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### Fact Sheet – Jean Vanier (Unabridged)

**September 10, 1928:** Jean Vanier born in Geneva, Switzerland, the fourth of five children of Canadian parents, Major-General Georges Vanier (1881-1967) and Madame Pauline Archer Vanier (1898-1991).

In 1914 at the advent of World War I, his father, a Montreal lawyer and later diplomat, became a founding member of the francophone Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> regiment, the famous “Van Doos.” He went on to become a distinguished and highly decorated soldier, and suffered the loss of a leg. Georges Vanier would later serve as First Secretary in the Canadian High Commission in London and then as Canadian Ambassador to France in 1938. In 1959 he was appointed 19<sup>th</sup> Governor General of Canada, the first French Canadian in that post, where he served until his death.

Jean’s mother, a noted humanitarian in her own right, who received an appointment as one of the first Companions of the Order of Canada, was the first non-political woman appointed to the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada. After the death of her husband, she spent the last two decades of her life living in a small house in Trosly-Breuil, beloved “grandmother” of the L’Arche community there.

Jean’s only sister, Thérèse, a captain in the Canadian Women’s Army Corps who sailed in the Battle of the Atlantic in World War II, later became a hematologist and the first woman consultant in her field at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London. There she developed a lifelong friendship with 1981 Templeton Prize Laureate Dame Cicely Saunders, and later joined Saunders’ in her pioneering work in palliative care. In 1974, Thérèse founded the first community of L’Arche in England, Little Ewell. She was a tireless advocate of unity across Christian faiths. Thérèse died in 2014.

Jean’s older brother Georges was a Trappist monk in Canada for almost seven decades. He was known as Fr. Benedict, and also died in 2014. Jean’s older brother Bernard was a painter who died in 2010 in Paris. Michel is still alive.

**1930s:** While Jean’s father, a longtime advocate and promoter of bilingualism in Canada, served in various diplomatic posts in Europe, Jean receives a broad education in English and French, primarily in England and France but also in Canada. While in Europe his father witnessed the expanding rise of Nazism across Europe. In an effort to help victims of Hitler, he urged the Canadian government to loosen immigration laws, but was largely rebuffed. His parents used their diplomatic cover to secure Canadian passports and safe passage for fleeing Jews.

**1940:** The Vanier family, stationed in France, flee in advance of the Nazi occupation and crossed the English Channel to the relative safety of London, the last Canadian diplomats to escape. After surviving months of German bombing during the Blitz, the family returns to Canada, crossing the dangerous waters of the North Atlantic. Georges Vanier returned to London in 1943 as the Canadian representative to the French government in exile and to other occupied European governments.

**1942:** At age 13, Vanier informs his parents that he wants to leave Canada to join the Royal Naval in Great Britain. Reluctant and fearful for her son’s safety and well-being, his mother balked at his request. His father, ever the diplomat, asked his son to prove his seriousness by making an appointment with him. At the end of their talk, his father gave his answer: “I don’t think it’s a good idea, but I *trust* you.” His father explained to his

mother, "If we clip his wings now he will never fly." Vanier now insists that his father's trust in him touched him deeply and gave him confidence in his desires and inner voice for the rest of his life.

Enters Royal Navy, Dartmouth Naval College.

**1945:** Following the liberation of Paris, Georges Vanier returned to France as Canadian Ambassador. His mother worked with the Red Cross there, assisting concentration camp survivors. Jean travels from England to witness firsthand the arrival of concentration camp survivors in Paris, an experience which informs his future journey into the world of wounded humanity. To this day he often quotes the writing of the young Dutch Jew Etty Hillesum, who kept diaries that detailed a confidence in God's presence during her imprisonment in concentration camps prior to her death at Auschwitz in 1943.

**1945-50:** Naval service on several warships. His experiences range from harrowing – at one point he falls into the ocean, loses consciousness and nearly drowns – to mundane, including long stretches serving watch on the ship's bridge. During those extended periods of solitude he begins to pray more and slowly comes to the realization that perhaps his future would move beyond the life of a naval officer.

**1947:** As a midshipman in the British Royal Navy, accompanies the British royal family on their tour of South Africa aboard the HMS Vanguard.

