

Cardinal condemns condom factory

LAGOS, Nigeria (CNS) — A Nigerian cardinal has condemned the government's recent approval of a billion-dollar condom factory in Yenagoa.

Cardinal Anthony Olubunmi Okogie of Lagos said the "condom is widely known not to be a safe protector against HIV/AIDS. It is widely acknowledged today that the safest measure against HIV/AIDS is abstinence."

He expressed concern about the condom factory in his New Year's Day message, made available to journalists in early January.

The cardinal said he wondered why the Nigerian government, which claims to be championing the eradication of HIV/AIDS, is now encouraging the spread of the virus through the use of condoms.

He urged the government to reconsider the plan "in order to ensure a healthy nation."

In his message, Cardinal Okogie described 2006 as a year of many national disasters.

"There were air crashes and numerous road accidents," he said, calling on the government to take steps to help reduce such accidents.

Although Cardinal Okogie said democracy in Nigeria has its problems, he expressed joy that "our democratic experiment has been on course."

He also commended the nation's judiciary for standing the test of time as the last hope of the ordinary Nigerian.

"Where our legislators have erred, the judiciary helped to restore order," he said.

Cardinal Okogie said he hoped people, with the help of selfless leaders, would reap the benefits of democracy in the way of "economic empowerment and financial emancipation of the citizens" in the new year.

“Nigeria needs — and urgently, too — selfless leaders who are known patriots and who are ready to serve the welfare of the peoples and not to feast only on their pockets,” he said.