



# “Exciting, tough and transforming”

## Immersive member Catherine reflects on her year in community

When I left home to be a residential member of the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth Palace, saying goodbye was hard not because I was going far away from home, but, I didn't know how to explain what I was getting myself into. Committing to prayer, study and service to poor communities was not a problem especially coming from a Christian family, but, being a monk (though part time) with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience was not a cool thing to do.

When I signed up to join the community, I had preconceived ideas of what spending a year in God's time might look like: spending hours fasting and praying, reading and studying the bible. Looking back now, we've done all that and have got even more than what I signed up for. I began the year with a desire to know God's will for my life. I expected it to be easy going, but it turned out to be exciting, tough and transforming.

The first step was to trust God fully, which he taught me to do through sharing about myself expecting no reply or comment in return and listening to the stories of others and not commenting. This vulnerability with each other built trust that created friendships. It was a point of realising how God sometimes deals with us: listen as we speak, and comment where necessary and how we ought to listen – seeking not to reply but to understand.

Reconciliation became the order of the day renewed each morning with a choice to love and expressed through honest conversations, confessions, writing, accompanied with tears, hugs and smiles after experiencing forgiveness and mercy. The pain of reconciling with the past is nothing compared to the peace and joy of the healing made.

This year's experience is better compared to the refining process that gold goes through under fire, the impurities are removed and best quality gold remains. We've been under fire, we've been refined and made ready for God's purpose, with great value to God's kingdom and his creation.

Maybe this is right for you?

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