



Pell and Coleridge miss the critical hospital questions

The comments of Cardinal George Pell and Archbishop Mark Coleridge miss the critical questions about the sale of Calvary Hospital. For a Catholic and an ACT taxpayer, these seem to be:

First, why is the Little Company of Mary accepting \$77 million of public money to which, on the face of it, it has no moral entitlement? If this is not the case, could the company please explain the basis for this entitlement, preferably without the sophistry of "sunk funds" etc. As far as I can see, this seems to be double-dipping into the

public funds.

Second, why is the company then proposing to build a new private hospital which will be used by the comparatively well-off? What about Catholic teaching on a "preferential option for the poor"?

Third, why is the ACT Government going to pay the company \$77 million when, according to the head of ACT Health at recent consultations, Calvary was 98 per cent built with public funds?

Let me make a suggestion to the company. Forget about buying Clare

Holland Hospice, which seems a totally unnecessary purchase. Sell Calvary for \$5-10 million to recognise your capital contribution and unpaid voluntary service over the years. Give \$1 million of this to expand the admirable pastoral care services at both Canberra hospitals.

Then devote the balance to the excellent work that the sisterhood is doing in, say, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Now that would be the real spirit of Calvary.

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