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Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr. Announces the 2013 Templeton Prize Laureate

Good Day, everyone! Thank you for joining us for the announcement of the Templeton Prize Laureate for 2013.

Each year on this occasion, I share with you the reflective words that have long been the motivating vision of the Templeton Prize. This Prize was created 40 years ago by my Father, Sir John Templeton, the late global investor and philanthropist.

The words Sir John has left to all of us are: “How little we know; how eager to learn.”

This vision for the Prize has always fostered a pursuit of discovery – most especially the seeking of new insights into the limitless potentials in the realm of the spirit.

The essence of this vision is what Sir John summarized as “Spiritual Progress.”

Reflecting Sir John’s spiritual and philosophical world views, the Templeton Prize affirms that there are, indeed, real and assessable “Spiritual Realities.” Moreover, all humans have a fundamental spiritual dimension – a dimension which is just as real as their physical or material nature.

This timeless belief is one that is shared by an overwhelming majority of people around the world – both past and present.

So what exactly do “Spiritual Realities” encompass?

First, concepts associated with the spirit would clearly include: prayer, thanksgiving, love, and a pursuit of the divine.

But so, too – creativity, purpose and infinity are also essential spiritual realities.

Sir John envisioned that the Prize would identify “entrepreneurs of the spirit” – those who devote their talents to expanding our vision of human purpose and ultimate reality.

Thus, in raising concepts like creativity and purpose in its pursuit of Spiritual Progress, the Prize often honors those who use the tools of philosophy or science to undertake spiritually relevant study and research.

For example, a number of Templeton Prize Laureates in the past 10 years have pursued a wide range of scientific and analytical research on basic spiritual realities such as compassion, humility, infinity, integrity, faith and the discernibility of Truth.

Overall, the optimal context for such a vision is to encourage an open-minded spirit of humility in these approaches. Thus, the distinctive context for so many past Laureates has typically been characterized – not by claims of final answers – but instead, by the discipline and the adventure of endless questions.

Sir John stressed that questions – when framed in humility – create an open mind, which in turn makes it possible for us to learn from each other. Furthermore, an open mind often sees new glimpses of a larger, timeless truth. In turn, such glimpses become major beneficial contributors to progress.

Sir John even foresaw the day when new information on spiritual realities from scientific research might reduce conflict between religions. He felt that, from such research, people will come to acknowledge a rich diversity of spiritual information which is universally accessible to *all* people.

Thus, in this way, it is hoped that all religions will embrace Sir John's' vision – “How little we know, how eager to learn.”

And so, in that very spirit of spiritual progress, the nine Templeton Prize judges who represent a wide range of disciplines, cultures and religious traditions – individually, and separately of each other – carefully evaluate a large number of Prize candidates each year.

From this process, the Templeton Prize judges have chosen the 2013 Templeton Prize Laureate as: Desmond Tutu, the emeritus Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa.

The judges noted that Archbishop Tutu's steadfastness to core Christian principles such as love and forgiveness has broken chains of hurt, pain and all too common instincts for revenge, and instead, has advanced the spiritual liberation of people around the world.

As a leading moral voice for love, peace and justice, Desmond Tutu, in extending hands of a common brotherhood – is one of the world's most revered religious leaders.

During the 1970s and 1980s, he helped to focus global attention on the apartheid policies of South Africa – a dehumanizing process of subverting God's equal love for all.

After Nelson Mandela was chosen as president in South Africa's first all-citizen democratic elections, Tutu chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission relentlessly and lovingly encouraged and fostered confessions, apologies, forgiveness and resolution to help shepherd his nation from institutionalized racial repression towards a true egalitarian democracy.

Thus, Archbishop Tutu has been awarded the 2013 Templeton Prize for his exceptional contributions to exemplifying a new and larger, living model of the benefits of religion and spiritual progress.

Indeed, it is the deep faith of Archbishop Tutu, and his core commitment to prayer, worship, and the life of the Spirit, that has provided him with the foundation for his message of love and forgiveness.

Tutu combines his deeply rooted belief in the theological concept that all human beings are shaped in the image of God – which is known in Latin as *Imago Dei* – with the traditional African belief of *Ubuntu*, which holds that only through others do people achieve humanity which, he says, creates “a delicate network of inter-dependence.”

By embracing such universal concepts of the image of God within each person, Desmond Tutu also demonstrates how the innate humanity within each of us is intrinsically tied to the humanity between all peoples.

His message calls upon all of us to recognize that each and every human being is unique in all of history and, in so doing, to embrace our own vast potential to be agents for spiritual progress and positive change. Not only does he teach this idea, he lives it.

For example, he has created that message through contemplation of such profound big questions as: “Do we live in a moral universe?”

In a video which you can view on the Templeton Prize website, Archbishop Tutu answers: “If this were not a moral universe – that is to say – one in which it would be a matter of indifference as to whether you lie or you don’t lie – it ultimately does not matter....then in such a universe the kind of things that seem to happen in our world would be very difficult to explain.”

On the same website video, Desmond Tutu is asked: “What is humanity’s duty to reflect and live God’s purposes?”

In framing such a calling, he speaks to every child and to every adult as follows: “God made us as those who fundamentally would be moral, ethical beings who can choose. The fantastic thing is that God says, ‘I have such a profound reverence for your freedom that I’d much rather you went freely to hell than to compel you to go to heaven.’ It’s a staggering thing, what this says about us. If we truly believed it, we would not just shake hands, we would genuflect in front of each other.”

These central teachings of Archbishop Tutu also notably reflect the long-standing, deep interests of Sir John Templeton which are so fundamental to the purpose of the Templeton Prize: namely, to recognize a spirit of humility so that people of all nations can learn about the rich variety of ways that others love and understand a supreme spirit.

Despite his retirement from public life in 2010, Archbishop Tutu continues to share his restorative message with audiences across the globe. In 2007, he helped form “The Elders” – an independent group of former world leaders who work for peace and human rights through, for instance, their partnership to end child marriage, called “Girls - not Brides.”

Today, as we celebrate the Templeton Prize and over 40 years of spiritual progress, we pay homage to Archbishop Desmond Tutu: as a true entrepreneur of the spirit – committed to creating a society guided by the essential human values of love, hope, tolerance and courage; and also, for his insights into the totality of God’s love; the spiritual dimensions of human experience; and most especially, for his advancement of spiritual progress.

Thank you – again – for joining all of us today in this most joyous announcement.