



AFRICA/EGYPT - Coptic Patriarch Tawadros: the presidential elections, the Church does not take sides with any candidate

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - Coptic Orthodox Patriarch Tawadros II has explicitly excluded any choice of the Coptic Orthodox Church in favor of one of the two candidates in the Egyptian presidential elections to be held next May 26 to 27. "I ask every citizen, Christian or Muslim", said Pope Tawadros in an interview published on Sunday, May 4th in the Egyptian Catholic weekly Hamel el-Resale "to read the electoral program of each candidate and choose who you want as President". In the same interview, the Coptic Orthodox patriarch wanted to reaffirm the "institutional" nature and not political of the explicit support expressed by the Coptic Church regarding the transition program that led to the removal of President Mohamed Morsi, the promulgation of the new constitution and presidential elections.

In the race for the Presidency of Egypt, there are only two candidates: former General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the left-wing politician Hamdin Sabahi. "The position expressed by Patriarch Tawadros" says to Fides Agency the Coptic Catholic Bishop of Minya, Botros Fahim Awad Hanna, "is to be appreciated and also manifests a positive maturation compared to the past, when some Bishops tried to influence the faithful in the choice of lists and individual candidates. We - Anba Botros continues - can only suggest to the baptized to get as much information as possible on the programs, not to be manipulated by propaganda, to consider the proposals with a critical sense and make a conscious discernment. But we must not go further. In the case of the upcoming presidential elections, the two candidates are very different but both are able to serve the Country. Everyone has to choose between them according to their own conscience". (GV) (Agenzia Fides 05/05/2014)