**1949:** Transfers to the Royal Canadian Navy and appointed to the carrier HMCS Magnificent.

**1950:** Studies the writings of Thomas Merton, an American Trappist monk, pacifist and social activist, and meets and befriends Daniel Berrigan, the American priest and counterculture activist later noted for his opposition to the Vietnam War. When docked in New York he visits the Harlem outpost of Friendship House, the Catholic missionary movement founded in the 1930s dedicated to social justice, particularly civil rights.

Following a 30-day Ignatian retreat, a period of silence, reflection and self-examination, Jean resigns his naval commission. He feels a strong call to follow Jesus and to live in the spirit of the Beatitudes, close to the poor and those at the margins.

Joins "L'Eau Vive" ("Living Water"), a center in Paris for training of lay people in spirituality and theology. This center, with an international reach, was directed by Father Thomas Philippe, a Dominican, who will become Vanier's spiritual father.

**1956:** Leaves L'Eau Vive to devote himself to prayer and the writing of his thesis, while living a life of poverty and solitude. He stays for a while at the Trappist monastery of Bellefontaine, and then for two years near the Marian shrine at Fatima.

**1961:** A serious case of hepatitis forces him to convalesce in Switzerland, after which he returns to Paris to finish his thesis.

**1962:** Receives his doctorate from the Institut Catholique in Paris. His widely praised dissertation is titled "Le Bonheur: Principe et fin de la morale aristotélicienne" (Happiness as Principle and End of Aristotelian Ethics), a bold challenge to the founder of modern ethics and Aristotle's widely-accepted concepts in such realms as bravery and virtue.

**1963:** Invited by Father Thomas Philippe to Trosly-Breuil, a village north of Paris, where he was serving as the chaplain at a small institution for people with intellectual disabilities. While there, Vanier visits psychiatric hospitals and other institutions where many people with disabilities were living. He becomes acutely aware of the plight of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities institutionalized in France, and concludes that they are among the most oppressed people in the world.

He comes to realize that a resolution to this oppression lay beyond common notions of charity, i.e. a humanitarian who aids someone less fortunate, and instead embraces an approach to end the suffering caused by the abandonment, loneliness and isolation lived by those with intellectual disabilities. His understanding of their need is crystallized when an institutionalized man asked him simply, "Will you be my friend?"

**1964:** Lectures briefly in philosophy at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto.

Decides to leave academia to follow his inner voice and spiritual calling. Invites two of the men from the institution near Paris, Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux, to live with him in a small house in Trosly-Breuil. He names the house L'Arche (French for "ark and "arch") to symbolize both Noah's Ark, a "boat" to which he could invite people in pain, and an "arch" or bridge connecting heaven and earth.

His initial urge to "do something for" becomes a commitment to "being with" and "friend to" Raphael and Philippe. Over time, with that shift in heart and consciousness, a core belief of L'Arche emerged: relationships lived in mutually supportive community lead to transformation of hearts. The strong need the weak, just as much as the weak need the strong. Vanier comes to understand that the desire to love and to be loved is the common longing of all people.

**1965:** Accepts Directorship of Le Val Fleuri, in Trosly, a small institution for 32 men with intellectual disabilities, where the men were strictly supervised. His first act as director is to throw away the keys. He still eats his meals there daily.

**Mid-1960s:** Returns to Canada twice a year where he lectures, gives retreats and talks about his new life, often to university students, some of whom come to Trosly to live and work at L'Arche. Thus began an influx of young people from around the world who came to share their lives with those living with intellectual disabilities, and were transformed. The L'Arche community grows fast and soon welcomes new people with intellectual disabilities.

**1967:** Speaks at Canada's National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa as the Six Day War rages in Israel, and notes that the world needs to find the vision and courage to prove it is not "fundamentally evil."

**1968:** Leads a retreat at Marylake in King City, Ontario, unusually bringing together lay people, clergy and people with disabilities. Out of this retreat, "Faith and Sharing" is born, communities created to meet and pray together each month. Since then, hundreds of Faith and Sharing retreats occur annually across North America.

**1969:** Steve and Ann Newroth, Canadian students who had lived at L'Arche in Trosly, return home and start Daybreak, the first L'Arche community in North America, in Richmond Hill, Ontario, north of Toronto.

Lectures on poverty to the major superiors of religious orders, Toronto.

