



AFRICA/KENYA - "Choose honest leaders, regardless of their religion," urges the Vicar of Mombasa

Nairobi (Agenzia Fides) - "What comes first, the integrity of leaders or their religious affiliation? Wish to be governed by a dishonest leader belonging to your religious affiliation or an honest leader, regardless of his religious identity," asks Fr. Wilybard Lagho, Vicar of Mombasa and President of the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CCC), in a reflection on the upcoming presidential elections which will be held in Kenya next year. "The elections will be an opportunity for voters to choose honest leaders, irrespective of their wealth, ethnic or religious affiliation. The choice of political leaders will be a test of the voters own integrity," said the document sent to Fides Agency. In reference to the recent sectarian clashes that took place in Mombasa, Fr. Lagho, referring both to the Koran and the Bible, urges Christians and Muslims to peaceful coexistence and good neighborliness. "In the coastal region, especially in Mombasa, where Muslims and Christians live in the same neighborhoods, let us envisage living together in peace. One of my favorite 'Hadith' (Sayings of the Prophet) regarding the good neighborhood depicts Jibrael (Gabriel) who recommended to treat neighbors kindly and politely, to the point that I thought I would he would order me to make them my heirs (Sahih All Bukhari - The book of Ahkam). " In reading the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel, Fr. Lagho recalls: "Christians are taught that your neighbors is the most needy, in other words, the most vulnerable, irrespective of their social, ethnic and religious affiliation (see Luke 20, 25-37)."

"Let religious leaders therefore unite and encourage voters to choose honest leader who will liberate our people from the corrupt leadership that has, unfortunately, led to chronic impunity in our Nation. For once, let the believers raise above social, ethnic and religious affiliation in the choice of political leaders," said Fr. Lagho. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 19/20/2012)