



PRESS RELEASE

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For attention: News/Features editor, Education editor, Middle East editor, Religion editor, Political/Scottish Parliament editor

Jean Vanier to Visit Edinburgh during the 2007 Middle East Festival

From Wednesday 7 February – Sunday 11 March 2007 the 4th Annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace will bring together artists, scholars, grassroots spiritual activists and religious and spiritual leaders exploring themes of peace and mutual understanding in our world today, with particular reference to the Middle East.

More generally, all of the principal faith and spiritual traditions of Scotland have been invited to participate in this spiritual, educational, artistic and cultural and international celebration of peace and mutual understanding. Indeed, the non-political nature of the Festival allows for an exceptional diversity among the participants. In total there will be over 100 events in the 2007 Festival. The Festival is jointly organized by the Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, and the Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning, EIAL, supported by partner organisations.

Among the highlights of the 2007 Middle East Festival will be a visit by Jean Vanier from Wednesday 28 February – Sunday 4 March 2007.

Jean Vanier, considered by many as one of the spiritual giants of our time, is one of today's leading spiritual writers – author of 'The Broken Body,' 'Becoming Human' and 'Befriending the Stranger,' among many others.

On Wednesday 28 February 2007 Jean Vanier will have a meeting with members of L'Arche and Faith and Light, before being Guest of Honour at a meal hosted by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, The Rt Rev Alan McDonald.

On Thursday 1 March 2007, Jean Vanier will lead an education event with senior students from high schools in Midlothian on the theme of 'Spirituality and Global Citizenship.' This event is hosted by St David's RC High School, Dalkeith. This will be followed by a meeting between Jean Vanier and Prisoners, Staff, Chaplains and Guests at HM Prison Edinburgh (Saughton Prison) on the theme 'From Brokenness to Wholeness,' at the invitation of The Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland.

On the evening of Thursday 1 March 2007, 7pm-9.30pm, doors open at 6pm, Jean Vanier will give the 2007 Middle East Festival Lecture at the Usher Hall on the subject of 'Spirituality and the Civilisation of Love.' There will be a welcome by Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken, Council Leader, The City of Edinburgh Council, and the event will be chaired by Rev Prof Frank Whaling. Jean Vanier will be joined in communicating something of the experience of creating communities of peace by members of both Faith and Light and L'Arche, with music led by John Coleman. The event is jointly hosted by The Middle East Festival, L'Arche, Faith and Light and The City of Edinburgh Council. Cost: £9/£7 (Concessions), Usher Hall Box Office, 0131 228 1155.

From Friday 2 March – Sunday 4 March 2007 Jean Vanier's visit will conclude with a Retreat in the City: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.' Coming together around the message of Jesus, at the Gillis Centre, Edinburgh. Participants are invited to join Jean Vanier, with members of L'Arche and Faith and Light, in a time for reflection, experiencing community and welcoming difference.

Each of the themes on Jean Vanier's visit to Scotland will contribute to peace and mutual understanding in our world today, in the context of the annual Middle East Festival.

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L'Arche/Faith and Light: Jane Salmonson, jane_salmonson@msn.com

ENDS

Notes for Editors

- Middle East Festival Website: www.eicws.org
- Middle East Festival News Releases and Articles: news releases for the 2007 Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace can be downloaded from the Festival Website, www.eicws.org, or are available from Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk
- Middle East Festival Interviews and Photo Opportunities: contact Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk
- Middle East Festival Pictures: some emailable pictures for the 2007 Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace are available from Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk
- Middle East Festival Brochure: a PDF of the 52-page full-colour A5 Festival Brochure for the 2007 Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace can be downloaded from the Festival Website, www.eicws.org, or hard copies are available from Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk
- Middle East Festival Poster: the Poster for the 2007 Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and

Peace can be downloaded from the Festival Website, www.eicws.org, or it can be emailed as a high resolution jpeg from Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk

- Further Middle East Festival Information: further information on the 2007 Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace can be downloaded from the Festival Website, www.eicws.org, or is available from Neill Walker, 0131 331 4469, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk
- Jean Vanier Visit Website: www.vanieredinburgh2007.freewebspace.com
- L'Arche Website: www.larche.org.uk, www.larche.org.au
- Faith and Light Website: www.faithandlight.org.uk

The 4th Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace, Edinburgh, Scotland, Wednesday 7 February – Sunday 11 March 2007.

