

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



Our Ref:

Your Ref:

KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

Waumini House, Westlands

P.O. Box 13475 - 00800, Nairobi

Tel: +254 020 4443133/4/5, / 4443906,4443917

Fax: +254 020 4442910,4441758

Email: kccb@catholicchurch.or.ke /

secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke

Website: www.kccb.or.ke

STATEMENT BY THE KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS(KCCB) ON COVID - 19 VACCINES

We, the Catholic Bishops in Kenya, laud the Kenyan Government for working tirelessly to ensure that the most vulnerable Kenyans have access to the newly released COVID- 19 Vaccine.

This indeed is aligned to the intention of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, as expressed in his 2020 Christmas Day address when he appealed to the nations of the world to share the new coronavirus vaccines with the neediest in all the regions of the planet by stating that *"today, in this time of darkness and uncertainty regarding the pandemic, various lights of hope appear, such as the discovery of vaccines, but for these light to illuminate and bring hope to all, they need to be available to all."*

The Stand of KCCB on COVID-19 Vaccination

The Catholic Church in Kenya has, since before independence, collaborated with the Government of Kenya to roll out high impact lifesaving vaccines through her wide network of health facilities as a critical partner in the health sector in this country.

The Church notes that it is licit and ethically acceptable to receive all COVID-19 vaccines that the Ministry of Health recognizes as clinically genuine, safe and effective. Consequently, we urge the Ministry of Health to take all the necessary steps required to affirm to the public that the vaccines are genuine, safe and effective in order to encourage people to be vaccinated.

In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the COVID-19 pandemic, the common good calls for vaccination, primarily to protect the weakest and most exposed. In this regard, receiving the available COVID-19 vaccines ought to be understood as an act of charity towards other community members and considered an act of love of our neighbour and part of our moral responsibility for the common good.

We note that vaccination is not, as a rule, an obligation and therefore it can only be done on voluntary basis and at the discretion of an individual after giving informed consent. We therefore appeal to the consciences of Kenyans to accept the COVID-19 vaccines in the light of the assurance given by the Ministry of

Health. However, those who for reasons of conscience or otherwise decline the vaccination, must avoid becoming vehicles for the transmission of the COVID-19 by strictly adhering to the containment protocols put in place by the Ministry of Health.

Finally, we, the Catholic Bishops make it clear that the recent statement from the Kenya Catholic Doctors Association (KCDA) was made by the Doctors in their own capacity and not on behalf of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops. It must be understood that those doctors cannot and should not purport to speak in the name of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

We, the Catholic Bishops in Kenya, avail our vast network of healthcare facilities to be utilized to ensure the vaccination programme is rolled out in an objective and well-coordinated manner and that the vaccine reaches the most vulnerable as stipulated in the vaccination roll-out plan.

While we continue to pray for decreased infection and deaths from COVID – 19, we appeal to everyone to continue protecting themselves and others by properly wearing face masks, frequently washing hands and keeping distance in compliance with the Ministry of Health COVID- 19 prevention measures.

We thank all the Kenyans for playing their roles as individuals to keep COVID-19 infections going lower and lower,

Let us be beacons of hope and care to our brothers and sisters. May Almighty God bless and protect the nation and people of Kenya.



for **Most Rev. Philip Anyolo**
CHAIRMAN
KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS