



## **AFRICA/EGYPT - Egyptian Catholics at the school of "political formation"**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - In the coming weeks the Egyptian Catholic communities will promote social political training courses to promote the common discernment before the full transition of ongoing uncertainties in the large African Country. The initiative aims to revive the pilot experience already inspired by the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate after the end of the Mubarak regime. "But now," explains to Fides Agency Botros Fahim Awad Hanna, Auxiliary Bishop of Alexandria of the Catholic Copts "the pastoral Council of the Catholic Church in Egypt in his meeting in early October, recommended to enhance this work of formation, indicating it as a priority for all the Egyptian Catholic communities of different rite."

The need to promote a non unprepared judgment in front of the political and social upheavals that are affecting Egypt was felt from the first blaze of the uprising, which began in January 2011. "Already in March of that year," says Bishop Fahim Hanna "we realized that something had to be done. We started fortnightly meetings at the headquarters of the Coptic Patriarchate. The meetings were attended by an average of eighty people, including many Muslims. Many of those present were educators who in turn reported the contents of the lessons in the local communities. "The meetings were a constant reference to the Church's social doctrine. Among the guiding criteria which inspired the sessions there were always the respect for human rights and the secular category of citizenship, valued as the basis for a peaceful and free coexistence from all ethnic and religious discrimination.

Now, in front of the new developments of the Egyptian political scene - marked by great flowering of parties and movements and the assertion of the Muslim Brotherhood - the need to confront oneself with the current policy is still more pressing. Bishop Fahim Hanna explains: "The constituent assembly is at work. We are waiting for the new Constitution. One makes choices designed to affect our individual lives and community. When the first draft of laws come out, we need to have the tools to be able to analyze, to know how to express a clear opinion, so one can say yes or no to the new Constitution in a reasonable manner." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 16/10/2012).