

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Religion Conference to Examine Global Impact of Catholic Church

The role of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world and in comparison with other religious traditions will be examined in a Department of Religious Studies conference at UC Santa Barbara on May 4 and 5.

Free and open to the public, the conference is the first in a series of community events sponsored by the Cordano Endowment in Catholic Studies at UC Santa Barbara.

The program will bring together scholars from a variety of disciplines to examine the distinctive structure of the Catholic church as a global institution and its impact on international affairs, women's reproductive rights, and more.

Catholicism, as the world's oldest transnational institution, has been the largest religious denomination in the United States since the mid-19th century.

"The Catholic Church as Global Actor" is both the title of the conference and of the keynote address by Thomas J. Reese, S. J., a visiting scholar at Santa Clara University.

Father Reese will open the conference on Thursday, May 4, at 8 p.m. in UCSB's Corwin Pavilion.

Trained as a political scientist, he has written widely on the way the church works at the national and international levels.

From 1998 to 2005 he was editor-in-chief of "America," a weekly magazine published by Jesuits.

Frequently quoted in the secular media, Father Reese was a CNN commentator for its coverage last year of the funeral of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

The conference will continue at 9 a.m. May 5 in Room 6020 of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building.

Other scheduled speakers include Eric O. Hanson, Donahue professor of political science, Santa Clara University; Rosemary Radford Ruether, visiting professor of Women's Studies in Religion, Claremont Graduate University; and sociologist Donald P. Sullins, Catholic University of America.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.