

Epiphany Prize Nominees

Written by Robert ID822

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The nominees for the prestigious \$50,000 John Templeton Foundation Epiphany Prizes for Inspiring Movies & TV were announced this week in Hollywood, with the People's Choice favorite, Mel Gibson's THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST, leading the way.

The chief criteria for the prize is that the film or TV show help "increase man's understanding and love of God," similar to the famous Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Rounding out the nominees for the film category were AMERICA'S HEART AND SOUL, Louis Schwartzberg's collection of stories featuring the real people who make America what it is; I AM DAVID, based on the book "North to Freedom" by Anne Holm and featuring Jim Caviezel in a secondary role; LADDER 49, the fire/rescue drama starring John Travolta and Joaquin Phoenix; and THE RECKONING, featuring Paul Bettany and based on novelist Barry Unsworth's "Morality Play."

Television shows nominated for the prize included A CHRISTMAS CAROL, made into a musical starring Kelsey Grammar and brought to the small screen by NBC and Hallmark; DOC: Happy Trails, an episode of Pax-TV's weekly drama featuring Billy Ray Cyrus; LOVE's ENDURING PROMISE, a Hallmark original movie based on the novel by Janette Oke; PATRICK, the story of Saint Patrick, narrated by Liam Neeson; THE QUESTION OF GOD, a documentary debate between the perspectives of C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud; and REDEMPTION: THE STAN TOOKIE WILLIAMS STORY, a Fox made-for-TV movie starring Jamie Foxx as the reformed gang leader. Stan 'Tookie' Williams is the founder of the Crips L.A. street gang which is popular among the rap and hip-hop culture.

Each year at Oscar time, the Templeton Foundation bestows Epiphany Awards to films and television programs that are both well-crafted and help draw man closer to God. The Foundation has increased the prize from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to help encourage filmmakers and television producers to create more of this type of programming.

The Templeton Foundation has awarded the Epiphany Prize for more than eight years now, with last year's film awarded to THE GOSPEL OF JOHN while LOVE COMES SOFTLY won the television honors.

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The winners will be announced Thursday evening, Feb. 24, at the Thirteenth Annual MovieGuide Awards Dinner and Gala, held at the Beverly Hilton in Hollywood. See <http://www.epiphanyprizes.com> for more information.