



## **Jean Vanier Research Centre launched at King's University College**

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London, ON – King's University College at Western University is the chosen home of the new Jean Vanier Research Centre <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/research/research-centres/jean-vanier-research-centre-at-kings/>. Endorsed by Dr. Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche and Faith & Light, two communities for people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, the Jean Vanier Research Centre at King's will create, support, and promote projects and initiatives on Vanier's ideas and life works. The new Centre is endorsed by the Jean Vanier Association in France, and it will support the Jean Vanier Research Centre at King's through document sharing, promotion, and in-kind supports. L'Arche (Ontario, Canada and International) are also Centre partners and will provide resource sharing, expertise, and leadership.

King's was seen as a natural fit for the Jean Vanier Research Centre due to King's mission as a Catholic University College and because of the Disability Studies program at King's. Both align to Dr. Vanier's philosophy of inclusion for the marginalized and the value of all people.

Dr. Sauro Camiletti, Interim Principal and Academic Dean at King's, says the Jean Vanier Research Centre fits very well into furthering our mission as a Catholic educational leader. "Dr. Vanier's philosophical, social scientific, and theological writing has the potential for greater influence in a setting like King's, where a diverse array of students and scholars can engage with, critique, and advance the best of his ideas. We see a strong fit between our growing Disability Studies program and the kind of projects the Centre plans to undertake. Many other academic programs here including Social Justice & Peace Studies, Catholic Studies for Teachers, Social Work, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology are also potential collaborators."

The Jean Vanier Research Centre is under the directorship of Dr. Pamela Cushing, founder of Disability Studies at King's and Associate Professor in the program. She has a long professional acquaintance with Dr. Vanier, including her PhD research of L'Arche. She is thrilled to bring his scholarship to our campus. "Jean Vanier has been speaking and writing since the 1960s about the crucial challenge of creating a society that embodies genuine belonging, dignity, and recognition of the gifts of those most often marginalized in society. The basic idea of the Jean Vanier Research Centre is to place those insights into the light of academic study so that we might better articulate his exceptional contributions to knowledge of difference, community, and listening in a way that mobilizes them for use in enhancing our society and the place of disabled people within it," says Dr. Cushing.

Born in Canada, Dr. Vanier is the son of the former Governor General of Canada, Georges Vanier and Pauline Vanier. Dr. Vanier moved to France where he received a PhD in philosophy. From France in 1964, he founded L'Arche, which has now spread to dozens of countries at more than 100 sites. Dr. Vanier is a Companion of the Order of Canada and the Legion of Honour (France). In 2015 he won the Templeton Prize, which honours a living person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension. It carries a prize of nearly \$2 million dollars. Dr. Cushing was the writer of the nomination for Dr. Vanier of the Templeton Prize.

King's is a publicly-funded Catholic post-secondary institution which provides general and honours degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, management, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally autonomous, King's is academically-affiliated with Western University, and King's graduates receive a Western University degree. King's is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centered on the values of social justice, equality, and the education of the whole person.

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