

Theologian

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talks during the two-day program at Creighton, titled "Who Do You Say That I Am?" About 500 people attended the symposium.

In church documents "Christology is used as the keystone of the argument against women's ordination," Ruether said. "It is said that women, by their very nature, cannot image Christ. Therefore they cannot be priests, since priests represent Christ.

"Does this mean that Christ does not redeem women, but reinforces women's bondage in a patriarchal social system? If this is the case, shouldn't women who seek liberation from patriarchy reject Christianity?"

she asked.

The church has always taught, Pope John Paul II said, ordination of women is not permitted under the direct will of Christ. It is, he said, a matter of function, not dignity nor holiness.

Ruether noted that "Christianity has never said that God was literally male, but it has assumed that God represents the qualities of rationality and sovereign power."

Because men were assumed to be rational and "women less so or not at all" by men in power, "it was more appropriate to use the male metaphor for God," she said.

To reaffirm the basic Christian belief that women are included in redemption in Christ, Ruether said, "all the symbolic underpinnings of Christology must be reinterpreted."

A review of history, she said, shows

that often women are the examples of those who are able to hear God's prophetic word and be converted. The Gospels tell how Christ is rejected "first by his family and hometown folk, then by the religious leaders, then by the crowd of his popular followers, and then by his own male disciples."

But the "the core group of his female followers" remain faithful at the cross and are first at the tomb, first witnesses of the resurrection, commissioned by the Risen Lord to take the good news back to the male disciples huddled in the upper room," Ruether said.

Today the view that women are fully human and should have equal rights is generally accepted, she said. "Even the pope and the Catholic bishops now feel compelled to affirm that women are fully human, are not inferior or defec-

tive in human capacities, and are equal sharers in the image of God. But they still cling to a Christology based on a patriarchal anthropology."

When the symposium opened April 24, two dozen protesters gathered at Creighton's Ahmanson School of Law to criticize the Jesuit-operated university for inviting Ruether, who belongs to an abortion-rights group.

"I'm ashamed that she calls herself Catholic," 19-year-old Jennifer Supan-check said. "I think she's a heretic, and if she'd really open the Bible, she'd find the truth."

When told what the protesters were saying about her, Ruether criticized them as "theological illiterates" and said she has "never encountered" a protest prior to one of her talks before coming to Omaha.

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