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ASIA/HOLY LAND - Patriarch Twal's message for the parliamentary elections in Jordan: citizens go to vote

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) - Patriarch of Jerusalem of the Latins, Fouad Twal, has sent a message to the "dear children" of Jordan in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for January 23. In the message, sent to Fides Agency, the Patriarch thanked King Abdullah II for ensuring that all citizens are able to exercise their electoral rights enshrined in the Constitution, and recalls the words addressed by King Abdallah to Benedict XVI in May 2009, during the papal visit to Jordan: "The sons of our people, Muslims and Christians are equal citizens before the law, and all are involved in shaping the future of our country."
The Patriarch then defines the parliamentary elections as a "valuable opportunity" offered to Jordanian citizens to exercise their rights and duties as part of their "beloved homeland." That Country, after the worship due to the one God, occupies a position of first importance, since – notes His Beatitude - dedication towards one's Country preceds and guarantees the protection of the legitimate interests of individuals or groups.
On addressing the Christians, Patriarch Twal recalls that Christ himself invited his disciples to be "in the world" as salt, light and leaven. "There is no contradiction," said the Patriarch of Jerusalem "between the worship of God and belonging to one's own country."
His Beatitude Fouad Twal hopes that the elections will bring in Parliament "righteous people before God and to his own conscience" so that the Parliamentary Assembly can take responsibility even in the season of instability lived in the Middle East. With respect to Christian candidates, the Patriarch calls on them to serve the common good and his brothers and sisters "before themselves," fleeing sectarian logic. They are expected to act with a sense of responsibility and love "recommended to the followers of Christ," which is the hallmark of Christian life "at all times and in all places." In his message, His Beatitude also cites a speech in 1993 of his predecessor Michel Sabbah, along with a passage of the working document for the Synod on the Middle East (held in the Vatican in October 2010) in which reference is made to the positive contribution that Christians are always called to offer to the benefit of the society in which they live.
Closing his appeal - which bears the date of January 12 - Patriarch cites the First Letter of St. Paul to Timothy, in the invitation to pray "for kings and all those who are in high positions, so that we may lead a tranquil life, with all godliness and dignity." His Beatitude prays to God to protect "the beloved kingdom" of Jordan, and addresses to Jordanian citizens the invitation to take part in the upcoming elections.
Patriarch Twal's intervention - who was born in Madaba and belongs to a Bedouin family of ancient Christian tradition – represents a significant public statement of the democratic legitimacy of the forthcoming elections, boycotted by Islamist forces. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 15/01/2013).

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