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AFRICA/EGYPT - A TV for Egyptian Catholics: "a tool to show everyone the wealth of the Catholic gaze"

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - Its name will be "Salam", which in Arabic means "peace." It will see the light of day within 2013, but the planning phase has already begun. It will be the first Egyptian Catholic television network, cathodic voice of the pluriform Catholicism that lives and works in the great Country now led politically by the Muslim Brotherhood. The project has been in incubation for a long time. "But here – explains to Fides the Bishop Adel Zaki OFM, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria - there are seven Catholic rites. To clarify and organize everything on behalf of the Catholic Church as a whole a bit 'of time and patience" were needed. The latest concerns were set aside only a few weeks ago, when Mgr. Zaki obtained from the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Egypt the authority to carry out the project on behalf of the whole national Catholic structure, provided it does not weigh on the financial statements of local Churches.
The television network will have a rented office in a building in Cairo near the Latin Episcopio. A specialized agency has been asked to prepare a draft of the future TV outlining the purpose and costs. It is expected that the initial phase will require a budget of 5 million euro. "But the project under construction – explains Bishop Zaki – will have to also indicate the standard costs, once the initiative starts working. Only by presenting a detailed and sustainable plan we can make the search for funding operational. " Key stakeholders for fundraising are the Bishops' Conferences of Italy, Germany and the United States, with their respective organizations for the support of other Churches. But Bishop Zaki relies heavily "on the Lord's providence, which will certainly put on our way someone willing to help us. There are already wealthy Egyptians who from the United States or Australia said they are excited about the project, and have pledged their support. "
The first meetings with television operators already active on other networks, to select the staff in charge of starting the business have started. We will start with broadcasting for two hours a day and then gradually expand the program schedule. "Of course – explains the Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria - we started off looking for collaborators within our community, and we hope to soon activate synergies with Catholic stations of other Countries. But the first criterion in the selection of personnel will be competence. The Coptic Orthodox and Muslims may also be involved."
If many operational and financial details of the project are still to be defined, its ideal reasons are very clear: "The Synod being held in Rome," warns Bishop Zaki "recognized that the media, wittingly or unwittingly, have become a tool to get people to proclaim the Gospel. In Egypt our Catholic identity is often not distinguished from those of the Coptic Orthodox and Protestants, who have several media networks. In the current situation in Egypt, it seems useful to have a tool to show everyone the wealth of the Catholic gaze, even on the ground of the social doctrine. It is a small dream that we want to achieve in all humility, as a contribution to the unity of Christians and of all the Egyptians. " (GV) (Agenzia Fides 24/10/2012).

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