



## **AFRICA/TUNISIA - "I am optimistic about the future of Tunisia" says the Archbishop of Tunis on the eve of the vote**

Tunis (Agenzia Fides) - "The situation is very calm. Last night, the campaign ended without any incidents and now we are living in the expectation of the vote" says to Fides His Exc. Mgr. Maroun Elias Lahham, Archbishop of Tunis, on the eve of the first free vote in Tunisia. Tomorrow, October 23, 11,000 candidates will contend for 218 seats in the Constitutional Assembly that will have to write the new Constitution. The registered voters are 7 million and a half.

There is a high number of parties that have entered the list, most of which are formed in the aftermath of the fall of Ben Ali's regime, and about the possibility that this situation can cause confusion among voters, Mgr. Lahham says, "The Tunisian parties are 120, of which 110 have presented themselves in the elections. This certainly is likely to cause confusion among voters, accentuated by the fact that it is the first time that the Tunisians vote in elections which are truly free. They are not accustomed to the election campaign, conducted by the parties, promising more or less the same thing. There is enthusiasm but also uncertainty".

The Archbishop of Tunis adds that "Tunisia has started its path to democracy. It will be a model of democracy made by Tunisians. There are no standard models of democracy valid for all countries. Each creates its own model, adapting it to their social and cultural conditions. I am optimistic about the future of the country", concluded Mgr. Lahham. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 22/10/2011)