Travels to India to assist in the efforts of two former Trosly L'Arche residents – Mira Chmelir, a Canadian of Indian descent, and Gabrielle Einsle, a German who had been living in Canada, to establish the first L'Arche in India. Moved by the teachings of Gandhi, who he felt as living and struggling close to the spirit of the Beatitudes, the visit allows him to draw a fuller realization of the realities that shaped Gandhi's worldview. This and subsequent visits underline for him the difficulties of interfaith issues and the struggles of ecumenism, as well as introducing him to Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengali poet he often quotes, who writes of the transcendent in our midst.

**1970:** Gabrielle Einsle founds Asha Niketan ("Home of Hope") in Bangalore, the first L'Arche in India. Today there are five L'Arche communities in India.

**1970s and beyond:** Additional L'Arche communities are organically founded in the UK, France, Denmark, Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, Ukraine, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Syria, Egypt, Argentina and Bangladesh. Although grounded in the Catholic tradition, L'Arche communities rapidly become ecumenical or inter-religious, finding their point of unity in a common set of human values.

**1971:** During the Easter holiday, Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu, the founder of OCH (Office Chrétien des Personnes Handicapées), and joined by his sister Thérèse,, organize 12,000 people including 4,000 with disabilities to make the journey to Lourdes, the traditional pilgrimage site of healing. Encouraged by the organizers to continue the fellowship afterwards, these groups become the foundation of "Faith and Light," a spiritual and mutual support movement. On a regular basis small groups of 15 to 40 people (children, teenagers or adults with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends) meet regularly together to pray, celebrate and share their hopes and difficulties. Multiple pilgrimages take place all over the world every two

years and every ten years there is a major pilgrimage to Lourdes or Rome. (There are now more than 1,500 [Faith and Light](#) groups in 82 countries.)

Receives the Kennedy Foundation Award, with co-recipient Mother Teresa (the first recipient of the Templeton Prize in 1973). Over the years, Vanier visits Mother Teresa in Calcutta and sees firsthand its poverty, including those refugees who had fled Bangladesh's savage civil war with Pakistan.

Talks on *Becoming Prophets of Peace* to the Empire Club of Canada.

"The Farm" opens, center of spiritual life in Trosly.

In advance and after the pilgrimage to Lourdes, Vanier travels extensively throughout the world to establish and support L'Arche and Faith and Light communities, and to give talks, lectures, and retreats with a special interest in speaking with young people, always seeking out those at the margins of society. He also frequently speaks and gives retreats in prisons, including one during which he lives in a prison cell. His message to prisoners focuses on the love and tenderness hidden in their hearts, capable of bringing life to others.

**1972:** First L'Arche community in the United States founded in Erie, Pennsylvania. L'Arche Belgium founded in Brussels.

Madame Vanier, Jean's mother, moves to the L'Arche community in Trosly, where she lives as beloved community grandmother until her death there in 1991.

Recognizing the need for mutual support and structures to maintain the unity of L'Arche, forms an International Council with the leaders of existing L'Arche communities, which evolves over the years into the [International Federation of L'Arche Communities](#) and later includes an international Board of Directors.

**1974:** Thérèse Vanier founds the first L'Arche community in England, near Canterbury, Kent. Established in a former vicarage, it symbolized a profound gesture of support for the ecumenism of L'Arche, for which Therese faithfully strove all her life.

Mother Teresa visits Trosly.

Leads a US conference with Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, international voice of "normalization."

An international L'Arche pilgrimage to Canterbury is attended by many people with disabilities, a first for the cathedral.

Foundation of L'Arche in the Ivory Coast (Bouake).

**1975:** Talks on *The New Society of Brotherhood, Justice & Peace*, at the Vanier Institute of the Family, Ottawa.

At the third International Federation Meeting in Canada, Vanier steps down as International Coordinator. An International Council is formed consisting of a new International Coordinator, coordinators of newly formed regions, and Vanier.

Foundation of L'Arche in Haiti (Port au Prince).

**1976:** Returns from India unwell. He suffers a debilitating tropical infection that leaves him weak and dependent on the assistance of others during a long recovery period, giving him critical insights into the relationship between the assistant and the assisted. This encourages him to gradually hand over responsibility for the operations of L'Arche communities to others.

**1977:** Foundation of L'Arche in Honduras (Tegucigalpa).

**1978:** Foundation of La Forestiere in Trosly, a home for those with severe disabilities who reveal to Vanier the presence of God hidden in the hearts of the most vulnerable and fragile.

