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**HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II OF JORDAN
RECEIVES TEMPLETON PRIZE AT WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL**

“Everything you honor me for simply carries onward what Jordanians have always done, and how Jordanians have always lived—in mutual kindness, harmony, and brotherhood”

His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was awarded the 2018 Templeton Prize in the presence of ambassadors, Jordanian and U.S. government officials, and Washington political leaders, faith leaders, the media, and society at a ceremony Tuesday evening at Washington National Cathedral.

“Today, I am truly humbled to be recognized by all of you. But let me say, everything you honor me for simply carries onward what Jordanians have always done, and how Jordanians have always lived – in mutual kindness, harmony, and brotherhood. And so, I accept this extraordinary prize, not on my own behalf, but on behalf of all Jordanians,” King Abdullah II said in remarks at the ceremony.

King Abdullah II, who has done more to seek religious harmony within Islam and between Islam and other religions than any other living political leader, was announced as the 2018 Templeton Prize Laureate on June 27 by the John Templeton Foundation, based in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

“His Majesty King Abdullah the Second is a person shaped by temporal and political responsibilities, yet one who holds the conviction that religious belief and the free exercise of religion are among humankind’s most important callings,” said Heather Templeton Dill, president of the John Templeton Foundation.

His Excellency António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, attended the ceremony and offered his congratulations. “King Abdullah’s leadership, based on love of God and love of one’s neighbor, is an important antidote that resonates everywhere: from communities to societies to the international arena,” said Secretary-General Guterres. “And let me be clear – his message is not about tolerance, because tolerance is not enough. King Abdullah calls on us to do far more than tolerate each other. His message is one of respect, solidarity and love. And I hope this celebrated award will help to spread that message of respect, solidarity, and love even more widely.”

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, founder of Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California, America's first accredited Muslim liberal arts college, and Professor Miroslav Volf, Founder and Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture, presented their views on the importance and the influence of the work of King Abdullah II.

"The Arabs say, 'something from its source should cause no surprise.' King Abdullah hails from the illustrious Hashemite clan whose family line, replete with peacemakers and philanthropists, goes back to the eponymous father of the Abrahamic religions," said Shaykh Hamza Yusuf. "Abraham pitched a grand tent in which all were welcome, and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, spawned the two great Semitic branches: the Jews and the Arabs. King Abdullah's work, above and beyond his duties as head of state, is helping to restore that resplendent Abrahamic tent where all are welcome as guests of God."

The King's quest to promote peace-affirming Islam gained momentum in 2004 in the wake of the Iraq war when he launched the "[Amman Message](#)," which articulated a clear understanding of the central elements of Islam.

In 2005, 200 Islamic scholars representing all schools of jurisprudence in Islam, under his guidance, issued a declaration now known as the "[Three Points of the Amman Message](#)," which recognized the validity of all eight legal schools of Islam, forbade declarations of apostasy between Muslims, and established conditions for issuing fatwas, Islamic legal rulings.

The following year, King Abdullah II supported and funded "[A Common Word Between Us and You](#)," which led to a 2007 open letter from Islamic religious leaders to Christian religious leaders calling for peace and harmony based on the twin commandments shared by both faiths, "love of God" and "love of the neighbour."

"Your Majesty, with the *Common Word* you have proclaimed powerfully the truth which none of us should ever forget: peace among religions is inseparable from dialogue about love of God and love of neighbor," said Professor Miroslav Volf. "Truth-seeking conversations about what matters the most are not an expendable luxury; they are a cultural necessity. Without them, we, diverse denizens of the blue planet and creatures of the One God, won't be able to walk into our common human future."

In 2010, King Abdullah II proposed [UN World Interfaith Harmony Week](#) with a General Assembly resolution adding "love of God or love of the good" to "love of one's neighbour," thus including all people of goodwill, with or without faith. The resolution, adopted unanimously, established the first week of February as UN World Interfaith Harmony Week.

"It is time to do all we can to maximize the good in our world, and bring people together in understanding. But it begins with the struggle, the jihad, within ourselves to be the best we can be. And it's been said that all it takes for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing. But together, God willing, we can achieve something

important; we can create the future of coexistence that humanity so desperately needs. Let us keep up the struggle,” His Majesty said at the ceremony.

In awarding the Templeton Prize to King Abdullah II, the Foundation also emphasized his unwavering commitment to protect Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and his leadership which has guaranteed safe haven for Jordan’s ethnic and religious groups, as well as several waves of refugees fleeing conflict and persecution.

“When we talk about hope and coexistence, no issue is more important than Jerusalem. More than half of the world’s people belong to religions that hold Jerusalem as a holy city – Islam, Christianity and Judaism. For Muslims, Jerusalem stands along with Mecca and Medina as one of Islam’s three holiest places. And a special duty binds me and all Jordanians as Hashemite Custodian of Jerusalem’s Islamic and Christian holy sites,” King Abdullah II said.

Performers at the ceremony included Jordanian vocalists Zain Awad and Emanne Beasha, the Dozan wa Awtar choir, and Jordan’s National Music Conservatory Orchestra, all under the direction of producer and pianist Talal Abu Al Ragheb.

The Templeton Prize, valued at 1.1 million British pounds, is one of the world’s largest annual individual awards and honors a person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works.

King Abdullah II said a portion of the Templeton Prize “will help renovate and restore religious sites in Jerusalem, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The entire remaining sum is also being donated to humanitarian, interfaith, and intra-faith initiatives, in Jordan and around the world.”

Established in 1972 by the late global investor and philanthropist Sir John Templeton, the Prize is a cornerstone of the Foundation’s international efforts to serve as a philanthropic catalyst for discoveries relating to the deepest and most profound questions facing humankind. The Foundation supports research on subjects ranging from complexity, evolution, and emergence to creativity, forgiveness, and free will.

King Abdullah II joins a group of 47 Prize recipients including Mother Teresa, who received the inaugural award in 1973, the Dalai Lama (2012), and Desmond Tutu (2013). Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks won the 2016 Prize. The 2017 Laureate was American philosopher Alvin Plantinga.

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