



HIS Holiness POPE SHENOUDA III (Aug 3, 1923- March 17, 2012)

His Holiness: Pope 'Papa Ava' Shenouda III; the 117th Pope of Alexandria; and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark (Born Aug 3,1923, Pope: Nov 14, 1971 - March 17, 2012)

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda (HHPS) was born Nazeer Gayed in the village of Salam near Assiut (in Upper Egypt) on Aug 3, 1923. He attended Cairo University and graduated with a B.A. degree from Cairo University, School of Literature with a History degree in 1947. He worked as a History and English teacher, and at the same time, attended evening classes at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo. He was appointed to its faculty in 1949. He also served as an army reserve officer for 2 years. In 1954 he experienced a deep urge to retire to monastic life, and entered the St. Mary's Monastery know as Al-Syriaan Monastery in the Western Desert. From 1956 to 1962 he led the life of a monastic hermit in a cave in the desert 7 Kilometers from 'Al- Syriaan.' Monastery He moved to the cave many Church books, history books and linguistics and the cave was transformed to a major study. He was later ordained priest with the name Father Antonius Al-Syriaany.



In 1962, the late Father Pope Cyril (Kyrillos) VI consecrated him bishop and assigned to him the position of bishop of theological education. The number of students at the Coptic Theological Seminary increased three-fold thanks to his relentless efforts. After he became bishop, he started weekly lectures open to the public: In Cairo on Fridays, and in Alexandria on Sundays. Thousands of these very valuable lectures are recorded on tape and represent a very important source of biblical teaching, Church tradition, and orthodox doctrine. He also answered questions in the weekly meetings that covered all aspects of life. Several books were published with questions and answers under the title: "Many Years with People Questions?"; There are many more questions and answers that can be published in the future, information that will benefit the faithful for years to come.

After the departure of the Holy Father Pope Kyrillos VI, bishop Shenouda was one of three bishops nominated to succeed the departed patriarch to the throne of St. Mark. Following the Coptic Church tradition of asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making the final choice in selecting a pope, A child was asked to draw a name in front of the congregation in attendance at the Great Cathedral of St. Mark. Bishop Shenouda was chosen by the will of God to be Patriarch on the 5th of Hatur 1688 A.M. (November 14, 1971).

One of his first efforts was to hold meetings with representatives of other denominations. It began with a series of informal meetings with Roman Catholic theologians which led to the signing of a joint statement with Pope Paul VI on the need for Christian unity. Visits have been exchanged with other patriarchs including Orthodox, and Catholic with Chalcedonians as well. He also was co-president of the World Council of Churches for 2 terms, and president of the Middle East Council of Churches (MEC) for many years and arranged many dialogues with all major denominations including Other Orthodox Churches, Catholics, and Protestants.

Under his leadership, the number of Coptic Churches increased in Egypt and abroad. His firm belief in spreading the word made him increase the number of episcopates. To that end he increased the numbers from 33 to 55 consecrating that many bishops to serve the new episcopates.

He consecrated over 115 Bishops, and all the bishops of the Coptic Church except His Eminence Metropolitan Michael, Bishop of Assiut were consecrated by HH Pope Shenouda III. He has devoted a great deal of effort to the reconstruction of old monasteries. He has personally ordained more than 22 bishops? and more than 500? priests.

HHPS is a prolific writer and a great poet in his own right. Over 100 Books were written by HHPS III, many. Among his writing are: "An Introduction to the New Testament", "A Commentary on the Book of Revelations", "A Commentary on the Book of Psalms", "The Book of the Song of Songs", "Meditations on the Ten Commandments", "Salvation: An Orthodox Perspective", "The Law of Monogamy", "St. Mark, Apostle and Martyr", "Repentance", Silence and Solitude, according to St. Isaac the Syrian", "The Upsurge of the Soul-a poem", "The Life of Prayer", "The Life of "Thanksgiving" Many were translated to many live languages including: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, etc

Since his return to the seat of Coptic Orthodox Administration on January 6, 1984 (the Egyptian Government under Anwar Sadaat, had banished him to the monastery of St. Bishoy in Oct. 1981), Pope Shenouda has been working hard to re-establish the daily management of the Church. His 40 month isolation resulted in more than 4 books. Over a million copies of these new books are in the hands of the faithful who never doubted for a minute that he was the true Holy Patriarch chosen by the Holy Spirit to lead the people whom the Lord on the tongue of Isaiah the prophet called: "Blessed my people Egypt"

