



Thirty-six young men and women from across the UK and around the world today became the first members of the Archbishop of Canterbury's new monastic-inspired community at Lambeth Palace.

The Community of St Anselm – a programme for Christians aged 20-35 to spend a year praying, studying ethics and theology, and serving the poorest in local communities – was officially launched in a special service at Lambeth Palace Chapel.

The first intake of the Community has 16 residential members from around the world – including the USA, Kenya and Australia – who will live at Lambeth Palace. They are joined by 20 non-resident members who will be living in London and continuing their jobs in finance, media, education, the civil service and elsewhere.

During the service the members committed to a year of prayer, study and service to the poor, during which they will live by a challenging Rule of Life inspired by the monastic traditions.



Archbishop Justin Welby, who has made the renewal of prayer and Religious communities a priority for his ministry, preached at the service.

In his sermon he said religious communities are “ancient and current reflections of the love of God seen in the Trinity” in which people “risk everything to seek to emulate that love”.

“Changed by the love which finds and directs us, changed by that grace, we too are to be sources of love and healing,” he said.

The Archbishop said his prayer for the community was that it “speaks God’s truth to itself and the world” in other words, that it is prophetic.

He added: “We commit to receive each other as a gift. That is a challenge for you, and for all at Lambeth Palace for whom this is a radical change, including me especially me. You are God’s gifts to me, and astonishing as it may seem, I to you, and all to each other. If we receive those gifts, we will bear fruit, now and in the future for decades even into eternity.”



Several members gave testimonies during the service, including 23-year-old Peter Angelica, who is joining the Community from New York City where he worked as a financial analyst.

He said hearing God’s call to join the Community amidst the noise of New York “was not an easy task, even after much thought, prayer and contemplation.”

“But through God’s love, and the support my family, friends and those I worked with, I have come to realize the importance of this decision for me and for others.”



Frances Germain, a London-based doctor, and George Karanja Njiri, a recent Divinity graduate from Kenya, both in their twenties, also spoke about their journey towards becoming members of the Community.

The Community is open to men and women from any Christian denomination, and this year includes Anglicans, Methodists, Roman Catholics and Pentecostals, among others. It takes its name from a Benedictine monk and brilliant scholar, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093-1109. St Anselm's motto was "faith seeking understanding", a reminder that the faith journey begins with an active love of God and from love a deeper knowledge of God follows.

*The Service of Commitment for the Community of St Anselm will be broadcast on Radio 4 this Sunday at 8.10am.*

[Visit the Community of St Anselm website](#)

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