

Introduction

“An encounter is a strange and wonderful thing – presence one person to another – life flowing one to another...”
(*Tears of Silence*, Jean Vanier)

In August 1964, Jean Vanier was called by God through Fr. Thomas Philippe. They met – life flowing, life giving. From this encounter there flowed forth the community of L’Arche. Later, Jean Vanier gave life to Faith and Sharing and Faith and Light.

Each of these streams had as its source the poor and little person. While the source is the same for all three, the focus of each is slightly different:

L’Arche creates communities of peace where people who have a mental handicap and those wishing to share life with them live, work and pray together.

Faith and Sharing is focused on a retreat that nourishes people through the Word, Eucharist, silence and small group sharing.

Faith and Light are communities of persons with mental handicaps, members of their families and friends. They meet regularly to share, pray and celebrate.

For more information contact:

L’Arche

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Faith and Sharing

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Faith and Light

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L’Arche

The word L’Arche is French for “the Ark”. In the Old Testament it was into a large boat, an ark, that Noah gathered his family and the different animals to preserve them from a great flood. The ark in the Jewish and Christian traditions is symbolic of diversity, refuge and hope.

Faith and Sharing



Two human faces turned one towards the other, represents the loving relationship. At the center: the cross, sign of Jesus, essence of love, source of life, united in love. The contour of the two human forms in a heart, the symbol of love.



Faith and Light

Jesus sleeps in the bottom of the boat. The heavens opened and your light, Lord, reached as far as us...

L'Arche

Foundation:

L'Arche was born in August, 1964 when Jean Vanier welcomed two men with a mental handicap into a small house in Trosly-Breuil, France.

Mission:

The mission of l'Arche is to create communities:

- ❖ of peace
- ❖ inspired by the Beatitudes where each person can grow humanly and spiritually. The needs of the person who has a handicap are the rule of life for each community.

Reality Today:

In 2013, there are 137 l'Arche communities throughout the world. L'Arche continues to grow on each continent.

Invitation:

L'Arche seeks those who are willing to live the simple life and spirituality of Nazareth with persons who are handicapped.

Faith and Sharing

Foundation:

Faith and Sharing began with a retreat preached by Jean Vanier at Marylake near Toronto, Canada in 1968. People were invited to spend 8 days meeting God in the Word, in the Eucharist, in silence and in small groups where they shared and prayed together.

Mission:

Faith and Sharing is a call to live the Beatitudes and to share the truth of the Good News with the poor. There is a two-fold movement in Faith and Sharing: an inward movement towards God hidden in each person's vulnerability and an outward movement towards the poor.

Reality Today:

In 2013, there are 13 local communities of Faith and Sharing in North America. These local core groups organize annual retreats and days of prayer.

Invitation:

Faith and Sharing seeks those who want to share this retreat experience and who desire to walk with one hand in the hand of Jesus and the other in the hand of the poor.

Faith and Light

Foundation:

Faith and Light was founded in response to a family's cry for support. Parents dealing with two handicapped children felt alone and isolated. Jean Vanier and Marie-Hélène Mathieu organized an international pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1971. From this Faith and Light was born.

Mission:

Faith and Light united those persons who have a handicap with their families and friends. Each small group meets regularly to share, pray and celebrate together.

Reality Today:

In 2013, there are over 1500 small groups of Faith and Light distributed in 51 provinces in 80 countries of the world.

Invitation:

Faith and Light invites families who have members with mental handicaps and those who would like to form community with them.