Many of his books have been translated into many languages including: English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, etc. since his return to the seat of Coptic Orthodox Administration on January 6, 1984

After his return to the seat of St. Mark, he increased his efforts in all areas related to his pastoral work increasing the number of churches in North America from 22 Churches to over 240 Churches (10 folds). He increased the number of Churches in Africa, The Arabian Gulf, England, France, Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Australia, etc. and added new churches in Scandinavia, Spain, Latin America. Churches were provided with married priests or monks according to the financial and/or political situation and provided with Church books in Coptic and Arabic and approved translations to local languages. Bishops were also ordained for Churches outside Egypt including 4 in the USA, 2 in Australia, 2 in Africa, 2 in South America, 4 in England, one in Austria, 1 in France, 1 in Germany, etc. Also, native Churches in England and France were provided with native (non-Egyptian) Bishops as necessary.

His Holiness travelled around the Globe many times, in particular in 1996 when the Church celebrated the Silver Jubilee (25 years) of his consecration, he preferred to travel around the world to visit Coptic orthodox congregation instead of waiting in Cairo for delegations to celebrate the Silver Anniversary.

In 2008 under the heavy load of 18 hrs work days and kidney disease, he fell in the monastery while he was alone and had a broken hip bone. He was treated in one of the best medical centers in Cairo and because of the sensitivity of fracture location was transferred to Cleveland Clinic where he was hospitalized for over 4 months. His request that he did not want to face his flock on a wheel chair, made it important for his physicians American, and Egyptian-Americans at the Clinic to triple their efforts to treat the broken bones and provide the maximum therapy to achieve the goal, and he went home in late October 2008 on his feet. During that time, he was treated for renal failure through dialysis. Dialysis equipment was also installed in the Papal residence in Cairo and top notch Egyptian physicians were at his service to assure best medical care.

Since 1989, he started an annual Seminar for the Clergy abroad that was held in February initially at the Papal Center in Cedar Groves, NJ and was later moved to The Vine Retreat Center outside Boston, MA.

His holiness continued his relentless efforts to teach and preach the Coptic People and others who were attracted to his simple and powerful approach of teaching and preaching the Holy Bible, and Church dogma as well as all aspects of Christian living.

Around 2010, physicians discovered cancer cells and immediately started treating him for cancer in Cairo and at Cleveland Clinic. This was kept in confidence to prevent any worry about the health of HHPS III. His visits to Cleveland Clinic increased. He struggled with severe pain in complete silence and his concern was not for his own wellbeing, but for the wellbeing of the Church; the body of Christ. His last visit to Cleveland Clinic was in January 2012. In this visit he learned that his illness was terminal. He also inside him felt that the time of his departure was near. This news was kept in confidence, Although, he became unable to deliver the weekly lecture, he tried real hard to continue. Two weeks before his departure he was not able to give a full lecture and it was cut down to 20 minutes under the weight of pain and suffering, the following lecture was cancelled because he could not deliver it. The flock congregated outside the Church to pray for him for the entire period he was supposed to speak.

On Saturday, March 17, 2012 he could not sleep and was seeing holy visions of multitudes waiting for him (The Cloud of Witnesses mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Around 5 PM on Saturday, his precious soul travelled to heaven surrounded with the spirits of saints as the angels carried the Holy soul to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he served honestly and sincerely for over 75 years (since he was 12 years old).

HHPS III is a phenomena that happens only once in a millennium. Many consider him to be like Paul the Apostle in Preaching, Athanassius the Apostolic in defending the faith, John the golden mouth in his ability to deliver golden words in all occasions, and Like Shenouty the Archimandrite, his name sake in monasticism, solitude; and the life of prayer.

We at St. Mary & St. Abraam Coptic Orthodox Church, St. Louis, Missouri, USA join all the Coptic and non-Coptic Churches around the world, all Egyptians and the people of God around the world in praying for the soul of our beloved Pope Shenouda III and in asking His Prayers for us in front of the throne of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ.



May the Soul of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III repose in the Paradise of Joy, in heavenly Jerusalem. In a green pasture on the waters of rest, in the bosom of the Forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with all the Martyrs, Cross bearers, and Saints, and all those who pleased God from Adam to the End of the World. And May His Holy Blessings be with us all. Amen. Glory be to You O' Lord, Glory be to You O' Lord. Lord Have Mercy. Lord Have Mercy. Lord Bless us all. Lord Repose his soul. Amen

And as it was, shall it be. It is from Generation to Generation; and Unto the Age of all ages. Amen.