



**For Immediate Release**  
Wednesday, May 28, 2008

**Attention: Editor**

**CHAMPION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TO VISIT CALGARY**  
**L'Arche founder Jean Vanier to bring message of peace to young adults**

**Calgary** – Young adults are invited to meet with social-justice leader Jean Vanier at St. Mary's University College on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> for what could be his last visit to Calgary. The almost 80-year-old founder of L'Arche, an organization that serves people with developmental disabilities, will discuss the theme 'Choosing our future: Peace, one heart at a time' during sessions open to young adults, ages 18 to 35.



"Jean Vanier is a mentor who teaches by living," says Peggy Loescher, Community Leader/Executive Director of L'Arche Calgary. "Young people can face enormous pressure to succeed but Jean's presence may affirm a more spiritually-oriented journey."

This affirmation is particularly valuable in Alberta, where the booming economy and high cost of living can have a polarizing effect on society, as people struggle to meet monetary demands and are categorized by their ability to cope.

Vanier, a world-renowned philosopher and the author of many books, asserts that "peace is not a question of just stopping this or that catastrophe, but of rediscovering a vision; a path of hope for all of humanity."

Young adults from all over the world figure prominently in L'Arche communities through supportive roles helping members with developmental disabilities with daily routines and activities in L'Arche homes and in the community. They learn to value the unique gifts of their housemates and minimize their limitations. This emphasis on maximizing the strengths of others and celebrating diversity is excellent training and experience for future careers and interpersonal relationships.

The values and vision of L'Arche have much to contribute to the broader Canadian society. As society shifts toward globalization, the wisdom gleaned from living with people of different abilities, cultural and religious orientation is ever more relevant.

- MORE -

Vanier's visit to Calgary also marks the western premiere of L'Arche Canada's newest educational material for high school, *Choosing Our Future: Senior Students in Conversation with Jean Vanier*.

The curriculum material includes a 15-minute video featuring Vanier in conversation with Grade 12 students seeking his insights on such issues as building an inclusive school environment, bullying, finding their purpose, and looking toward the future. Information on how to order the curriculum materials will be available at the event.

Young-adult leaders working with young people are invited to attend the afternoon session for a cost of \$35. Young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 are invited to attend the evening session for a cost of \$25. People can register for the event by visiting [www.larchecalgary.org](http://www.larchecalgary.org) or calling (403) 571-0155.

L'Arche began in 1964 when Vanier chose to support the gifts and needs of two men with developmental disabilities in his home in Trosly, France. Today there are 135 L'Arche communities, in 36 countries, where people with developmental disabilities and the friends who assist them, share life in family-style homes and engage in meaningful daytime pursuits. In Canada, L'Arche includes over 200 homes and programs in 29 communities. The communities of Western Canada are hosting Jean Vanier during his visit to Calgary.

- 30 -

### **Contact Information:**

To learn more about Jean Vanier's visit or to schedule an interview with Pat Favaro, Regional Coordinator of L'Arche Western Canada or Peggy Loescher, Community Leader/Executive Director of L'Arche Calgary, please contact Sherra Hill at (403) 571-0155 ext 19 or e-mail [shill@larchecalgary.org](mailto:shill@larchecalgary.org).