Festival Directors and Contacts

**Festival and Conference Directors:
Neill Walker and Dr Neil Douglas-Klotz.**

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Quotes Associated with Jean Vanier's Visit to Scotland

Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken, Council Leader, The City of Edinburgh Council said: "Jean Vanier is one of the greatest spiritual leaders of our time. I have seen first hand the work of the L'Arche community which he founded and have seen the profound difference he has made to the lives of 1000's."

Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien said: "Jean Vanier is a very well known Christian spiritual adviser and friend to many people all over the world, particularly those who are not as fortunate as ourselves. It is wonderful to think that he will be visiting Scotland again and I am sure he will strengthen the faith of those who meet him and listen to him, as well as gathering together many other supporters to help those who are in any sort of need. May God, indeed, bless him and his apostolate on this forthcoming visit."

Rt Rev Alan McDonald, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland said: "I am delighted that Jean Vanier is coming to Scotland and look forward to spending time with him. I know that we have much to learn from his experience and his knowledge, his wisdom and his grace and I am glad that the programme gives opportunities for all kinds of Scots to encounter him and to hear something of his unique insight."

Most Revd Idris Jones, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church said: "Jean Vanier's work is a constant reminder to all of us of the need for a society which can both show compassion and also create the environment in which every individual finds purpose and the freedom to reach their potential. His visit to Scotland is therefore one that all will receive with pleasure."

The Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland said: "The exceptional gift which is Jean Vanier's is his capacity to touch the hearts of all who hear him, however wounded or lost they may be. I am thrilled that he is giving some of his Edinburgh time to prisoners: they have a deep need of the healing and hope of which he will speak."

Neill Walker, Director of the EICWS, and Co-Director of the Middle East Festival said: "Jean Vanier's visit to Scotland, following an invitation to participate in the Middle East Festival, will illustrate the breadth of his concerns and the wide social relevance of his spiritual work. It is particularly pleasing to host the visit in the context of the Middle East Festival, reflecting and enhancing the central ethos of the Middle East Festival in relation to peace and mutual understanding in our world today."

Des Farmer of L'Arche U.K. said: "Jean Vanier has demonstrated the power of compassionate love by inspiring, for over 40 years, the worldwide development of both L'Arche and our sister organisation, Faith and Light. Not only has he promoted the value and dignity of people with learning difficulties, he has done the same for all people who have been rejected or marginalised, in every society. Jean's message of love in action is the kind of compassionate wisdom which we all need to hear."

Marian Docherty said: "St David's High School is honoured to host Jean Vanier's visit to a Scottish school. His philosophy and international work are an inspiration and a challenge to young people everywhere. We hope that his visit will encourage our own school community to promote justice and peace and to develop our global citizenship programme in India."

Detailed Schedule of Jean Vanier's Visit to Scotland

Wednesday 28 February 2007

Event: Meeting between Jean Vanier and members of L'Arche and Faith and Light.
Time: 3pm onwards.
Contact: Faye Clerk, fayeclerk@penhouse.demon.co.uk

Event: Meal hosted by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland with Jean Vanier as Guest of Honour.
Time: 7pm.
Contact: Neill Walker, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk, 0131 331 4469.

Thursday 1 March 2007

Event: Jean Vanier Education Event.
Title: 'Spirituality and Global Citizenship.'
A meeting between Jean Vanier and Students, Staff, Chaplains and Guests.
Facilitator: Marian Docherty.
Venue: St David's RC High School, Dalkeith, Midlothian.
Time: 9.30am-11am.

Event Description: The event is designed to engage and inspire young people through a discussion of faith, spirituality and global citizenship focusing on the international work of Jean Vanier, and on global citizenship issues arising in the Middle East. St David's pupils will present their own global citizenship project, Working for Our World, which runs in partnership with the Association of People with Disabilities (APD) in Bangalore, India. The WOW Project enables young people to extend their awareness of other cultures and faiths, to respond to the needs of others and to develop their potential as global citizens. Part of this presentation will celebrate Scottish and Indian musical traditions. We will also feature the experiences of young people who have devoted their time to L'Arche communities around the world.

