



## Press release

### **Leela Gandhi awarded Alfons Auer Ethics Prize**

**Faculty of Catholic Theology honors professor from Brown University for her work on postcolonial theory**

**Dr. Karl Guido Rijkhoek**  
Director

**Antje Karbe**  
Press officer

Telephone +49 7071 29-76788  
+49 7071 29-76789  
Fax +49 7071 29-5566  
karl.rijkhoeck[at]uni-tuebingen.de  
antje.karbe[at]uni-tuebingen.de

[www.uni-tuebingen.de/aktuell](http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/aktuell)

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The University of Tübingen's Alfons Auer Ethics Prize this year goes to Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies Leela Gandhi, in honor in particular of her innovative work on postcolonial ethics and political theory. A descendent of Mahatma Gandhi, she has drawn on his approach to develop a creative ethics that critically and constructively works towards new forms of non-violence and surmounting the losses and injuries left by colonialism even in postcolonial worlds.

As an outstanding thinker and open-minded debater, her work is also of fundamental significance to Christian theological ethics, in the view of the Faculty of Catholic Theology. Professor Gandhi has developed a postcolonial theory which also throws up a challenge to theology: if theological ethics are to fulfill the ambition of an inclusivity that encompasses all people at all times, it is important that it hears the postcolonial criticism of its own colonialism.

**The award ceremony will take place on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 5 pm in the lecture theater of the Theologicum building (Liebermeisterstr. 12). Members of the public and representatives of the media are warmly invited.**

Professor Ulrike E. Auga from the Institute for Missiology, Ecumenism and Religious Studies of the University of Hamburg will give a speech in honor of Professor Gandhi, who will herself speak on the subject "The challenges of postcolonial theories for ethics and possible perspectives for a postcolonial ethics".

Born in Mumbai, Leela Gandhi has researched and taught at the Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island (USA), as John Hawkes Professor of Humanities and English, since 2014. She took her doctorate at Balliol College, University of Oxford (UK) and has already taught at the

University of Chicago, the La Trobe University (Melbourne, Australia) and the University of Delhi. Above all, her radical work on postcolonial theory and politics, democratic practice and postcolonial communitization has made Gandhi internationally renowned. As well as being a Senior Fellow of the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University, she is a founding co-editor of the academic journal Postcolonial Studies and serves on the editorial board of the electronic journal Postcolonial Text. Professor Gandhi is the great-granddaughter of the non-violent campaigner and civil rights leader Mahatma Gandhi.

### **The Alfons Auer Ethics Prize**

Named after the theologian Alfons Auer (1915–2005), the Alfons Auer Ethics Prize is awarded by the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Tübingen. Auer was the founding director of the Catholic Diocesan Academy of Rottenburg-Stuttgart (1951–1953), held the Chair of Moral Theology at the University of Würzburg (1955–1965) and from 1966 until becoming Emeritus in 1981 was Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Tübingen.

Auer is regarded as one of the most important German moral theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as he endeavored to bring about a dialog of church and the world in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. His ethical approach was characterized by placing human reason at the heart of questions of Christian ethics, which he embedded in a positive view of humanity and creation. Previous prize-winners have included the Canadian social philosopher Professor Charles Taylor (2015), human rights activist Heiner Bielefeldt (2017) and the Irish politician and former President Mary McAleese.

Entrepreneur Siegfried Weishaupt has sponsored the prize since the centenary of Auer's birth. Weishaupt is managing partner of Max Weishaupt GmbH, a worldwide enterprise with 3000 employees. Based in the town of Schwendi, the company was founded by his father Max Weishaupt, an honorary senator of the University of Tübingen. Weishaupt has also been a passionate collector of art for more than 50 years now. The collection of Siegfried and Jutta Weishaupt has been on show at the Kunsthalle Weishaupt museum in Ulm since 2007.

### **Contact:**

Prof. Dr. Andreas Holzem  
University of Tübingen  
Faculty of Catholic Theology  
Telephone: +49 7071 29-7 80 54  
dekanat[at]kath-theologie.uni-tuebingen.de



Professor Leela Gandhi receives the Alfons Auer Ethics Prize of the University of Tübingen.

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