



RATZINGER PRIZE 2024

On Friday, 22 November, Card. Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness, will present the Ratzinger Prize 2024 to the theologian Professor Cyril O'Regan and the sculptor Etsurō Sotoo. The ceremony will take place in the Sala Regia of the Apostolic Palace, starting at 17.00.

In the morning, at 07.15, a Mass in memory of Pope Benedict XVI will be celebrated at his tomb in the Vatican Grottoes. Afterwards, the two prize winners will be received by the Holy Father Francis.

THE PRIZE WINNERS

Prof. **Cyril O'Regan** (Ireland, 1952).

Professor of Systematic Theology in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana, USA).

Professor O'Regan studied philosophy in Ireland. He then earned the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy (1985) and Doctor of Theology (1989) at Yale University (USA). He became a professor in 1990 at Yale University, Department of Religious Studies, and since 1999 at University of Notre Dame, Department of Theology.

His main fields of study: Systematic Theology and History of Christianity.

He is the author of many articles and diverse works, including: *The Heterodox Hegel* (1994); *Gnostic Return in Modernity* (2001); *Theology and the Spaces of Apocalyptic* (2009); *The Anatomy of Misremembering: Balthasar's Response to Philosophical Modernity* (2 volumes.); *Newman and Ratzinger* (publication in progress).

Professor O'Regan does a great deal of teaching and is much appreciated by students for his attentive teaching relationship to students. He has devoted several important articles to the figure and teaching of Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI.

Etsurō Sotoo (Fukuoka, Japan, 1953).

Graduated in Fine Arts from Kyoto University (Japan), he first taught in Kyoto and Osaka.

Visiting Barcelona in 1978, he was very impressed by the construction of the “Sagrada Familia” Basilica and asked to work there as a sculptor, beginning with the Nativity Façade, following instructions left by Antoni Gaudí. He converted to Christianity and was baptized. He is an ardent devotee of Gaudí and is also committed to his cause for canonization.

His major works are in various parts of the church of the “Sagrada Familia”, but also in other places in Spain, Japan and even Italy, having created the ambo of Florence’s cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore, in 2015.

He is the first East Asian and the first sculptor to be awarded the Ratzinger Prize.

As is well known, Pope Benedict XVI consecrated the Basilica of the “Sagrada Familia” during a trip to Barcelona in 2010, expressing high appreciation for the figure and art of Antoni Gaudí.

THE RATZINGER PRIZE

The Ratzinger Prize is the principal initiative of the Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI. It is awarded, according to the Statutes, to “scholars who have distinguished themselves for with particular merit in the activity of publication and/or scientific research”. In recent years, the scope of the awardees has also expanded to include the arts practiced with Christian inspiration.

Nominations for the Prize are proposed to the Holy Father for his approval by the Foundation’s Scientific Committee, which consists of five members appointed by the Pope. It currently consists of Cardinals Kurt Koch (Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity), Luis Ladaria (Prefect Emeritus of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith), Gianfranco Ravasi (President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Culture), His Exc. Msgr. Salvatore Fisichella (Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization) and by His Exc. Msgr. Rudolf Voderholzer (Bishop of Regensburg and President of the *Institut Papst Benedikt XVI*).

The Prize has been awarded annually, starting in 2011, each time to two (exceptionally three) scholars.

With the 2024 edition, the Awardees will reach a total number of 30. They are mainly eminent personalities in the studies of Dogmatic or Fundamental Theology, Sacred Scripture, Patrology, Philosophy, Law, Sociology, or in artistic activity, music, architecture and now also sculpture.

Confirming the worldwide cultural horizon of the Prize, the honored personalities come from as many as 18 different countries, on the five continents: Germany (7), France (4), Spain (3), Italy (2), Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Estonia, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Lebanon, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States.

The awardees are not only Catholic, but also belong to other Christian denominations-one Anglican, one Lutheran, two Orthodox-and one is Jewish.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUNDATION

International study conferences

During 2024, the Foundation collaborated with the “De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture” at the University of Notre Dame (Indiana, USA) for the Conference: *Benedict XVI’s Legacy. Unfinished Debates on Faith, Culture, and Politics* (7-9 April).

During 2025, the Foundation intends to collaborate with the Universidad de Navarra (Pamplona) for the Conference: *Evangelization. Believing, Thinking, and Celebrating according to the Thought of J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI* (28-30 April).

“Razón abierta” Award and “Ratio et spes” Award

In collaboration with the “Francisco de Vitoria” University of Madrid, the Foundation promotes the International “Open Reason” Prize, which will reach its sixth edition in 2025. In collaboration with the Polish University “Nicholas Copernicus” in Toruń, it promotes the “Ratio et spes” Prize, which in 2025 will reach its fifth edition. Both prizes aim at fostering dialogue between theology, philosophy, ethics, and the sciences in today's world, inspired by the Ratzingerian idea of “open reason”.

Benedict XVI Chair

The Foundation collaborates with various academic and cultural institutions engaged in the thought and work of Benedict XVI, in different countries. In particular, it participates in the activities of the Benedict XVI Chair founded at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota (USA) and which will be inaugurated next October, and promotes the initiative of the English edition of the *Collected Works* (Opera Omnia) of J. Ratzinger with the support of several American universities.

Scholarships

Among the Foundation’s statutory tasks is the annual disbursement of a number of Scholarships for deserving doctoral students engaged primarily in theological, biblical, and patristic studies.

Learn more about the Ratzinger Prize and the Awardees and about the Foundation’s activities at: www.fondazioneratzinger.va.