

Yet another blow for hard-pressed parishes

SIR – In your [report](#), the Diocese of Leicester is quoted as saying that it is not seeking to “abolish parishes” but rather “put them on a footing which is sustainable for mission and ministry in the 21st century”.

This is mere bluster, and I suspect there will be copycat announcements from other dioceses. It is time to divert central funding to support beleaguered parishes all over the country.

Charlotte Dixon

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SIR – In your article on Leicester diocese’s plan to merge all of its 234 parishes into huge “minster communities”, the first of these groupings, Launde, is described as having 23 “parishes”.

This implies that there are only 23 churches. However, it is my understanding that, in fact, within the Launde grouping there are 35 churches. It appears that the recognisable parish priest role will essentially be replaced by one oversight minister per minster community. It is unsustainable to minister to a group of 35 churches.

Within the “plan” for Launde, there is a counter-intuitive assumption that parish giving will double. Studies show that reducing priests leads to reduced attendance and giving.

Urban people don’t seem to comprehend the rural-urban divide. If you are 86, living on your own in the country and no longer able to drive, sometimes the only local person you can count on for help at a moment’s notice is your parish priest.

The funding for “strategy” and reorganisation would be better spent on more such priests.

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