

*For Immediate Release*

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## ***Jean Vanier, Founder of L'Arche, Receives the 2008 Nation Builder Award***

**Along with many other media outlets around the world that reveal their “Person of the Year” at the end of December, The Globe and Mail today announced that Jean Vanier has been named their Nation Builder of 2008.**

London ON - Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, and son of the late Governor General, Georges P. Vanier, has been named Nation Builder of 2008 by The Globe and Mail.

A lecturer and prolific writer, Vanier is probably best known in Canada for his bestselling collection of essays, *Becoming Human*. He does not consider himself a philosopher, rather a man in search of meaning. If our society has difficulty functioning, if we are continually confronted by a world of crisis, full of violence, fear, and abuse, he suggests that it is because we do not understand what it actually means to be human.

At the age of 13, during World War II, Vanier left Quebec City and his family to join Britain's Royal Navy. Although he began his adult life believing it was his duty to participate in war, Jean Vanier has devoted most of his life to learning about and building peace—internal, personal peace; peace between individuals; and peace in communities. He is considered by many a serious candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Forty-four years ago, Vanier created a home for himself and his two friends, Raphaël Simi and Philippe Seux, both of whom were intellectually disabled. He had no idea that this very personal commitment would inspire a worldwide movement called L'Arche, nor that it would one day be recognized as an act of nation-building.

A social visionary, Vanier's concept of a great society is one based on the acceptance, even the welcoming, of human weakness and vulnerability—our own, and that of others. The origin of this vision lies in the friendships he has cultivated in L'Arche, with men and women who live essentially by their hearts.

One of the great spiritual leaders of our time, Jean Vanier lives in France, in the village of Trosly-Breuil, home to one of the 134 L'Arche communities around the world.

The Nation Builder Award is given annually by The Globe and Mail's editorial team to an outstanding Canadian who unifies and inspires us and, in so doing, makes us a better people and this a better country.

L'Arche is an international organization working in 34 countries across the globe. There are 29 L'Arche communities in Canada, from the Comox Valley in BC to Cape Breton Island NS. L'Arche develops community environments, and assists people living with intellectual disabilities to develop their capacities and reveal their gifts through relationships of mutual sharing, relationships which are often the source of transformation for those who do not have an intellectual disability. L'Arche London is one of 29 L'Arche communities in Canada. More info on Jean Vanier and the work of L'Arche can be found at [www.larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca)

For more information, call ..

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