

Catholic campus revokes chair for feminist scholar: University of San Diego and Rosemary Radford Ruether

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The University of San Diego has rescinded an invitation to a controversial feminist theologian who had been planning to spend a semester teaching and lecturing on the Roman Catholic campus.

Rosemary Radford Ruether, a longtime advocate for Catholic women's ordination and for less centralized authority in the Catholic Church, had received an invitation to occupy an endowed chair at USD in the fall of 2009. But upon further review, the school withdrew Ruether's invitation on July 18 and announced plans to search for a replacement.

Ruether, 71, has for decades challenged Catholic social teachings on abortion, contraception and other issues on the grounds that they derive unjustly from male-dominated theology. She has called Pope Benedict XVI "homophobic" and "an extreme reactionary in relation to sexual issues."

University spokesperson Pamela Gray Payton said: "Given what the donor has described and the intent of the donor's gift, [Ruether] would not have been the most appropriate person for that particular donor, for that particular [lecture] series or chair." Payton declined to say which of Ruether's credentials may have disqualified her.

The revocation drew swift protest from the Women's Ordination Conference, a group that advocates admitting women to the Catholic priesthood. The group, which includes Ruether on its national advisory committee, on July 22 demanded that USD extend an apology to Ruether. *-Religion News Service*