

Rosemary Radford Ruether – Responder: 2011 Romero Lecture Series



Rosemary Radford Ruether – an internationally acclaimed church historian, theologian, writer, and teacher specializing in the area of women and religion. She was a major voice in raising a feminist critique of the traditionally male field of Christian theology.

Rosemary Radford was born on November 2, 1936, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her collegiate career began at Scripps College where she received her B.A. in philosophy and history in 1958. At Claremont Graduate School she earned both her M.A. in ancient history in 1960 and her Ph.D. in classics and patristic in 1965. Her doctoral dissertation was entitled *Gregory Nazianzus Rhetor and Philosopher*. During her graduate work at Claremont, she was a Danforth fellow in 1960-1961 and held a Kent fellowship from 1962 to 1965.

Ruether was the Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, and a faculty member in the joint doctoral program with Northwestern University. She previously taught at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles (1964-1965) and Howard University School of Religion (1965-1975). She was a visiting lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, Boston College, Sir George Williams University, and Heythrop College, University of London. She was also a Danforth Lecturer at the Universities of Lund and Uppsala in Sweden. She held honorary degrees from St. Olaf's College, Minnesota; St. Xavier's College, Chicago; Wittenburg College, Ohio; Emmanuel College, Boston; Hamilton College, New York; Walsh College, Ohio; and Dennison College, Ohio.

Ruether's works in areas such as the history of women in Western religions, liberation theology, and the relationship between Judaism and Christianity were based on theological and historical data, utilized methods taken from the different liberation theologies, and drew upon a variety of personal experiences of and reflections on the condition of powerlessness. During the 1960s she worked in the Watts section of Los Angeles and with Delta Ministry in Mississippi. She traveled worldwide, including trips to Asia, Nicaragua, and the Middle East.

Rosemary is one of the most prolific and readable Roman Catholic theologians, author of nearly 500 articles and more than 30 books. She also contributed to numerous anthologies. Ruether's work represents a significant contribution to contemporary theology, especially in the area of women and the church. Among her best known works are *The Church Against Itself* (1967); *Communion Is Life Together* (1968); *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (1972); *New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (1975); and *Mary - the Feminine Face of the Church* (1977). With Eugene Bianchi she co-authored *From Machismo to Mutuality: Essays on Sexism and Woman-Man Liberation* (1976).

Acting as both editor and contributor, Ruether produced two major anthologies on women and Western religious history: *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (1974) and *Women of Spirit* (1979) with Eleanor McLaughlin. In collaboration with Rosemary Skinner Keller, Ruether published a three volume docu-history, *Women and Religion in America* (1986). A contributing editor to *Christianity and Crisis* and *The Ecumenist*, Ruether was also published in such periodicals as *America*, *The Christian Century*, *Commonweal*, *Cross Currents*, *Dialog*, *Explor*, *Fellowship*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Theological Studies*, and *Theology Today*.