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Dear Friends,

**Our Man in Lambeth** In 2011, newly-appointed Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby moved with his family into 800-year-old Lambeth Palace, the official London residence of the Archbishop on the south bank of the Thames, just opposite the Houses of Parliament. John Martin, writing in *The Living Church*, reports that “in a lighthearted moment, someone asked the Archbishop if he had plans for the rest of ‘this old place.’ Quick as a flash he said, ‘We’ll fill it with young people.’”

Archbishop Welby had already identified three priorities for his time of service: Prayer, especially in the structured religious life; Reconciliation, inside the Church and beyond; and Witness and evangelism.

**A plan emerges: The Community of St. Anselm** The Archbishop’s off-the-cuff remark about young people in the Palace, and his carefully considered priorities for his work as the leading cleric of the Anglican Communion have come together in his establishment of The Community of St. Anselm, a gathering, over the next ten months, of sixteen young people, mostly in their twenties, living in the Palace and another twenty commuting in from the London area.

I first heard of The Community of St. Anselm [CoSA] from Peter Angelica who grew up at St. Elizabeth’s and, after graduating from college last year, was working for a bank in Manhattan. Peter had heard about the Archbishop’s plan to offer young people the unique experience of living together in the Palace for a year of reflection and experience of intentional Christian community, and had applied.

**Three from the United States** The odds of getting in were fairly daunting. The Community’s plan was to include maybe two or three from the United States, and, as it turned out, Peter was among the three finally selected. It was, for someone who wanted to explore the Christian life, something like getting a Rhodes Scholarship and winning an Olympic medal at the same time.

In the course of the preliminary interviews, Peter asked a good question: What do they expect from those who might finally make it into the program? One might imagine that the purpose of such a program would be to be to recruit young clergy or even form the nucleus of a new Anglican

religious order, along the lines of the Order of the Holy Cross or The Society of St. John the Evangelist, two distinguished communities of Episcopal monks founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

But Peter got a different answer. When the 10 months were up, they told Peter, he would return to his earlier life. They were not so interested in the impact the program would have on his *first* year out as the difference it might make on his *tenth*. The goal was not job recruiting, but character formation—they were in this for the long haul.

**The KGB...or Jesus** If this were a spy novel, one might describe the Archbishop's plan as a strategy to establish a network of sleeper agents to be sent back into an unsuspecting target nation. Or, one might think of Jesus' image of how it only takes a comparatively small amount of yeast to turn a large glob of wet dough into light, fragrant, tasty bread. Perhaps the Archbishop, who had an extensive and successful career in the international oil business before becoming ordained, had a vision of how a few well-formed Christians, scattered about, might begin to make a noticeable difference in many different parts of the world.

In the liturgy marking the official opening of the Community of St. Anselm, the Rev. Anders Litzell, appointed by the Archbishop to serve as the Prior [think "Head of School"], summarized the goal of the Community this way: "Archbishop Justin's vision is for transformation in church and society through the deep work of the Holy Spirit. Included in that transformation will be his own work as archbishop, informed and challenged by the presence of young people here at his home-base. We trust it will transform these young lives, to reflect the beauty of God's holiness with irrepressible integrity. But even more, we dare to seek for the transformation of our world – in business, politics, education, healthcare, development – through the work to which God calls and equips each of us as we commit to God and God's people in self-giving within our local, national and international communities."<sup>1</sup>

**A typical day at Lambeth** This ten-month period, the first of three planned by the Archbishop, could be described as Spiritual Boot Camp. Prior Litzell described a typical day to *The Living Church*: "Each day will begin with silence: breakfast, shared Bible reading, morning prayer, and personal prayer, all in silence until 10:00 am (with the exception for sharing in the liturgy of morning prayer). Then the rest of the morning and afternoon is given to an even split of either study or service outside the walls to the most vulnerable in society<sup>2</sup> This is broken by a midday Eucharist. The day concludes with Vespers and an hour of joint silent prayer. The contents of the evenings vary, and on Sundays all members will find a local church in which to worship. All household activities are shared – cooking for each other, doing laundry for each other, cleaning, etc."

Whatever else community members might learn about the Spiritual Life, it sounds as though their status as a roommate or potential spouse might be significantly enhanced by this experience. Peter, by the way, took a copy of our new parish cookbook with him, and the recipes of St. Elizabeth's have already been a significant contribution to the shared life of the Archbishop's new community.

**Old principles, new applications** Silence, interestingly, is defined not only in the obvious way, but also extends to limits on the use of media, electronic devices, and accessing the Internet. In

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, our own Diocese has a program to bring young people together for a year of living in Christian community and working with the most vulnerable in our area. Our program is Newark ACTS and is one of the ministries supported by St. Elizabeth's contribution to the shared ministry of the Diocese through our pledge to the Diocese.

<sup>2</sup> On September 22 the Archbishop announced that one of the "cottages" inside the walls of Lambeth Palace will be a temporary home for refugees fleeing the Syrian war.

those limits as in many other elements of their rule of life, CoSA seeks to embody the principles of Benedictine, Franciscan, and Ignatian [Jesuit] traditions updated for our own time. In a time when the Pope is a Jesuit who chose the name of “Francis” when he was elected to succeed Pope Benedict, we can see perhaps a broader base for finding in traditional religious communities practices and principles to guide us in our current culture.

**Knocking at the door** Peter writes, “I entered the Palace on Friday [September 4] with my bags in hand via the Gatehouse. In practice this meant slamming the knocker fairly hard against the door to ensure that I was heard (my first knocks were too soft). From there I went directly to where we all are staying—the Lambeth Cottages. As far as I can tell, these cottages were originally used by the grammar school that used to be on the grounds. They have been completely gutted and renovated...I share my room with a recent Oxford graduate from Brussels. He was in New College, and served as one of the student volunteers who looked after its chapel.”

