

COVID-19 has put capabilities of States to the test

Felipe VI at Princess of Asturias Awards

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USPA NEWS - Smiles and tears. The Princess of Asturias Awards ceremony, which was held in Oviedo (northern Spain), revolved around the persistent pandemic that plagues the country - almost a million infected - and the 33,775 deaths that the coronavirus has caused so far. The joy of the winners, clouded by the pain for those who are gone, turned into tears that escaped the eyes of the winners. A different ceremony; no public, little press and with attendees separated by the safety distance recommended by experts.

The King and Queen of Spain, Felipe VI and Letizia, accompanied by their daughters, the Princess of Asturias and the Infanta Sofía, presided over this Friday, October 16, the ceremony for the 2020 Princess of Asturias Awards, held at the Reconquista Hotel in Oviedo with the presence of the Queen Emerita Sofía. An act in which he stated that "democratic Spain was what gave meaning to the reason for being of our Foundation. Since its birth - 40 years ago now in this Covadonga room where we are - our Foundation has worked tirelessly, always cultivating its deep roots in knowledge, thought, in love of science and culture, in solidarity; and it has grown thanks to the permanent sap that, like our society, has received from our Constitution: a historical commitment that guarantees day by day our democratic coexistence, the dignity of the human being, and their rights and duties as a citizen in freedom. In short, a permanent commitment to our constitutional principles and values."

In an edition of these awards so marked by the pandemic, Felipe VI stated that "during this crisis the vast majority of the Spanish people are showing unequivocal proof of resistance and integrity. Your example cannot be a sterile effort or be forgotten. And that example demands that all the Institutions be always - and now more than ever - at the side and at the service of the citizens; it requires us to conduct ourselves with a sense of duty, with the greatest responsibility, and with the utmost integrity and rectitude, so that the national interest prevails and the general interests of the Spanish are our north and guide."

"Perhaps this is a moment when, most necessary, we need courage and hope. This ceremony, the circumstances in which it is held, the experience of recent months, are proof that nothing has been easy. The proof that we have been and continue to be subjected - the whole of humanity - to a very hard pressure and tension," said the King, who in his speech pointed out that "this health crisis has put the capacities of States to the test; it has shown its weaknesses and shortcomings as well as its strengths; and also the transcendence of the high values that should govern democratic life; the importance that, for all, without any distinction, solidarity, union, in short, affection. The value of shaking hands, a hug, a caress... An affection that we have all cultivated over time and that binds us and crosses us, giving us life."

Before the King spoke the Princess of Asturias, Leonor de Borbón (14), who explained that "I follow very closely, like many children and young people my age, what happens in our country. And after not going to school for months, going back to class showed us that we have to adapt to these new circumstances, always hoping that everything will improve. But if there is something that my sister Sofía and I have learned, it is the sense of responsibility. Our parents have always taught us this. And I think the young people of my generation are also aware of this. A sense of responsibility that happens by never forgetting the people around us, who love us and who we love," said the Princess, who added that "we have also verified the importance of solidarity thanks to people who, like the winners, are an example of how to cope with difficulties. With your extraordinary work and talent, you set the path for us."

In this edition, the award in the Concordia modality went to Spanish health workers on the front line against COVID-19; American composers Ennio Morricone and John Williams the Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts; the Guadalajara International Book Fair and Hay Festival of Literature & Arts, the Princess of Asturias Award for Communication and Humanities; Dani Rodrik, the Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences; Carlos Sainz Cenamor, the Princess of Asturias Award for Sports; Canadian writer Anne Carson, the Princess of Asturias Award for Literature; Yves Meyer, Ingrid Daubechies, Terence Tao and Emmanuel Candès, the Princess of Asturias Award for Technical and Scientific Research; and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Princess of Asturias Award for International Cooperation.

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