



AFRICA/EGYPT - Coptic Catholic Bishop Youhanna Golta: Egypt cannot become Islamist like Mali

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "The future of Egypt? At the moment no one knows. Not even President Morsi. " On the second anniversary of the Revolution of 25 January 2013, while there are reports of new clashes in the streets between police and anti-government protesters, the Coptic Catholic Bishop Youhanna Golta outlines to Fides Agency the contours of the delicate moment lived by the great north African Country -. According to Anba Golta, "if the government and the Muslim Brotherhood try to repress the demonstrations held these days, the nightmare of civil war will return in Egypt."

Bishop Golta, as a representative of the Catholic Churches in Egypt, took part in the Constituent Assembly called upon to write a new Constitution. Today he confirms to Fides the reasons that led him and other Christian representatives to withdraw from that body: "Work had begun on the right note, but at some point it became clear that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis wanted to impose an Islamic Constitution. We discussed with their leaders, but they did not want to listen. We realized that our function was only decorative, and went away." In past days, the Christian representatives officially withdrew from the so-called "national dialogue" convened by President Morsi to try to reopen contacts with the social partners and the opposition groups. "To dialogue - notes Anba Youhanna - there is need of someone who can listen to the arguments proposed by others. Even the Party 'Strong Egypt', founded by the former member of the Muslim Brotherhood Abdel Moneim Abul Fotouh, has withdrawn from national dialogue. And we remain in contact with representatives of the University of Al-Azhar. Only a minority of the people supported with their vote, in the referendum, the entry into force of the new Constitution. "

According to Bishop Golta "Egypt is not Mali. It is at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. More than ten million Christians live there. Its economy is based on tourism and trade. This is why one cannot agree to allow it to become an Islamist Country. But there are also international strategies that project a division of Egypt. And to pay the price would be the people. I - continued Anba Golta - love my Muslim brothers and my sisters. I also dedicated my studies and my PhD to Islamic culture. "

For Bishop Golta, the real problem is the relationship between politics and religion: "Who wants to be religious, cannot claim to compel by law the people to pray, not to drink alcohol and follow all practices related to his religion. In Arab countries, only by separating religion and politics one can have democracy. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 25/01/2013).