the plight of the Palestinians.

The Burke Lectureship sponsors an ongoing series of lectures by distinguished theologians, philosophers, and other scholars who visit the UCSD campus for one or more days of teaching and exchange with faculty, students, and interested members of the community.

The endowed series honors the memory of Eugene M. Burke, a Paulist priest, teacher, theologian, church historian, and scholar. After his retirement from Catholic University in 1976, Burke was closely associated with UCSD as a member of the Paulist ministry to students and as a member of the UCSD Catholic community until his death in 1984. The Burke Lectures focus on the religious dimensions of being human, exploring the function and responsibility of religion in society and its role in shaping social and moral values.

The Burke Lectureship is affiliated with the Division of Arts and Humanities and the UCSD Center for the Humanities. Parking for this lecture is available at the nearby parking structure at Gilman and Villa La Jolla Drives on the UCSD campus. For further information visit the Burke Lecture web page at <http://burkelecture.ucsd.edu>.

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