



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE « TEMPLETON PRIZE »  
FOR PROGRESS IN RELIGION**

*Friday, 10 May 1996*

*Your Excellency,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to welcome the founder, trustees and board judges *The Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion*, together with Her Excellency the British Ambassador who is accompanying you here today. Your visit to Rome for the presentation this year's Templeton Prize affords us the opportunity to meet and to reaffirm our shared conviction about the fundamental role which our understanding of God and a genuine spirituality play in human development.

Perhaps one of the principal aspects of your initiative is the attention which it directs to the life-enriching and transforming nature religious experience. In one of the major documents of the Second Vatican Council we read: "In our time, (man's) attempts to search out the secrets the material universe and to bring it under his control have been extremely successful. Yet he has always looked for, and found, truths of a higher order... realities known only to the mind... Man's intellectual nature finds at last its perfection, as it should, in wisdom, which gently draws the human mind to look for and to love what is true and good. Filled with wisdom, man is led through visible realities to those which cannot be seen" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 15).

By giving credit for originality in the service of religion and awarding the Templeton Prize to men and women noteworthy in their approach to the great questions of life, you are affirming that *what counts is what people are, rather than what they have*. You are saying that technical progress alone cannot satisfy the human heart or lead to full human development. Of far greater importance is progress towards true justice, wider brotherhood, and a more humane social environment (Cfr. *ibid.* 35).

I wish to encourage you in your endeavours. May Almighty God strengthen your resolve to use

your influence for the good of the human family. Upon you all, and upon the recipients of the Templeton Prize past and present, I invoke abundant blessings of joy and peace.

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