

## Management Consultants guide Orders

by David Quinn

The Irish Catholic

21<sup>st</sup> June 2007

**RELIGIOUS Orders are turning to the world of management consultants to ensure they get the best deal possible when selling property. They are also seeking advice on how they can secure their legacy as their numbers dwindle.**

The move takes place against a background of religious congregations selling large amounts of property in recent years in order to raise money for their work, but also because falling numbers means they cannot run all their facilities as they would like.

In some cases, it is understood, congregations have not secured the best deal they could when selling their property. This has caused some orders to turn to management consultants for help.

Last year, the Little Company of Mary asked for professional advice when selling Mount Carmel Hospital at Monkstown in Dublin. There were no active Sisters left at the hospital and the congregation decided to sell it. But they wanted to get the best deal possible and also to ensure as far as they could that the Catholic ethos of the hospital would be maintained.

They turned to a company called Prospectus, who were asked to identify buyers who would respect the Catholic ethos of Mount Carmel. In the end, a firm called Harlequin was found, which is now called the Mount Carmel Health Group.

Mr Diarmaid Ó Corrbuí of Prospectus told ***The Irish Catholic*** that the promise to maintain the Catholic ethos was “*more of a gentleman's agreement*” because of the difficulty in absolutely guaranteeing that the ethos could be maintained indefinitely.

Mr Ó Corrbuí also said that the Oblates had used his firm for advice on how to follow good practice and use lay people to carry on their legacy as the number of Oblates declines.

Discussing the future of Religious Orders, Mr Ó Corrbuí said *"They are now facing the harsh reality of either withering away or undertaking a major strategic review of how best they can deliver on their mission and core objectives."*

He said the sort of questions the Orders needed to ask themselves included whether there is a continuing role for the work of the order in the country, what new models of engagement with lay people are needed, and what does the Order need to do to implement its strategy.