

Item Metadata

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:45:00

Speaker 1

The night sky, of course, is, in a sense, the most universal possible environment, because that's been observed by all humans all over the world. Since the dawn of history. And they've wondered about it in different ways. And gradually we've come to understand the scale of the universe and our place in it in terms of price is interesting because surely we want to encourage the public to really understand the world in which they were born.

00:00:45:02 - 00:01:05:15

Speaker 2

This year marks 50 years of the Templeton Prize, established by Sir John Templeton, the financier and philanthropist who believed that scientific and spiritual inquiry were complementary and that expanding knowledge in these areas could lead to a better world.

00:01:05:17 - 00:01:33:04

Speaker 3

My grandfather created the Templeton Prize because he wanted to recognize individuals who were engaged in the marvelous things that religion was doing in the world. And he thought a prize program would be a way to elevate those individuals and shine a spotlight on the work that they were doing because he believed that religion had an important role to play in human affairs.

00:01:33:07 - 00:02:15:00

Speaker 2

Over the years, the prize has evolved to include scientists, humanitarians, astrophysicists, a saint, and even a living monarch. But at its core, its purpose remains to celebrate those who have changed our lives by exploring the deepest questions of the universe and humankind's place and purpose within it. Launched at a time when nearly half the world's population was living in extreme poverty, the first Templeton Prize was awarded to Catholic nun and missionary mother Teresa.

00:02:15:02 - 00:02:27:26

Speaker 2

She was presented with the award by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, whose close association with the prize spanned nearly four decades.

00:02:27:28 - 00:03:02:24

Speaker 2

Religious leaders and theologians from all the major faiths have been recognized. Past winners include Anglican Archbishop and anti-apartheid campaigner Desmond Tutu. Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. And Tibetan Buddhism. Spiritual leader. The Dalai Lama. The prize has always championed independent thinkers, including novelist and Soviet

dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. And 25 years after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, a fellow dissident received the prize.

00:03:02:27 - 00:03:08:04

Speaker 2

The Catholic priest and philosopher Tomas Halik.

00:03:08:06 - 00:03:29:16

Speaker 4

I do not believe in a religious Esperanto, but I hope for unity and diversity where mutual respect lead us to see differences not as a threat but as an opportunity.

00:03:29:19 - 00:04:07:18

Speaker 2

For 50 years, the prize is celebrated the work of great humanitarians. Chiara Lubich was one of the first to be recognized

for founding the so-called free Movement, with its commitment to peace and social justice. In 1981, Dame Cicely Saunders, a nurse and physician, was made a laureate for establishing the first modern hospice. And more recently, Edna Adan Ismail, the winner in 2023, was honored for her fight to end the practice of female genital mutilation and to improve the health care of women and babies in her homeland.

00:04:07:21 - 00:04:35:23

Speaker 5

I really feel very blessed to have won the Templeton Prize for the Edna Adan Hospital and for and the Edna university. And I hope it becomes also an example for Somali women. A little girl born in the Horn of Africa, where girls were not allowed to go to school, became the first nurse, has also become the awardee of such a prestigious award.

00:04:35:25 - 00:05:02:08

Speaker 2

Since the start of the 21st century, the challenges of rapid technological advancement and the impact of climate change have become dominant issues for humanity. The Templeton Prize has championed the work of philosophers and opinion leaders who write about the human condition and the moral and spiritual questions of our time. Holmes Rolston is best known for his contributions to environmental ethics.

00:05:02:11 - 00:05:11:18

Speaker 6

The environmental crisis is essentially a crisis of the spirit.

00:05:11:21 - 00:05:30:08

Speaker 2

At a time when the UN has reported that the rate of extinction of both plant and animal species is at an all time high. The prize went to Ethologist and conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall for her pivotal observations that have changed humanity's understanding of its role in an interconnected world.

00:05:30:10 - 00:05:48:08

Speaker 7

Right now we're facing climate change, which is intimately linked with loss of species, and we have to understand that we humans are part of the natural world. And not only that, we depend on it. But when species go, they've gone.

00:05:48:10 - 00:06:15:18

Speaker 2

Over the years, the Templeton Prize has evolved to recognize scientists such as Jane Goodall, who have pushed the boundaries of research and discovery, beginning with biologist Alister Hardy, the first scientist to win in 1981. The prize has been awarded to many eminent researchers, including geneticist Francis Collins. Dr. Collins, who led the groundbreaking Human Genome Project that first mapped the DNA of human beings.

00:06:15:25 - 00:06:21:18

Speaker 2

Advocates of the principles of faith and science are complementary.

00:06:21:20 - 00:06:43:04

Speaker 8

When you look at the language of the DNA instruction book, it's hard not to be in awe. And certainly for someone like myself who's a believer in God. This seems to me like a glimpse of the creator's ability to turn nothingness into something amazing.

00:06:43:06 - 00:07:12:18

Speaker 2

Work in the field of physics and the basic forces that shape our universe has also been recognized. Past laureates include mathematician and theoretical physicist Freeman Dyson, particle physicist John Polkinghorne, and most recently the

Nobel Prize winning theoretical physicist Frank Wilczek, who received the Templeton Prize for his revelatory investigations into the fundamental laws of Nature and how it affects our understanding of the universe.

00:07:12:20 - 00:07:35:24

Speaker 9

I saw, and I still see, an enormous gap in the culture of thinking about big questions and also thinking about how history works and scientific understanding. So I've come to see it as part of my mission now in recent years to to fill in that gap.

00:07:35:27 - 00:08:04:10

Speaker 2

Humankind has always looked for answers to life's enduring questions. What makes us human? Why are we here? Some laureates look to the stars for answers, including astrophysicist and former royal astronomer Martin Rees, who led pioneering research into the origins of the universe and cosmologist and astrobiologist Paul Davies. His research includes the theory of quantum black holes and the nature of time.

00:08:04:13 - 00:08:16:27

Speaker 6

Personally, I've always liked exploring the deeper meaning, and I think given the state of the world, we need people who are visionary, not just in their own discipline, but across many different fields.

00:08:16:29 - 00:08:27:27

Speaker 2

Marcelo Gleiser, a theoretical physicist and cosmologist who won the prize in 2019, regards science as a vehicle for exploring the unknown.

00:08:27:29 - 00:08:49:14

Speaker 10

Sir John's idea of creating a prize that celebrated those who engage with the fundamental big questions of existence was absolutely visionary. Because, very simply put, this is what makes us human. That curiosity that we have to understand the mystery of who we are.

00:08:49:16 - 00:09:13:05

Speaker 2

With 53 laureates from 25 nations, including among them 19 scientists, 17 religious leaders, nine theologians and philosophers and eight opinion leaders. The Templeton Prize looks to the future, where it will continue to uplift those who lead the way in exploring the deepest questions of the universe and our place and purpose within it.

00:09:13:07 - 00:09:46:00

Speaker 3

It has been the greatest joy in my life to carry on my grandfather's vision for the Templeton Prize. We need people who are thinking about solutions to the challenges that we face. And I know there are already people who are doing this work and writing about it and talking about it. The role of the Templeton Prize is to elevate those individuals so that the world knows.

END TRANSCRIPTION