Foundation of L'Arche Australia (Canberra), L'Arche Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou) and L'Arche Ireland (Kilkenny).

**1979:** First annual 10-week "renewal" for long-term assistants, in England. The most recent was in 2000.

**1981:** Steps down from day-to-day operations of L'Arche Trosly.

Spends a year living in La Forestiere which forces him to confront feelings of anger and pain, not as emotions to be defeated but as significant parts of his being. The experience causes him to listen more deeply to those feelings and recognize them as pathways to a closer relationship to God and, in turn, others.

A ten-day trip to Lebanon includes talks at Saida University and elsewhere, as many as five per day, including one to 500 people at a psychiatric hospital titled "*The Wounded Image of the Mentally Sick*." Also participates in a television program bringing together Muslims and Christians.

A visit to Honduras coincides with the assassination of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero in San Salvador. Gives the homily at the official mass for Romero in the cathedral of Choluteca.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with 40 long-term l'Arche members. This trip has often been repeated after Easter, with Vanier giving talks about the life of Jesus at each stop.

Foundation of L'Arche Poland (Krakow), the first in a communist country, and L'Arche Spain (Tordera).

**1982:** Development of Faith and Light, particularly in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

**1983:** Delivers the major address to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, where 230 different churches are represented.

Foundation of L'Arche Italy (Rome) and L'Arche Switzerland (Geneva).

**1986:** Visits the Philippines during the People Power Revolution, where he gives a retreat near Manila, visits Faith and Light communities, and the prison at Muntinlupa.

Priest and author Henry Nouwen joins L'Arche Daybreak in Canada, where he lives until his death a decade later, and about which he wrote in his book, *Adam: God's Beloved*.

**1987:** At the invitation of Pope John Paul II, participates in the Synod of the Laity in Rome. Visits Japan and South Korea.

Foundation of L'Arche Brazil (Sao Paolo) and L'Arche Germany (Tecklenburg).

**1988:** Delivers the inaugural Harold M. Wit Lectures at Harvard Divinity School on "Living a Spiritual Life in a Contemporary Age," where he asks his listeners to make a choice between a life of competing with others to "win" or "to be in solidarity with others." The lectures are published as *From Brokenness to Community*.

Foundation of L'Arche Philippines (Cainta).

**1989:** Invited by the Moscow Institute of Philosophy, a section of the Academy of Sciences, to give talks in Russia and to participate in a conference on "The Ethics of Nonviolence." Meets with people concerned with care of the disabled and with Christians from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Baptist churches. This trip opens doors for subsequent Russian visits, and others to Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, to discover their needs and speak on the place of people with disabilities within the plan of God. Faith and Light communities are developed in all these countries.

**1990:** Foundation of L'Arche Uganda (Kampala).

**1991:** 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Faith and Light is marked by a pilgrimage to Lourdes attended by 13,500 people from five continents. "Towards Unity" is a celebration of the vision of new life and communion born of a relationship with the weak.

Death of Madame Vanier at Trosly.

Foundation of L'Arche Slovenia (Medvode).

**1992:** Leads retreat at the Orthodox Institute of Theology in Bucharest, attended by members of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches. The Orthodox Patriarch gave his authority for the Eucharist to be celebrated on alternate days in a local Orthodox church, the first time such authority had been given.

Foundation of L'Arche Austria (Vals), L'Arche Hungary (Budapest) and L'Arche Japan (Shizuoka).

**1993:** Leads ecumenical retreat in the Ukraine, attended by members of the Greek-Catholic, Latin, Independent Orthodox, Orthodox, Baptist and Pentecostal churches.

Death of Father Thomas Philippe.

**1994:** Foundation of L'Arche Netherlands (Gouda).

**1995:** Attends ecumenical "Festival for Peace" in Northern Ireland, and includes the [Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet](#), wherein people wash each other's feet as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper, which serves as a helpful gesture of interdenominational communion.

Foundation of L'Arche Syria (Damascus).

**1997:** Invited to meet with Pope Shenouda III, head of the Coptic Orthodox Church (with the largest membership of any church in the Middle East), and speaks to a large audience at the Orthodox Centre of Theology in Cairo.

