



TEMPLETON PRIZE

FOR PROGRESS IN RELIGION

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224 WEST 29TH STREET • 15TH FLOOR • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001 • TEL: 212 967-8200 • FAX: 212 967-7292

The Star-Ledger

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1994

Conservative Catholic theologian wins \$1 million prize in religion

NEW YORK (AP) — Like many of his contemporaries, Michael Novak went from anti-war activist in the 1960s to conservative in the '80s. The Catholic scholar's theological odyssey won him the \$1 million Templeton

Prize for Progress in Religion.

In announcing the award yesterday, administrators of the prize praised him as a pioneer in the theology of economics. Best known for leading lay opposition to the U.S.

bishops' critique of the American economy, Novak was chosen by a nine-judge international panel that included former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"The great myth of the 20th century was for progressive people to imagine that the state was the engine of their hopes," Novak said yesterday.

The Templeton Prize was established in 1972 by investment manager John M. Templeton to recognize individuals who advance the world's understanding of religion. It is the largest monetary prize for achievement in any field.

Previous winners include Mother Teresa, the Rev. Billy Graham and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Last year's winner was former Watergate figure Charles Colson, who later founded a prison ministry.

Novak, whose writings include "The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism" and "The Experience of Nothingness," holds the George Frederick Jewett Chair in Religion and Public Policy at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

Novak, 60, was born in Johnstown, Pa. He spent 12 years as a Roman Catholic seminarian but did not enter the priesthood.

In the 1960s, he was a strong critic of the Vietnam War and an ad-



Michael Novak
Advocate of capitalism

vocate of the federal government's anti-poverty programs.

Later in his career, he became a leading conservative theologian who argued that capitalism, restrained by political and moral forces, is the economic system most likely to raise the poor out of poverty.

In 1986, U.S. bishops approved a pastoral letter urging changes in national economic policies to fight "the social and moral scandal" of widespread poverty in a wealthy nation.

ASSOCIATED PRESS story.
As it appeared in
(Newark) Star-Ledger.