



THE ARCHBISHOP



Service at Lambeth Palace.

Two key members of the Archbishop of Canterbury's new community for young Christians were commissioned at Lambeth Palace today.

Archbishop Justin Welby licensed the Revd Anders Litzell as Prior of the Community of St Anselm, and Sister Sonia Béranger as its Director of Community, in an ecumenical service attended by clergy, religious and lay people from a variety of different churches and religious communities.

During the service the congregation laid hands on the new Prior and Director as they prayed for them in English and French.

The Community of St Anselm, which launches in September, is a radical new initiative by Archbishop Justin Welby. Young Christians from around the world are invited to spend 'a year in God's time' at Lambeth Palace.

Mr Litzell is an Anglican priest from Sweden, who has experience of the Pentecostal and Lutheran traditions as well as three provinces of the Anglican Communion. Having studied in the USA before becoming ordained in the Church of England, he served a Lutheran parish in Sweden and directed Alpha's Sweden office. Later he moved to London to work with Alpha International. He will pioneer the Community and direct its worship and work.



Sister Sonia is a senior member of the Chemin Neuf community with much experience in the spiritual formation of young people across several continents. Most recently she led Chemin Neuf's community at Hautecombe Abbey in France. As well as being responsible for the Abbey, which receives 100,000 visitors a year, she also ran a training programme for young Christians from different nationalities and denominations. She will be responsible for the spiritual formation and communal life of the Community of St Anselm.

Archbishop Justin Welby said: "This is a moment of extraordinary adventure. We don't know what the outcomes will be. It is a question for the Holy Spirit of God, and that's a very, very good place to be.

"Our hope and vision is that those young people who come here will be so changed by their encounter with Christ that in twenty or thirty years, they will change the world."

During the service the Archbishop also spoke of being "humbled" that the Chemin Neuf community was "lending" one of their leading members, Sister Sonia, to serve and lead in the venture of another church.

The Revd Anders Litzell said: "It was a tremendous privilege to be surrounded by so many expressions of faithful life in Christ – monastic and otherwise – in a celebration of God's grace, and to be commissioned for this work along with Sister Sonia.

"We are excited and look forward to the next stage, of welcoming young Christians to join this community. I am especially grateful for the wisdom we have received from the many expressions of religious life that are helping shape this experience for the young people as they pursue a greater likeness of Christ."

Sister Sonia Béranger said: "I feel really grateful today and full of the joy of starting something totally new – and of serving a church other than my own; although at the same time it is my church, because it's the Church of Jesus Christ.

"My hope is that the Community will be a place where each person can discover their calling more and more – their personal calling, their calling within the church; and their calling to serve the world. And that this would be a place where people really get to know Christ. Because it's only by knowing Christ that we can know ourselves, and know the place in the world where we can give the best of ourselves."

Applications for the Community of St Anselm open next month. Find out more by visiting the Community's website: stanselm.org.uk

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