

The young nuns: Justin Welby invites young people to live monastic life at Lambeth Palace

Young people in Britain are being invited to become a monk or a nun for a year. Their Abbot will be the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.



The newly-formed Community of St Anselm will be formally launched with the first one-year monks and nuns in September next year. Members will subscribe to a Rule of Life, which has not yet been finalised but will likely cover all kinds of matters including money and relationships. Those who are single will be expected to be celibate, but membership is also open to married couples.

Archbishop Welby is seeking young people with an "adventurous" spirit seeking to explore a "monastic" lifestyle. He wants applications from people from "all walks of life, hungry for a challenging and formative experience of life in a praying community."

The community will initially consist of 16 people living at Lambeth Palace full-time, and up to 40 people, who live and work in London, joining part-time. The year-long programme will include prayer, study, practical service and community life.

Members will live a spiritual discipline compared to that of medieval monks, drawing closer to God through a daily rhythm of silence, study and prayer. At the same time they will also be immersed in the modern challenges of the global 21st century church, witnessing to the power of a pared-back disciplined faith in managing the demanding business of contemporary high-tech life.

Lambeth Palace is currently recruiting a Prior to lead the community and direct its worship and work, who will work under the leadership of Abbot Welby. The word Abbot derives from the language Jesus spoke, the Aramaic *av* or *abba*, meaning father.

One inspiration for the community is the man considered by many to be America's greatest living theologian, Stanley Hauerwas, the Gilbert T Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law at Duke Divinity School. His theological insights are tweeted every day by @dailyhauerwas, and include sayings such as : "The deepest sacrifice of those we ask to go to war is that of their normal unwillingness to kill," and "Good communities are spaces where people love one another enough that

they're not afraid of disagreements."

Archbishop Welby said: "Stanley Hauerwas reminds us that the church should always be engaged in doing things that make no sense if God does not exist. The thing that would most make no sense at all if God does not exist is prayer. Living in a praying community is the ultimate wager on the existence of God, and is anything but comfortable or risk-free. Through it people subject themselves to discipline, to each other in community, and, above all, to God.

"I expect this venture to have radical impact – not just for the individuals who participate but for life at Lambeth, across the Church and in the world we seek to serve. This is what we expect in following Jesus. I urge young people to step up: here is an open invitation to be transformed and to transform."

Dr Jo Wells, the Archbishop's chaplain, said: "Archbishop Justin is passionate about prayer and about community. The renewal of prayer and Religious Life is the first of his three priorities, and that is what the Community of St Anselm is all about.

"We are inviting people from all around the Anglican Communion – and beyond – to live a year in God's time. There are no qualifications for joining the Community except a longing to pray, to learn, to study together the things of God, and so to be stretched in body, mind and spirit."

"Archbishop Justin longs that Lambeth Palace be not so much a historic place of power and authority, but a place from which blessing and service reach to the ends of the earth."

The community is named after Saint Anselm, a Benedictine monk and brilliant scholar, was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093-1114. His motto of 'faith seeking understanding' reminds us that the faith journey begins with an active love of God – and from this love a deeper knowledge of God follows. Anselm became a monk when he was 27. Rather as Archbishop Welby was told by his bishop that there was no future in the Church of England for a man like him when he first applied for ordination, when Anselm first enquired about the possibility of becoming a monk, aged 15, he was turned away.

For more information and to apply, [click here](#).

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