

# Secularist of the Year 2010

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Nominations are in for Secularist of the Year and a pretty “catholic” list it turns out to be. The winner will be announced at the special event to present the £5,000 Irwin prize in February next year. So, here – in alphabetical order – are the nominations.

**Pope Benedict xiv** – “who has surely done more than anyone to promote the cause of secularism.”

**Pat Condell** who has “for several years now risked his life by answering back to the rule of political correctness, the thoughtlessness of religion generally and the increasing threat of Islam in our society.”

**Richard Dawkins** – nominated several times – need we say more?

**Stephen Fry** – for his consistent critical approach to religion and his performance in the [IQ2 debate](#)

**Sabin Guzzanti** Italian comedian and activist who was threatened with prosecution by the Vatican for “insulting the Church” when she called the Vatican to stay out of Italian politics – and saying that the pope would be tormented in hell by “great big gays” in revenge for what he has done to them on earth.

**Jim Hatfield** for his “outstanding work over the past nine years in examining the mindset and methods of the authors of Greek scripture. By taking on this task he has successfully exposed the in-built folly of the Christian religion, and done so in terms impossible for the churches to shrug off.”

**Allan Hayes**, President of the Leicester Secular Society, ([here's Allan's latest letter to the press](#))

**Peter Hearty** for the hilarious and telling [Platitude of the Day blog](#)

**Oliver Kamm**, a leader writer and columnist on *The Times*. “Oliver is an eloquent and persuasive champion of secularism, both in his [blog](#) and in his columns for *The Times* and other media.

**John Keats** (posthumously), famed for his poetry, but also a great thinker and philosopher.

[Ludovic Kennedy](#) (posthumously)

**Sean Lock**, made what has to be the finest, simplest and most incisive comment on the whole horrible religious mess. “I don’t believe in God because I’ve thought about it.”

**The Rev'd Canon Eric MacDonald** For [this devastating letter to Rowan Williams](#)

**Azar Majedi** “is well known internationally for her constant campaigning to promote secularism and to fight against political Islam and to expose the inherent misogyny in all religions.”

**Pragna Patel** of the Southall Black Sisters. This group offers support and safety to women from

ethnic minorities who have suffered abuse. It takes its secularism very seriously and accepts no excuses or justification for violence against women based on religion.

**Penn & Teller** for their [critical attack on the Vatican](#)

**Terry Pratchett** – novelist, secularist and freethinker

**Debbie Purdy** “for pushing religious influence on individual freedom and dignity a little bit further away.”

**Samantha Stein** for establishing and directing [Camp Quest UK](#)

**Sophie in 't Veld MEP** for her work on separation of politics and religion in the European Parliament

**Sir Stephen Wall** – former chief of staff to Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor who subsequently went on to [attack the Church](#) in no uncertain terms, calling the Pope “just plain loopy”

The glittering prize-giving lunch in London is on Saturday 13 February 2010. If you would like to be there, book your ticket soon – this is always a popular and convivial event and has been sold out in previous years well in advance. The £45 ticket (£15 for accredited students) will include a welcome drink, a three course meal with coffee or tea and all the entertainment and surprises you've come to expect. Book at our [on-line shop](#) at or send a cheque to NSS, SoY, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL