Madame Vanier worked energetically for the Voluntary Air Department of the St. John's Ambulance during the First World War, and was a representative of the Canadian Red Cross in France during the Second World War.

Her Excellency is a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, a Dame of Magistral Grace of the Order of Malta, and a Dame of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

In June, 1964, General and Madame Vanier sponsored the Canadian Conference on the Family. The Conference was held at Carleton University, Ottawa. Since the family life of the Vaniers has been a rich and rewarding experience, it has, therefore, been the wish of the distinguished couple that a close look at family life in Canada through such a conference might help more people to find the happiness which they themselves have experienced.