

## **Scripps Oceanography Lecture to Address Darwin's Contributions to Science and Religion**

*Free public presentation by Templeton Prize winner scheduled for April 20*

April 1, 2010

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An evolutionary biologist, geneticist and philosopher of science will deliver an engaging public lecture on Darwin, natural selection and connections to science and religion at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

UC Irvine Professor Francisco Ayala will present "Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion" at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20 at the Robert Paine Scripps Forum for Science, Society and the Environment (Scripps Seaside Forum) on the Scripps Oceanography campus (8610 Kennel Way, La Jolla, CA 92037). The lecture is free and open to the public.

Ayala, the fifth recipient of the annual Richard H. and Glenda G. Rosenblatt Lectureship in Evolutionary Biology, is a distinguished member of the international science community, acclaimed for his many contributions to biology and philosophy. He has been the Donald Bren Professor of Biological Sciences at UC Irvine since 1987 and University Professor of the University of California since 2003.

On March 25, 2010, Ayala was announced as the winner of the 2010 Templeton Prize, which "honors a living person who has made exceptional contributions to affirming life's spiritual dimension" and carries an award valued at more than \$1.5 million.

During "Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion," the title of Ayala's April 20 lecture at Scripps as well as the title of his 2007 book, Ayala will discuss biological evolution and especially Darwin's discovery of natural selection, the process that accounts for the adaptive organization of organisms and their features. Ayala will discuss natural selection and religion and in particular put them in the context of the design of organisms as a natural process.

During his distinguished career Ayala has helped lead the rise and expansion of molecular evolution and the philosophy of biology. Ayala published the first comparative data analyzing genetic differentiation as a function of taxonomic level in the fruit fly *Drosophila* spp., as well as in various other animal groups. Working with geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky, Ayala confirmed theoretical predictions about the distribution and adaptive significance of genetic variability in natural populations. One of Ayala's central contributions to evolutionary biology was demonstrating that there is much more genetic variation, or polymorphism, in natural populations than previously believed.

Ayala has explored the distinctive characteristics of the scientific method and has made significant contributions to the philosophy of science. More recently Ayala has studied human parasites, including the carrier of Chagas disease, as well as the evolution of the parasite tied to malignant malaria.

Among his numerous honors and awards, Ayala has been designated Doctor Honoris Causa by universities in Argentina, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Poland, Russia and Spain. In 2002 he received the National Medal of Science, the highest scientific award in the United States, from President George W. Bush. From 1994 to 2001, Ayala was a member of the U.S. President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology.

*Note: a book signing and reception will follow the lecture. Attendees may bring their own copies of Ayala's book "Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion" for signing during the reception. **Note to broadcast and cable producers:** UC San Diego provides an on-campus satellite uplink facility for live or pre-recorded television interviews. Please phone or e-mail the media contact listed above to arrange an interview.*

**Scripps Institution of Oceanography: [scripps.ucsd.edu](http://scripps.ucsd.edu)**

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Scripps Institution of Oceanography, at UC San Diego, is one of the oldest, largest and most important centers for global science research and education in the world. The National Research Council has ranked Scripps first in faculty quality among oceanography programs nationwide. Now in its second century of discovery, the scientific scope of the institution has grown to include biological, physical, chemical, geological, geophysical and atmospheric studies of the earth as a system. Hundreds of research programs covering a wide range of scientific areas are under way today in 65 countries. The institution has a staff of about 1,300, and annual expenditures of approximately \$155 million from federal, state and private sources. Scripps operates one of the largest U.S. academic fleets with four oceanographic research ships and one research platform for worldwide exploration.

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