



AFRICA/EGYPT - Patriarch Tawadros II: the idea to divide Egypt to create a "Coptic State " is irrational

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - The members of the Coptic diaspora who launched the idea to divide Egypt to create a Coptic State are "irrational". This is what Pope Tawadros II in person said, for two months at the helm of the largest Christian community in an Arab Country. In an interview with Turkish Anadolu Agency on the occasion of Coptic Christmas, and re-launched by the Egyptian media, Pope Tawadros strongly affirmed that "the Church is an integral part of that Egypt that will not be divided, that has been united since the Pharaoh Menes and will remain so forever."

The Patriarch also added that the plight of the Copts in the new political environment dominated by Islamist currents "does not represent a crisis," noting that sectarian incidents in Egypt over the past decades have already occurred in the Country. Tawadros also reiterated that the reserves of the Copts in front of the new Constitution cannot be interpreted as a reaction based on sectarian character: they only express concern about the articles of the Constitution that "are not consistent with the principles of citizenship."

During the Christmas vigil, the militants of some Egyptian parties displayed banners with best wishes on them in front of San Marco Cathedral where the Patriarch celebrated the solemnity of Christmas. The celebration was attended by a number of political opposition figures, including former Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. President Morsi paid tribute to the Patriarch over phone, and sent the Head of the presidential cabinet, Refaa El-Tahtawi to the Christmas liturgy. According to local sources, the Patriarch's request not to applaud or rumble in church at the entrance of political leaders was respected. Back in November the new Patriarch asked the faithful to refrain from clapping and "ululations" during liturgical celebrations, respecting the churches as houses of God (GV) (Agenzia Fides 07/01/2013)