



AFRICA/NIGER - "Refugees are the invisible of our time", says a missionary

Niamey (Agenzia Fides) - "The refugees are the invisible of our time," says Fr. Mauro Armanino, SMA missionary from Niamey, the capital of Niger, who shares with Fides some reflections on World Refugee Day which is celebrated today, June 20. "There is much talk about them at the moment, when they become visible in the crisis, in the camps that are set up not too far from the borders. They often become invisible when they are in town. Invisible as the poor", says the missionary.

"Refugees have a history which is too heavy to carry and too complicated to tell: words fail to do so. They experience displacement and marginalization in solitude.

An experience of abandonment and sometimes rejection. But also made of solidarity in the small things. It is above all a renewed sense of faith in God that is perceived as the only comfort in life."

Fr. Armanino believes that "the definition of a refugee is clear but it should be updated in the light of what is happening in our globalized world." "It is now difficult – he explains – to establish the difference between a refugee who has no choice but to escape from his Country to save his own life and for climatic or economic reasons."

But beyond these differences what matters, concludes the missionary is "to ensure that what is hidden becomes visible and recognized. Sharing this experience is an important sign of civilization and openness. We can humanize ourselves only by remaining together." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 20/6/2013)