



## **AFRICA/EGYPT - Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak is the new Patriarch of Alexandria of the Catholic Copts**

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - The Coptic Catholic Church has a new Patriarch: Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak, 57, Bishop of the Eparchy of Minya. The Synod of the Coptic Catholic Bishops, who gathered in Cairo from January 12 to 16, received a letter of resignation for health reasons by Patriarch Cardinal Antonios Naguib, and after a day of spiritual retreat, proceeded to the election of his successor, who then received the Ecclesiastical Communion granted by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak was born on August 19, 1955 in Beni-Cliker in the Eparchy of Assiut. He studied philosophy and theology at the Major Seminary in Maadi, Cairo, and was ordained a priest in February 1980. He continued his studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1988, obtained a licentiate in dogmatic Theology. He was a professor of dogmatic theology and then - from 1990 to 2000 - a rector of the same Seminary in Maadi where he was a student. He also held the role of Director of the Catechetical Office in Sakakini and in 2002 became pastor of the Catholic Coptic Cathedral in Cairo. In September of that same year, the Coptic Catholic Synod elected him bishop of the Eparchy of Minya. His episcopal ordination took place on 15 November 2002.

During the years of his episcopal ministry, the Diocese of Minya distinguished itself for the fervor of catechetical activity and the intensification of the social and charitable activities. In the villages of the diocesan territory, 12 training centers have been established and a program of integral development - health, economic, educational - in favor of farmers and poorer sections of the population, making no distinction between Christians and Muslims have been launched. In the diocese there are also 20 active Catholic schools. "Thanks to our faith in Jesus Christ and certain of our love for Egypt, we will never leave our land," said the then Bishop Sidrak to Apic Agency in an interview published last April. (GV) ( Agenzia Fides 18/01/2013).