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[**Catholic Church leaves many guessing its stand on Aids declaration**](http://www.kenyacentral.com/general/14376-catholic-church-leaves-many-guessing-its-stand-on-aids-declaration.html)

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While fellow faith organisations have agreed to change their approach to HIV-related issues in Kenya, the Catholic Church has been conspicuously mute on the matter.

Some of its members attended the Nairobi meeting where the declaration by religious leaders was made, but they could not openly show their support.

One of the critical issues the religious leaders indicated in the declaration, though not plainly, is they would no longer oppose certain interventions, including condoms, which are used in the prevention of HIV infection.

The Catholic Church is known for its strong stance against the use of condoms arguing that it encourages promiscuity and fails to address the root cause of the high HIV infections.

In its This We Teach and Do, a policy document posted on its website, the church says:

“Some international agencies, national governments and non-governmental organisations advocate the liberal use of condoms.

“They seem prompted by the principle of the greatest happiness of the largest number of citizens, guided by the principle of utilitarianism and hedonism.

“They may resort to the unrestricted use of condom (whose efficacy, incidentally, is not infallible) and tacitly encourage promiscuous living.”

In the document, the church is categorical that it “does not promote the use of condoms as protection against Aids because sexual intercourse is for the married alone, and using a condom does not make it right in other situations.”

It goes further to emphasize that “abstinence and fidelity are not only the best way to avoid becoming infected by HIV or infecting others, but even more they are the best way of ensuring progress towards life-long happiness and true fulfilment.”

Interviews with several people including those in the church, indicated that such a position taken before the signing of the declaration explains why the Catholic Church might not want to contradict itself.

In addition, they note, the Kenya Catholic Church is in a dilemma to append a signature on a declaration that may go against the stand of the Vatican.

“Unlike other churches, the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church makes it difficult for an individual diocese or country representative to take a position on certain matters without consulting the headquarters in Rome,” said a source at the church who sought anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the media.

Dr Sobbie Mulindi, the deputy director of National Aids Control Council, and who coordinates the religious leaders’ programme, said they have a very productive working relationship with the Catholic Church.

“The Catholic Church has its own way of doing things. But that does not mean they are not supporting our efforts of prevention and management of HIV and Aids.”

- See more at: http://www.kenyacentral.com/general/14376-catholic-church-leaves-many-guessing-its-stand-on-aids-declaration.html#sthash.cD8YOlMt.dpuf