



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

L'Arche Founder Jean Vanier Wins 2015 Templeton Prize

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Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, an international network of communities where people with and without intellectual disabilities live and work together, has won the 2015 Templeton Prize. One of the most prestigious honors in the world, the Templeton Prize, has previously been awarded to Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama and others.

In 1964, Jean Vanier invited Raphaël Simi and Philippe Seux, two men with intellectual disabilities from a local institution, to live with him in a small home in Trosly-Breuil, France. This act of compassion planted the seed of what has become a worldwide movement of 147 [L'Arche](#) communities, in 35 countries and on five continents. In the United States, [L'Arche USA](#) has 18 member communities in 15 states and the District of Columbia. [L'Arche Portland](#) is a member of L'Arche USA. Located in Southeast Portland, the community was founded in 1987 and has two homes where people with and without intellectual disabilities live side-by-side, building relationships of mutuality.

According to Jean Vanier, this prize honors the most vulnerable among us, often marginalized in our societies, and to whom he attributes his discovery. It is these people who revealed to him that those who have been previously rejected, when welcomed, can become a source of healing, unity and peace for our world. Vanier, 86, has extended his advocacy of belonging and social justice to nurture dialogue and unity among Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and other faiths through lectures, conferences and retreats around the world. His scholarship includes more than 30 books translated into 29 languages.

In remarks prepared for today's announcement, Vanier made a plea for global peace. "Before being Christians or Jews or Muslims, before being Americans or Russians or Africans, before being generals or priests, rabbis or imams, before having visible or invisible disabilities, we are all human beings with hearts capable of loving."

The announcement was made today at the British Academy in London by the John Templeton Foundation. Jean Vanier joins a distinguished group of 44 former recipients, including Mother Teresa, who received the inaugural Prize award in 1973, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1983), and Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (2007). Last year's Templeton Prize recipient, Czech priest and philosopher Tomáš Halík, followed

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Desmond Tutu, the former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, in 2013 and the 2012 Templeton Laureate, the Dalai Lama. Vanier will be formally awarded the Templeton Prize at a public ceremony in London on Monday, May 18. The prize is valued at close to \$1.7 million.

In videos available on the Prize website, www.templetonprize.org, Vanier examines topics including “What does it mean to be fully human?”

To learn more:

www.jean-vanier.org

www.larche.org

www.larcheusa.org

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