Peter and his colleagues spend a fair amount of time with the Archbishop who usually leads their daily service of Morning Prayer. As I read Peter’s comment that “Every single person in the Community comes from a different liturgical background,” I found myself wondering if CoSA might be something like an intentional microcosm of the world-wide Anglican Communion. Perhaps one of the Archbishop’s goals is to work with that level of diversity and complexity on a scale where new ways of understanding, relationship, and, when necessary, reconciliation might be explored which could inform his work with the Anglican Communion throughout the world.

**The usual suspects** Peter observed that the majority of his colleagues come from backgrounds other than business—recent college graduates, social workers, seminary students—basically the “usual suspects” for a church project. Personally, I was glad to hear that the Archbishop looked beyond that circle, and am proud of Peter both for presenting his case for membership and for having the courage to go into this environment where a young American banker from Princeton might find himself on the receiving end of a variety of preconceptions. I cannot imagine why everyone in Britain would not like Americans, but perhaps that is part of the problem.

On Friday, September 18, the Community of St. Anselm had their official opening liturgy in the chapel at Lambeth Palace. You can hear (for the next three weeks) an edited version of that service which includes the Archbishop’s sermon but, alas, not the brief address Peter was invited to present. To hear the service, Google “BBC 4 Worship,” click on “Available Now” and then on “A Living Sacrifice.” It will only be up for thirty days following September 20.

Three members of the Community were invited to make brief statements, Peter was one of the three, and, according to the BBC, this is the transcript of what he said:

Hello, my name is Peter Angelica and I am 23 years old. I’m joining the Community from New York City, where I worked as an analyst for a commercial bank. As one of the millennials that moved to the City straight after school I have the chance to witness how my peers cope with the realities of working life. Many have quickly fallen into the work-hard, play-hard mentality that is associated with working in finance. Many seem to be constantly looking to rapidly advance in the workplace, with little idea what they’re racing towards.

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 it is answering that call which has required even more faith and trust in God. It has been a challenge to transition from the routine of my life in New York and my work at the bank to the Community, and I have sometimes questioned my decision to do so. But through God’s love, and the support of my

family, friends and those I worked with, I have come to realize the importance of this decision for me and for others.

Peter's sister Nancy was able to fly over to be present at that service, and you can see pictures if you Google "Community of St. Anselm." Even though Peter's address which I have just quoted did not make the cut for the broadcast, you can still hear his voice in response to the roll call of the community, presumably in alphabetical order, when "Peter" is the first name called out.

**The finances** Each member of the community was expected to come up with the funding for their participation. I viewed this as something like the opportunity to support one of our own who had qualified for the Olympics, and I am glad to report that Peter received support, by vote of the Vestry, from a parish fund, set aside in a year of an annual budget surplus, to support occasional unbudgeted opportunities to strengthen our community life. Put another way, generous pledgers in earlier years, and the careful management of expenses by our staff and Vestry, helped to make Peter's project possible. Bishop Beckwith, from his Discretionary Fund, matched what the Vestry had voted. Bishop Beckwith also met with Peter personally to reflect with him about this opportunity. Through the Rector's Discretionary Fund (supported by gifts from parishioners and often on the occasion of baptisms, weddings, and funerals), I was able to offer support, and thought of that as Peter in some way taking with him (in addition to the ECW Cookbook...) the year-in, year-out life of our congregation, including both occasions of great joy, and those of deep sorrow. In addition, members of the congregation who had heard of Peter's opportunity also contributed substantially.

Some years ago Desmond Tutu observed that the time had come for Africa to start sending missionaries to the West.<sup>3</sup> I remembered that as I was thinking about Peter's mission to Lambeth. Peter will certainly have a lot to learn, but I think he may have something to offer, to his colleagues and perhaps to the Archbishop, as well. So as you teach Sunday School or Confirmation, coach young people preparing for Flower Sunday, cook dinner with your family for the St. Paul's shelter, invite a teen to join the Outreach ministry or to help out with preparing the altar, or bring your child to acolyte or to choir practice, remember that these ordinary, daily acts will shape the character of one who, one day, will bear witness on a larger stage. Maybe not in Lambeth, but after school, or in a college dorm or locker room, or over lunch with work colleagues, at the playground or playing field with other parents, or in a meeting or a class they lead.

**Business school weighs in** Management guru Peter Drucker famously remarked that culture eats strategy for breakfast. We could never have had a strategy for one of our young people to be invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to hang out with him for a year. But it turns out that we have nurtured a culture which did that very thing.

"Every day," Peter writes, "continues to be eye-opening, challenging, and a test of my faith, but I am better for it." Wouldn't that be a good motto for us all.



At our own services of Morning Prayer, daily and on Sundays, we will pray for the Community of St. Anselm. We do not single out Peter in this prayer, but I invite you to hold him up to God for blessing as we say these words:

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<sup>3</sup> I quoted that back to him when I asked if he would be the officiating bishop at my ordination to the priesthood back in 1988. He laughed and very graciously agreed.

Gracious God, we pray for the Community of St. Anselm. Guide, inspire, and comfort those who offer this year to you and to your world through prayer, study, and work with the poor. Give them a clearer sense of your presence, a deeper confidence in your love, and a more personal experience of your mercy. May they, and all whom you have called to live in religious communities, find in their vows, freedom; in their companions, friends; and in their earthly poverty the immeasurable riches of your glorious Kingdom. This we ask in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

The Rev. Cn. John G. Hartnett  
*Rector*