



Press Release

14th May 2014

**Monsignor Professor Tomáš Halík receives 2014 Templeton Prize
at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London**

The Czech priest and philosopher Tomáš Halík, who advanced religious and cultural freedoms after the Soviet invasion of his country, received the 2014 Templeton Prize in a ceremony at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London on 14th May.

Valued at £1.1 million (about \$1.8 million or €1.3 million), the Templeton Prize is one of the world's largest annual awards given to an individual and honours a living person who has made exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension.

In his talk delivered at the ceremony, Msgr Prof Halík noted that statements such as "Britain is a Christian country" provoke the question: How can religion – and specifically Christianity – transform the globalisation process into a culture of communication? How can the power of faith create respect, where differences are not perceived as threats but as potential for mutual enrichment? He cautioned that a model of multiculturalism based on the principle of tolerance can work for people living *alongside* each other, but not for people living *together*.

Leading members of the Czech and UK Catholic community, Czech political and cultural leaders, along with other senior British faith leaders attended the ceremony.

Condemned by his nation's communist government as an "enemy of the regime" in 1972, Halík, 65, spent nearly two decades organizing and building an extensive secret network of academics, theologians, philosophers and students dedicated to cultivating the intellectual and spiritual underpinnings for the democratic state he and others envisioned.

Those years of groundwork and counselling to liberation leaders such as Václav Havel and Cardinal František Tomášek helped Czechoslovakia transition to democracy following the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989.

Since that time, Msgr. Prof. Tomáš Halík has advocated religious tolerance and understanding through his writings and lectures by sharing ideas and beliefs among followers of widely varying cultural and spiritual traditions and, notably, non-believers.

Musical performers at this year's ceremony included American Grammy award-winning composer Eric Whitacre, leading his own choir in a performance of his celebrated work *Lux Aurumque*. Also appearing was BRIT Award-nominated singer-songwriter Laura Mvula, who performed her song *Father Father* with the Eric Whitacre Singers. Czech pianist Martin Kasik played works by J.S. Bach, Antonín Dvořák and Frédéric Chopin.

Prof. Halík is the 44th recipient of the Prize, established in 1972 by the late global investor and philanthropist Sir John Templeton. Former laureates include Rev. Billy Graham (1982), Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1983) and Martin Rees (2011). Last year's recipient, Desmond Tutu, followed the 2012 Templeton Laureate, the Dalai Lama.

Notes

Videos of Tomáš Halík answering several Big Questions are available at www.templetonprize.org and www.youtube.com/user/TempletonPrize/.

Further information including biographical information on the 43 previous Templeton Prize Laureates is available at www.templetonprize.org

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For enquiries contact

Don Lehr

t: +1 212 967 8200 m: +1 917 304 4058 e: dlehr@templetonprize.org