

CU FA Professor Tomáš Halík Wins Prestigious Templeton Prize

Tomáš Halík, Charles University Professor, priest and president of the Czech Christian Academy, is the first Czech person to be awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize. The award recognizes his anti-Communist stance during the period of normalization when the Communist regime tightened its grip on the country, his efforts toward eliminating prejudice among atheists and religious people, and toward facilitating dialogue between various religions. The prize will be awarded during a ceremony in the presence of members of the British Royal Family, scheduled for London in May.

The management of the Faculty of Arts, CU would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Professor Halík on such a distinguished award.

Doc. Mirjam Friedová, the Faculty Dean, says: *"I was happy to learn that such a distinguished international award has gone to one of my colleagues. In its motto, the Templeton Foundation has expressed the basic lament of mankind: How little we know, how eager to learn. Professor Halík is a remarkable personification of the latter part of the motto in particular – through all his life and work, he has shown the eagerness to learn, a quality I would like to see in each of our teachers and researchers, and in each of our students as well. This prize is not a religious award, as is sometimes superficially understood. It is a prize awarded to those who are willing to push the limits of mankind's learning about itself. It is a prize awarded to those who ask "big questions" and search for the answers. Templeton was interested, among other things, in where we have come from and where we are headed, treating the laws of nature and the universe as*

seriously as spiritual principles that shape us as humans; these principles include, for instance, what is the essence of love, what role is played in human life by gratitude, forgiveness, creativity and the creative potential. It is this spiritual dimension of being that is so important for the Templeton Foundation; putting aside the remarkable results of the lifetime efforts of Professor Halík as a researcher and citizen, I believe this year's prize is in the best hands. I humbly realize that being in the company of such personalities as Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn and the Dalai Lama does credit, first and foremost, to the prize recipient himself. However, I am extremely delighted that our faculty have such an excellent personality in their midst; I am equally delighted as an ordinary citizen of the Czech Republic."

Established in 1972, the Templeton Prize is named after its founder, Sir John Templeton, a British entrepreneur and businessman. It is awarded to a living person who has contributed to "progress toward research or discoveries about spiritual realities."

Prof. PhDr. Tomáš Halík, Th.D., is a graduate of philosophy and sociology from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague; first having to study theology and religious studies clandestinely in Prague, he took a postgraduate degree in Rome after the fall of communism in 1989; he was appointed Professor in 1997. Tomáš Halík currently serves as president of the Czech Christian Academy and pastor of the Academic Parish in Prague (since 1990). His lectures at the Institute of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the CU FA cover topics in philosophy and sociology of religion. Lectures outside the Czech Republic have brought him to a number of universities in Europe, the USA, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australia, including Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard Universities. In his research and teaching, Professor Halík explores the relationships between religion, culture and politics as well

as European cultural identity. His books have been translated into numerous languages. Awards granted to Professor Halík include the Romano Guardini Prize (2010) and Europe's Best Theological Book for *Patience with God* (Vzdáleným nablízku).

Related articles:

English:

Templeton Prize – official website [Templeton Prize, 13/3/2014]

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Czech priest, philosopher Tomas Halik wins 2014 Templeton Prize [Religion News Service, 13/3/2014]

Czech priest and former dissident Tomáš Halík wins £1.1m Templeton prize [The Telegraph, 13/3/2014]

Czech:

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Tomáš Halík získal jako první Čech Templetonovu cenu [Česká televize, 13/3/2014]