

**NEWS RELEASE**

**Wednesday 1st June 2011**

**HISTORIC BUCKINGHAM PALACE CEREMONY MARKS TEMPLETON PRIZE  
PRESENTATION**

**- HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, Presents Prize to Astronomer Royal -**

LONDON, JUNE 1 – Theoretical astrophysicist Martin J Rees was joined by seven Templeton Prize laureates for the presentation of the 2011 Templeton Prize by HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

In a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace which saw the greatest number of Templeton Prize winners gathered together in one place to honour the Duke of Edinburgh's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Lord Rees, 68, received the £1 million Templeton Prize, the world's largest annual monetary award given to an individual.

John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D., president and chairman of the John Templeton Foundation, presented the Duke of Edinburgh with a specially commissioned book chronicling the history of the Prize. The book highlighted the Duke's role as its presenter since it was first awarded in 1973 and his longstanding association with the Prize founder, the late Sir John Templeton.

Lord Martin Rees, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a former president of the Royal Society, was awarded this year's Templeton Prize in recognition of his profound insights on the cosmos – insights that have provoked vital questions that address mankind's deepest hopes and fears. He has spent decades investigating the far-ranging implications of the Big Bang, the nature of black holes, the so-called 'dark age' of the early universe, and the mysterious explosions from galaxy centres known as gamma ray bursters.

Lord Rees, who will give a lecture entitled 'From Here to Infinity' at One Great George Street this evening (Wednesday), said: "Some people might surmise that intellectual immersion in vast expanses of space and time would render cosmologists serene and uncaring about what

happens next year, next week, or tomorrow. But, for me, the opposite is the case. My concerns are deepened by the realisation that, even in a perspective extending billions of years into the future, as well as into the past, this century may be a defining moment.”

His award of the Templeton Prize, which honours a living person who has made exceptional contributions to affirming life’s spiritual dimension, recognises the role of critical ‘big questions’ raised by Lord Rees – such as ‘How large is physical reality?’ Such questions are the centerpiece of philosophical and theological considerations that open humanity’s grasp of the core of both life and all of existence, and thus foster dimensions of spiritual progress that the Templeton Prize seeks to encourage.

John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D., president and chairman of the John Templeton Foundation, noted that for all the discoveries attached to Lord Rees’s career, it is his relentless intellectual curiosity and the resultant Big Questions regarding the essence of reality that Lord Rees inspires in so many different people, that qualify him for the 2011 Templeton Prize.

In this context, Dr Templeton said: “The questions Lord Rees raises have an impact far beyond the simple assertion of facts. Instead, his questions open wider vistas than any telescope ever could.

“By peering into the farthest reaches of the galaxies, Martin Rees has opened a window on our very humanity, inviting everyone to wrestle with the most fundamental questions of our nature and existence.”

Lord Rees is one of the world’s most renowned astrophysicists, authoring and co-authoring more than 500 research papers and several books, with lectures and broadcast appearances worldwide.

The Templeton Prize has been awarded each year since 1973 by the John Templeton Foundation.

Dr. Templeton concluded: “It is with great pride that the John Templeton Foundation has brought together eight Templeton Prize Laureates to honour the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh, who has been a patron and supporter of the Prize and the debate it seeks to foster around life’s most fundamental questions, for so many years.”

The eight Templeton Prize laureates who gathered in Buckingham Palace to honour the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and the year of their awards, are:

- Michael Bourdeaux (1984)
- Paul Davies (1995)
- Sir Sigmund Sternberg (1998)
- Ian Barbour (1999)
- George F.R. Ellis (2004)
- Charles Townes (2005)
- John Barrow (2006)
- Martin J Rees (2011)

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### Notes to editors

Speaker and Templeton Foundation interviews are available on request.

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### Martin Rees

Martin Rees was born in 1942, growing up in Shropshire.

From Shrewsbury School he gained entry to Trinity College, Cambridge, which would become his lifelong academic home. In 1963, he received his bachelors in mathematics.

He received a research invitation to the university's department of applied mathematics and theoretical physics, where he was inspired by Dennis Sciama, a brilliant scientist whose other students included Templeton Prize laureates George Ellis and John Barrow, as well as Stephen Hawking, James Binney and Brandon Carter.

His post-graduate work in astrophysics in the mid-1960s coincided with an explosion of new discoveries, with breakthroughs ranging from confirmation of the big bang, the discovery of neutron stars and black holes, and a host of other revelations. Rees quickly established himself as one of the bright young luminaries in this field.

Rees obtained his Ph.D. in theoretical astronomy in 1967. After short-term posts in the US and a period at Sussex University, he returned to Cambridge in 1973 on appointment as Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1979. As the society's president from 2005 to 2010 he provided wide advice on policy questions to the UK government and interaction with scientific academies worldwide.

He is a foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences (USA) and the American Philosophical Society. He has received numerous academic awards, and has served as a visiting professor or adviser at institutions around the world.

In 2005, Rees was appointed to the House of Lords as a non-party-political peer, sitting on the Cross Benches as Lord Rees of Ludlow. He was knighted in 1992 and was appointed to the Order of Merit in 2007. In 1995 he became Astronomer Royal.

He lives in Cambridge with his wife, Caroline Humphrey, a professor of social anthropology and founder of the Mongolia and Inner Asian Studies at Cambridge.

### **The Templeton Prize**

The Templeton Prize was created by global investor and philanthropist Sir John Templeton and was established in 1972.

The Templeton Prize is a cornerstone of the John Templeton Foundation's international efforts to serve as a philanthropic catalyst for discovery in areas engaging life's biggest questions, ranging from explorations into the laws of nature and the universe to questions on the nature of love, gratitude, forgiveness, and creativity.

The Templeton Prize aims to identify "entrepreneurs of the spirit", outstanding individuals who have devoted their talents to expanding notions or understanding about ultimate purpose and reality.

The Templeton Prize is awarded annually on the decision of a panel of independent judges. Past judges have included the Dalai Lama, Professor Sir Brian Heap and Professor Paul Davies.

For more information on the John Templeton Foundation and the Templeton Prize, visit [www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org) and [www.templetonprize.org](http://www.templetonprize.org).

Photos of the Laureate are available at: [www.flickr.com/photos/templetonprize](http://www.flickr.com/photos/templetonprize)

Videos of the Laureate are available at: [www.youtube.com/templetonprize](http://www.youtube.com/templetonprize)