



PRIX  
**FRANÇOIS GUIZOT**  
INSTITUT DE FRANCE



François Guizot-Institut de France 2020 prize

**Award ceremony**

Monday 5 October 2020, 6:30 PM, Grande Salle des Séances

## Speech of Xavier Darcos

### Chancellor of the Institute

Mr. President of the Association François Guizot,  
Mr. Honorary Chancellor,  
Mr. Permanent Secretary,  
Mr. President of the Jury,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

Even though there are 30 of us and we are masked because of the health situation, I am very happy to welcome you to this new ceremony for the Prix François Guizot-Institut de France. This is one of the first events to gather an audience in this Grand Salle des Séances since its renovation, this room that Guizot himself frequented and in which his shadow looms large. Once again, I thank the Association François Guizot for its loyalty. François Guizot was one of the most complete public figures of the 19th century. A politician as much admired as he was criticized, he was also a first-rate academic, elected three times to the Institut de France. He was here the restorer and ex-officio member of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques in 1832, elected in 1833 to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres and finally in 1836 to the Académie Française. How then can we not be delighted to see his name resounding in these walls, as if in echo to the numerous reflections that he led here?

No doubt he would not have been insensitive to the research rewarded this evening, that you, Madam, have gathered in this impressive work entitled "L'Église dans l'État" published by Gallimard.

The religious question animated François Guizot all his life. From his Huguenot mother from the Cévennes to his friendship with the liberal Catholic Montalembert, Guizot was defined by his contemporaries as "the most Catholic of Protestants and the most Protestant of Catholics".

As a statesman, he understood that the dialogue between political authorities and religious authorities was one of the foundations of social peace. In 1833, did he not himself associate the Catholic clergy and the principal teaching congregations with his reflections on his bill on primary education?

It is not for me to present the prize-winning work here, leaving that pleasure to my colleague Jean-Claude Casanova, whom I thank once again for having chaired the jury. The questions that you deal with in this book, Madam, that of Jansenism, of the social usefulness of religion, of the great questions linked to the place of religion that agitated 18<sup>th</sup> century France, give us a light on this timeless question of the struggle between politics and religion. Centuries pass and the debate remains. Even very recently, the President of the Republic again took up this question.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Stéphane Coste, President of the Association François Guizot, I would like to thank in particular his mother, Mrs. Catherine Coste, who is at the origin of this happy partnership between the Association François Guizot and the Institut de France, as well as all the members of the jury, without whose enlightened advice this ceremony would not take place.

I would like to congratulate the laureate and thank each of you for coming to this ceremony, braving the circumstances.