Receives the Pope Paul VI International Prize from Pope John Paul II who says of Vanier: "He is a great spokesman for the culture of solidarity and 'the civilization of love,' both in the fields of thought and action, in his commitment to encouraging the integral development of every man and the whole man."

L'Arche USA established to support L'Arche communities in the U.S.

Foundation of L'Arche Zimbabwe (Harare).

**1998:** Animates a day on spirituality for the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, representing 230 different Christian churches, which includes the participation of all present in the Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet.

Joins three other founders of lay communities – Chiara Lubich (1977 Templeton Prize Laureate), Kiko Arguello, & Fr. Luigi Giussani – at the invitation of Pope John Paul II to speak to 350,000 people at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome, about the vision and spirituality of L'Arche and Faith and Light.

At the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, leads a retreat at the Lambeth Conference for 800 bishops of the Anglican Communion (and their spouses) and speaks on "The Call to Holiness." Vanier again includes the "Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet" in his presentation, and is honored and humbled to wash the feet of the Archbishop. In his book, *Our Life Together*, Vanier later writes that "These events are a sign to me that our churches are discovering...that people with disabilities have a place at the heart of Christian community, and a sign that we are beginning to grasp the truth of Paul's words: 'God has chosen the foolish and the weak in order to confound the wise and the strong'.... I give thanks....for....calling us all to work for unity between Christians."

Delivers the Massey Lectures in Convocation Hall, Toronto, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on "Becoming Human," which are later published in a best-selling book, *Becoming Human*.

Foundation of L'Arche New Zealand (Parapraumu).

**2000:** Renovation and work towards incorporation of The Farm in Trosly. As well as a place of prayers, it becomes a center of welcome, retreat, and training in the values and spirituality of L'Arche.

**2001:** 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Faith and Light celebrated by 16,500 pilgrims to Lourdes, from 73 countries including 6,000 people living with disabilities.

**2002:** Launch of the Identity and Mission process throughout L'Arche communities.

**2003:** Visits South Africa and Zimbabwe where he speaks at, among other places, a prison in Zimbabwe.

Death of Raphael Simi, co-founder of l'Arche.

With Giles le Cardinal, founds "Intercordia" in France and in Canada, a learning program that partners with universities to foster respect for diversity and solidarity among students of varying abilities, cultures, and religions by encouraging college students to live an inter-cultural experience among poor and marginalized people in developing countries.

Foundation of L'Arche Argentina (Buenos Aires), L'Arche Bangladesh (Mymensingh) and L'Arche Egypt (El Minia).

Retires from the L'Arche International Board at age 75. Becomes a French citizen, giving him dual citizenship in France and Canada.

**2004:** Invited by Pope John Paul II to attend a small international symposium on the dignity and rights of people living with intellectual disabilities and to reflect on their place. There the Pope states: "...that in revealing the fundamental frailty of the human condition, the disabled person becomes an expression of the tragedy of suffering...and that disabled people are humanity's privileged witnesses. They can teach everyone about the love that saves us; they can become heralds of a new world, no longer dominated by force, violence and aggression, but by love, solidarity and acceptance."

Invited to participate in the Pope's pilgrimage to Lourdes, and to deliver short meditations in front of the Pope. Later writes of the weakness of the Pope, afflicted with Parkinson's disease, as a living symbol of the presence of God in weakness, poverty and vulnerability, and as a call to tenderness.

Attends International Council of Faith and Light in Syria where he gives two public talks in Damascus and Aleppo, each to about 700 people, mostly Muslims. After the talk in Aleppo, the Mufti speaks of people with disabilities being a path to God.

Leads an ecumenical retreat in Northern Ireland.

Foundation of L'Arche South Korea (Seoul).

A CBC poll ranks him as number 12 on the list of greatest Canadians.

**2005:** Invited to Jordan by the British organization Questscope to meet with Muslim youth in difficulty, and with their teachers and psychologists to help develop an approach to the needs of troubled youth.

Attends inter-religious meeting in Lyon organized by the community of Sant'Egidio, a community of prayer and service to those at the margins, where he participates in a round table discussion with a Muslim philosopher and a Jewish Rabbi on "an anthropology for the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Attends International Federation of L'Arche meeting in Assisi, Italy, where the L'Arche International Identity & Mission statement is accepted. While there, he speaks to the assembly about St Francis: "Francis was radiant, radiant with joy. Joy attracts and awakens hearts. He shows us all a way of humility and love. His desire to live simply and poorly, to share his life with the poor, instead of becoming rich and powerful, is a call for us all in l'Arche. In the midst of war and conflict, he was a man of peace. He revealed a new way of living."

