

14/06/2019

Dear friends,

These past few weeks have been emotional, with our sadness over Jean's death as well as the many testimonies of gratitude for his life and the legacy he passes on to us. As we have already said, our founder's death coinciding with the launch of our charter process underlines this passage that we now experience together.

As you know, in March, we wrote to you about the documentary that was broadcast on the Franco-German television channel Arte about the victims of sexual abuse in the Church, and in particular about the testimonies of two women who were victims of Father Thomas Philippe while he was a priest in Trosly until 1991. Father Philippe died in 1993. The first testimonies relating to the abuses committed by Father Thomas, of adult and non-disabled women, were submitted to L'Arche leadership in 2014 and were the subject of a canonical inquiry whose results were made public and shared by L'Arche in 2015.

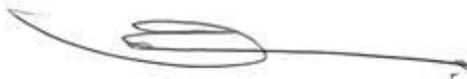
Since this documentary aired, we have had many discussions in which we invited our members to ask questions and express their emotions. In these discussions many of you have wondered about the early history of L'Arche and how Father Thomas was able to commit these abuses. In particular, we shared our questions about the environment around Father Thomas at that time, including Jean Vanier's role in that environment. It is our responsibility today to continue this questioning, and shine light on information that grows our knowledge of our past.

That is why L'Arche International has commissioned an external organization to conduct a thorough and independent inquiry that will allow us to better understand our history, refine our work to prevent abuse and improve our own current policies and practices. This inquiry will follow clear criteria to ensure its objectivity, transparency and confidentiality within a clearly defined framework. We expect to be able to share more information on its results during the month of September.

Ultimately, this work allows us to learn from our past mistakes, and to reflect on how we can improve and ensure our commitment to making all our communities places where everyone, with or without disabilities, feels respected and safe.

Alongside Jean's death and the launch of our charter process, this work contributes to this passage that we are living.

In union with each of you,



Stephan Posner



Stacy Cates-Carney