NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://www.ncronline.org)

Vatican to draft guidelines for Catholic hospitals

Francis X. Rocca Religion News Service | Feb. 4, 2011

VATICAN CITY -- Controversies over bioethical standards at U.S. Catholic hospitals show the need for greater Catholic education for health care workers, Vatican officials said Thursday (Feb. 3).

Church leaders said a new set of biomedical guidelines will be published later this year, as well as a separate document on AIDS prevention after last year?s controversial remarks by Pope Benedict XVI on the morality of condom use.

The announcement, at a press conference to publicize educational initiatives of the Vatican?s Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, did not include a publication date for the AIDS document.

Bishop Jose L. Redrado, secretary of the council, said Catholic facilities are confronting a ?culture of death? following disputes over a 2009 abortion at a Catholic hospital in Arizona that doctors said was necessary to save the mother?s life. Phoenix Bishop Thomas Olmsted stripped the hospital of its Catholic affiliation and excommunicated its chief ethicist.

Such disputes show the need to translate church teaching into the terms of ?modern society,? Redrado said.

?The language should be clear,? he said, ?explaining what the church says, where the frontiers are, where there is a risk of crossing the line.?

A forthcoming charter for health care workers, which would update a guide issued in 1995, will be a major part of the educational effort, said Monsignor Jean-Marie Musivi, undersecretary of the council.

The charter will reflect the latest church teaching in such fast-changing fields as stem cell research and assisted reproduction technology.

?We have some good nurses, even including our religious sisters, but they don?t have specific preparation on these questions, so this charter could play a role,? Musivi said.

The document on HIV/AIDS will reflect the work of a May 28 Vatican conference on the subject, and include notes on Benedict?s comments on the morality of using condoms to help stem the spread of the disease.

In a book-length interview last year, Benedict said condoms are not a ?real or moral solution? to the AIDS epidemic, but that their use by someone intending to prevent infection could ?be a first step in the direction of a moralization? of sexuality.

A December statement by the Vatican?s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?which Musivi on Thursday called an ?authoritative explanation??insisted that the pope?s words did not mark a change in Catholic moral teaching or ?pastoral practice? against the use of condoms for AIDS prevention or contraception.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/03/2016 - 17:26*): http://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/vatican-draft-guidelines-catholic-hospitals