**2006:** Participates in a Paris conference on peace initiatives, including a round table discussion with Adolfo Perez Esquivel and Hildegard Goss-Mayr.

Symposium organized in Aberdeen by Dr. John Swinton on "L'Arche: A Place of Gentleness."

Leads retreat in Krakow and visits Auschwitz, 24 years after his first visit to Poland. Leads first annual retreat for Paris street people and their accompaniers in Trosly. Another trip to India where he leads a retreat and visits with communities of L'Arche and Faith and Light.

**2007:** Foundation of L'Arche Ukraine (Lviv).

**2008:** Speaks at Duke University Divinity School, to mark the publication of *Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness*, co-authored with Prof. Stanley Hauerwas.

At age 80, visits the Community of Saint Martins, Kenya, a community living the spirit of the Beatitudes, immediately after the worst of the post Kenyan election violence and civil strife in the Great Rift Valley. There gives a retreat, later transcribed into a book. This visit paved the way for the founding of L'Arche Kenya at the heart of the [Community of Saint Martins](#).

In Northern Ireland, where unity was still a challenge, Vanier leads clerics from all faiths on a day of retreat at the Dromantine Conference, beginning with the Washing of the Feet and reminding participants that "The change that really matters is a change of heart. Such change is made possible through meeting in true communion, and is the gift of the weak and the vulnerable to humanity."

At the International Federation of L'Arche meeting in Kolkata, India, he speaks to the assembly about Gandhi's nonviolence: "...steadfast in his conviction that lasting justice, peace and unity could only come through nonviolence....and in his belief in the rights of every person, in his desire to love each one, even the enemy, in his belief in God and prayer, in his desire to be true and to seek truth in all things, in his desire to live humbly amongst those who are humiliated... We in L'Arche have a lot to learn from this holy man."

At age 82, announces that he will no longer undertake long haul journeys. Many people continue to visit Trosly for retreats, group formation session for L'Arche assistants, film and video creation, book projects and personal encounters. He continues to travel in Europe and to the Middle East.

Foundation of L'Arche Lithuania (Vilnius) and L'Arche Palestine (Bethlehem).

**2009:** In Israel and Palestine, narrates 14 films on the Gospel of St. John from the L'Arche perspective.

Foundation of L'Arche Croatia (Zagreb) and L'Arche Kenya (Nyahururu).

**2010:** Convenes a meeting of Christians and Muslims in Trosly. Asteroid 8604 is named "Vanier" in his honor.

**2012:** At the International Federation meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, assembly members discuss Martin Luther King and his nonviolent struggle for equal rights. Tim Shriver, Chairman and CEO of the Special Olympics, gives the opening address, saying: "L'Arche is like a diamond. I have been to many places all over the world. No one has what you have: the depth of forgiveness of yourselves, the depth of compassion for one another, the depth of simplicity, the depth of openness and love and welcome that exists in L'Arche."

**2014:** 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of L'Arche. Meets with Pope Francis in Rome to mark the anniversary, joined by people with disabilities and directors of L'Arche communities from around the world. In an article published prior to the visit, the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* notes similarities between the teachings of Vanier and the Pope, who has said that modern society treats anyone who is poor, weak or different as "trash or leftovers", and calls people to enter into a relationship with them.

**2015:** Speaks at the House of Lords, London on "Why do the Strong Need the Weak?"

Currently there are 147 L'Arche communities in 35 countries on five continents, and more than 1,500 Faith and Light communities in 82 countries.

Awarded the 2015 Templeton Prize.