Jean Vanier will present his views on some global citizenship issues arising in the Middle East. This will be followed by a related question and answer session. The visit will conclude with a video conference link to Bangalore to discuss our joint work and plans for the future. The event will be open to senior pupils in other Midlothian High Schools and to schools across Scotland which support APD in Bangalore. We aim to develop the commitment and faith of our young people through an exploration of Jean Vanier's inspirational work.
Contact: Marian Docherty, dochem70@staff.mgfl.net, 0131 654 4702.

Event: Jean Vanier Prison Event.
Title: 'From Brokenness to Wholeness.'
A meeting between Jean Vanier and Prisoners, Staff, Chaplains and Guests.
Facilitator: Rev Bill Taylor.
Venue: HM Prison Edinburgh (Saughton Prison).
Time: 11.30am-3pm.
Event Description: Time spent in reflection and spiritual exploration with Jean Vanier and prisoners and staff at Edinburgh Prison. In preparation for this event, some prisoners have been working together on a book by Jean Vanier called 'The Broken Body.'
Contact: Neill Walker, njwalk5300@hotmail.co.uk, 0131 331 4469.

Event: The 2007 Middle East Festival Lecture with Jean Vanier.
Title: 'Spirituality and the Civilisation of Love.'
Welcome by Councillor Rev Ewan Aitken, Council Leader, The City of Edinburgh Council.
Chair: Rev Prof Frank Whaling.
Hosts: Jointly hosted by The Middle East Festival, L'Arche, Faith and Light and The City of Edinburgh Council.
Venue: Usher Hall, Lothian Road, Edinburgh.
Time: 7pm-9.30pm. Doors open at 6pm.
Event Description: Referring to Jean Vanier's work in creating L'Arche, Pope John Paul II stated, 'Over the past 30 years L'Arche has grown to become a dynamic and providential sign of the civilization of love.'

Jean Vanier, considered by many as one of the spiritual giants of our time, is one of today's leading spiritual writers – author of 'The Broken Body,' 'Becoming Human' and 'Befriending the Stranger,' among many others.

Jean Vanier invites us to consider how each of us might enter into a Civilisation of Love, by first establishing peace within our own hearts. He will be joined in communicating something of the experience of creating communities of peace by members of both Faith and Light and L'Arche, with music led by John Coleman, member of L'Arche Tasmania and composer of works including 'Revealing the Holy' and 'Slow Action of Love.'

EICWS is a registered charity, number SC030155; Faith and Light is a registered charity, number FC009996; L'Arche is a registered charity, number 264166.
See: www.eicws.org, www.vanieredinburgh2007.freewebspace.com, www.larche.org.uk, www.faithandlight.org.uk, www.larche.org.au
Cost: £9/£7 (Concessions).
Contact: Usher Hall Box Office, 0131 228 1155,
or online at <http://www.usherhall.co.uk/index.php>

Friday 2 March – Sunday 4 March 2007

Event: Retreat with Jean Vanier.
Title: Retreat in the City: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.'

Coming together around the message of Jesus.

Venue: Gillis Centre, 100 Strathearn Road, Edinburgh.

Time: Registration: 9am-9.30am. Retreat: 9.30am – 6.30pm approximately.

Event Description: You are invited to join Jean Vanier, with members of L'Arche and Faith and Light, in a time for reflection, experiencing community and welcoming difference. Exploring together the Gospel message of Jesus, we will be guided by Jean to consider our open-ness to 'encountering the other,' crossing the frontiers beyond what is comfortable and familiar towards more meaningful sources of life in an increasingly insecure world.

'Our security will not be in money, nor in armed protection, but in the depth of our friendships. If we can love each other, respect each other, confirm each other – that's where our security will be.'

Gathering daily at the Gillis Centre, this non residential retreat – including an optional evening programme offering a variety of experiences and expressions of Christian worship and spirituality – is open to all, with some priority given to those with disabilities and their carers. Each day will end after a shared worship at approximately 6.30pm. The optional evening programme will run from 8pm-9.30pm approximately.

Cost: £55 per person for 2.5 days: optional evening programme, lunch and tea/coffee breaks inclusive.

Applications to: Celia Stone, Jean Vanier Retreat, PO Box 28832, Edinburgh, EH15 1WF, or via website <www.vanieredinburgh2007.freewebspace.com>

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