



The Society of Mary and Martha

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Sir,

Recent media stories on bullying and the St Luke's consultation on health care needs have put clergy welfare back on the agenda. Here at Sheldon it continues to be our primary focus. People run into trouble because of any combination of personal weaknesses, impossible situations, inadequate resources, or life dumping too much in one hit. Feedback like "restored my faith in a caring church" may be nice for us, but begs questions about how such faith gets lost.

It's interesting how heavily the Society of Mary and Martha relies on donations from clergy themselves and the salary sacrifice of its Community to survive financially. We are currently raising £1m for a much needed rebuilding of the Long Barn to replace our smallest guest bedrooms. Even with St Luke's no longer needing regular subsidy, the contribution from dioceses has only amounted to 24K in total, well short of the modest 2-4K each that we requested (except Bristol, Monmouth, Oxford and St Albans, to whom thanks).

We have an excellent course in March on reducing bullying and its impact, helpfully titled "Constructing Co-operation". Clergy and their households are incredibly valuable resources for the whole church. Let's co-operate effectively in supporting, encouraging and caring for them.

Yours

Carl Lee
Sarah Horsman

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