## **Honours and Awards**

- Joseph Kennedy Foundation Award, with Mother Teresa, Washington D.C., United States, 1971
- Officer of the Order of Canada, Canada, 1972
- Prize of the Institut de la Vie, France, 1973
- Companion of the Order of Canada, 1989
- The Maclean's Honor Roll, Canada, 1990
- Royal Bank of Canada Prize, 1991
- Grand Officier de l'Ordre national du Québec, Canada, 1992
- Humanitarian Award, University of Notre Dame, United States, 1993
- Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, France, 1994
- Paul VI International Prize, given by Pope John Paul II, Italy, 1997
- Rabbi Gunther Plaut Humanitarian Award, Canada, 2001
- Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, France, 2002
- Community of Christ International Peace Award, United States, 2003
- Prix Gadium et Spes, de L'Ordre des Chevaliers de Colomb, Canada, 2005
- Medal of the Order Ecce Homo, Tomaszów, Poland, 2005
- Prize from the Polish Senate, Poland, 2006
- Blessed are the Peacemakers Award, Chicago Catholic Theological Union, United States, 2006
- Beacon Fellowship Prize, UK, 2006
- Nation Builder Award, Globe & Mail, Canada, 2008
- Pacem in Terris award, United States, 2013
- International Human Development and Solidarity Award, University of Notre Dame, U.S., 2014
- Templeton Prize, 2015

## **Conferences and talks**

- Major Superiors of Religious Orders, Toronto, Canada, 1969
- Empire Club of Canada, Toronto, Canada, 1971
- Conference with Mother Teresa, Massey Hall, Toronto, Canada, 1971
- Colloque sur l'enfance inadaptée, Alger, Algeria, 1973
- Colloque "Réinsertion sociale-La croisée des chemins", University of Ottawa, Canada, 1974
- General meeting of the International Conference on Social Welfare, Nairobi, Kenya, 1974
- Conference "In weakness seeds of hope", Washington DC, United States, 1977
- University of Saida, Lebanon, 1980
- General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1983
- Invitation of Pope Shenouda III of the Orthodox Coptic Church, Egypt, 1983
- Harvard University, United States, 1988
- Moscow Institute of Philosophy, Russia, 1989
- Institute of Orthodox Theology, Bucharest, Romania, 1992
- Harvard University, "From Brokenness to Community", Boston, United States, 1992
- World Congress of Ecclesiastical Movements, "The Spirituality of L'Arche", Rome, Italy, 1998
- Lambeth Conference, "The call to holiness", talk to 800 Anglican Bishops, Canterbury, U.K., 1998
- Massey Lectures, Radio Canada, "Becoming Human", 1998
- World Youth Day address, Toronto, Canada, 2002
- Les Etats Généraux du Handicap, comité Kristeva, Paris, France, May 2005
- World Youth Day address, Cologne, Germany, 2005
- Conference with Dr. Balfour Mount, "Voyage towards a personal and social transformation", Ottawa, Canada, 2006
- Conference at Lent with Axel Khan, "To be different", Notre-Dame de Paris, France, March 2006
- La Cité de la réussite, Round Table with Boris Cyrulnick, La Sorbonne, Paris, October 2006
- Templeton Foundation, Humble Approach Initiative Symposium, Trosly, France, 2007
- 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, Quebec City, Canada, 2008
- La Cité de la Réussite, Round Table with Patrick Poivre d'Arvor, Marcel Rufo, Senate, April 2008

- Colloque Fragilités interdite, “Advocating for the Right to be Vulnerable”, University of the Social Sciences, Toulouse, France, 2009
- Blackfriars Priory School, “The Long Road to Freedom “, Oxford, U.K., January 2011
- Unesco, “The Thirst for Peace”, Paris, France, 2011
- Colloque Fragilités interdites, “All Vulnerable, All Human!”, Lyon, France, 2011
- Grandes conférences catholiques, “What Hope for Peace ?”, Brussels, Belgique, 2013
- “Fragility, a liability or a strength ?”, Strasbourg, France, 2013
- Colloque Fragilités interdites, “Fragile! and yet so much strength!”, Nantes, France, 2013
- UNESCO, “Listening to my inner voice”, Paris, France, 2014
- UNESCO, “To Live Together”, Paris, France, 2015
- House of Lords, “Why so the strong need the weak?”, London, UK, 2015

### **Books by Jean Vanier**

- *The Gospel of John, the Gospel of Relationship*, Franciscan Media, 2015
- *Signs: Seven Words of Hope*, Paulist Press, 2014 (In the UK as *Signs of the Times: Seven Paths of Hope for a Troubled World*, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2013)
- *Tears of Silence*, House of Anansi Press, 2014 (original edition 1974)
- *Mental Health: The Inclusive Church Resource*, with John Swinton, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2014
- *Befriending the Stranger*, Paulist Press, 2014 (William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005; Paulist Press, 2010)
- *I Meet Jesus: He Tells Me “I Love You”*, Paulist Press, 2014 (Original edition 1981)
- *Happiness: A Guide for a Good Life, Aristotle for a New Century*. Arcade Publishing, 2012. (In Canada as *Made for Happiness: Discovering the Meaning of Life with Aristotle*. House of Anansi Press, 2001, 2005)
- *An Ark for the Poor: The Story of L’Arche*, Novalis, 2012 (Crossroad Publishing Co., 1995)
- *The Heart of L’Arche: A Spirituality for Everyday*, Novalis, 2012 (Geoffrey Chapman, 1995)
- *Becoming Friends*, St Paul Communications, 2010
- *Our Life Together: A Memoir in Letters*, HarperCollins, 2009
- *Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Witness of Weakness*, With Stanley Hauerwas, InterVarsity Press, 2008
- *Becoming Human*, Paulist Press, 2008 (Original edition 1998)
- *Community and Growth*, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007 (Paulist Press, 1989)
- *Encountering ‘the Other’*, Paulist Press, 2006
- *Seeing Beyond Depression*, Paulist Press, 2005
- *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John*, Paulist Press, 2004
- *Finding Peace*, House of Anansi Press, 2003 (Continuum Publishing Group, 2006)
- *Man and Woman, God Made Them*, Paulist Press, 2000 (Original edition Novalis, 1984)
- *Our Journey Home: Rediscovering a Common Humanity Beyond our Difference*, Orbis Books, 1997
- *The Scandal of Service, Jesus washes our feet*, Novalis, 1996
- *The door of Hope*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1995
- *Jesus, the Gift of Love*, Crossroad, 1994
- *From Brokenness to Community*, Paulist Press, 1992
- *Images of Love, Words of Hope*, Robert Pope Foundation, 1991 (Paulist Press, 1988)
- *Treasures of the Heart*, Meakin, 1989
- *The Broken Body*, Darton, Longman & Todd, Paulist Press, 1988
- *I Walk With Jesus*, Paulist Press, 1987
- *Eruption to Hope*, Paulist Press, 1983 (Griffin House, 1971)
- *Followers of Jesus*, Paulist Press, 1976
- *Be Not Afraid*, Paulist Press, 1975
- *In Weakness Strength: The Spiritual Sources of Georges P. Vanier, 19th Governor-General of Canada*, Griffin House, 1969

## **Books Inspired by Jean Vanier's Work**

- *Adam, God's Beloved*. By Henri Nouwen, Orbis Books, 2012
- *The Boy in the Moon*. By Ian Brown, Macmillan, 2011
- *The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L'Arche Communities from Theology and the Sciences*. Edited by Hans S. Reinders, Eerdmans Press, 2010
- *Theology, Disability, and Spiritual Transformation: Learning from the Communities of L'Arche*. By Michael Hryniuk, Cambria Press, 2010
- *Living L'Arche: Stories of Compassion, Love and Disability*. By Kevin Scott Reimer, Liturgical Press, 2009
- *Walking on a Rolling Deck: Life on the Ark*. By Kathleen Berken, Liturgical Press, 2008
- *Jean Vanier: Essential Writings*. Edited By Carolyn Whitney-Brown, Orbis Books, 2008
- *Enough Room for Joy: The Early Days of L'Arche*. By B. Clarke, SJ. Novalis Publishing, 2006 (Paulist Press, 1974)
- *The Miracle, the Message, the Story: Jean Vanier and L'Arche*. By Kathryn Spink, Paulist Press, 2006 (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005)
- *My Life Together: L'Arche Communities and the Challenge of Unity*. By Hilary Wilson, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004
- *L'Arche Communities: New Movements and Communities in the Life of the Church*. By Helen Reid Thomas. Catholic Truth Society, 2002.
- *Encounter with Mystery: Reflections on L'Arche and Living with Disability*. Edited By Frances M. Young, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997
- *One Bread, One Body: The ecumenical experience of L'Arche*. By Therese Vanier, Novalis/Gracewing, 1997
- *Nick, Man of the Heart*. By Therese Vanier, Gil & MacMillan, 1993
- *A Blessed Weakness: Spirit of Jean Vanier and L'Arche*. By Michael Downey., Harper Collins, 1989
- *The Challenge of L'Arche*. Novalis/Winston, 1981

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