

117th Pope of Alexandria and the patriarch of all Africa of the Coptic Orthodox Church. He passed on March 17.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III presided more than 40 years over a worldwide expansion of the Coptic Orthodox Church. During his papacy, he appointed the first-ever bishops to preside over North American dioceses. When His Holiness became Pope in 1971, there were only four churches in North America. Today, there are over 100.

He championed a deep commitment to ecumenism interfaith dialogue, not just with Catholic groups—meeting the Roman Catholic Pope of Rome for the first time in over 1,500 years in the year of 1973—but he joined with Protestant churches as well as Islamic leaders and Muslim clerics. He was a man for the world.

I had the honor of meeting the Pope at our local Coptic Christian church when it was being constructed. He was a man of immense faith, unforgettable. I never will forget his steady, strong, peaceful countenance when I asked him what it would take to achieve unity among the faith confessions, and he said: It would take love.

His contributions to world understanding and bridging horizons yet unmet will flower in decades ahead and progress will move forward in his memory.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 17, 2012]  
COPTIC POPE DIES IN EGYPT AMID CHURCH'S STRUGGLES

(By Kareem Fahim)

CAIRO.—Pope Shenouda III, who led the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt for four decades, expanding the church's presence around the world as he struggled, often unsuccessfully, to protect his Christian minority at home, died on Saturday after a long illness, state media reported.

Pope Shenouda, who was 88, had suffered from cancer and kidney problems for years.

His death comes at a time of rising fears for Egypt's 10 million Coptic Christians, who have felt increasingly vulnerable since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak and amid attacks on churches by hard-line Islamists and repression by Egypt's security forces.

The rise to power of conservative Islamist parties has also raised concerns that Egyptian national identity is becoming more closely bound to Islam.

"It's an injection of uncertainty for Copts at a time of transition in the country," said Michael Wahid Hanna, a fellow at the Century Foundation. "Whether people were fond of him or not, this will cause anxiety."

On Saturday night, hundreds of Coptic Christians gathered at Cairo's main cathedral to grieve.

Samir Youssef, a physician, called the pope "an intellectual, a poet—strong, charismatic."

"On a personal level, I'm worried about the future. I think there will be a conflict, the same chaos that followed the 25th of January," he added, referring to the start of the uprising last year.

In a statement, President Obama praised Pope Shenouda as a beloved "advocate for tolerance and religious dialogue." Egypt's interim rulers, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, called on Egyptians to "come together in solidarity and be tolerant, to take Egypt toward security and stability."

Pope Shenouda, who became patriarch in 1971, was known as a charismatic, conserv-

ative leader for Egypt's Copts, who make up about 10 percent of the population in the majority Sunni nation.

He filled a leadership vacuum as Copts—along with most Egyptians—retreated from public life under authoritarian rule, and he expanded the church's reach, especially in North America. At the same time, he was criticized for what were seen as his autocratic tendencies, which stifled internal church changes, and his support for Mr. Mubarak's government, given in return for a measure of protection that Copts increasingly felt was insignificant.

The failure to distance the church from Mr. Mubarak led to greater disillusionment with the pope after the revolution, especially among younger and more secular Copts.

Pope Shenouda was born on Aug. 3, 1923, as Nazeer Gayed in the city of Asyut, Egypt, according to a biography of the patriarch posted on the church's Web site. He attended Cairo University and became a monk in 1954.

In 1981, Pope Shenouda was sent into internal exile by President Anwar Sadat, with whom he clashed after complaining about discrimination against the Copts. Mr. Mubarak ended that exile in 1985, with an informal understanding that Pope Shenouda would be less vocal in pointing out discrimination, according to Mariz Tadros, a researcher at the University of Sussex and the author of a forthcoming book on the Copts.

That understanding was severely strained in the past decade after a series of deadly clashes between Copts and Muslims, and charges that the state, and especially its security services, stoked the sectarian divide. After 21 people were killed in a church bombing last year, some Copts criticized the pope for not confronting the government.

The Coptic Church's own policies, including its almost total ban on divorce, have also increased tensions. Some have left the church specifically to divorce, either choosing another denomination or officially converting to Islam, then sometimes converting back after the split.

The conversions have incited rumors that have led to episodes of Muslim-Christian violence.

The next pope will face a growing desire among many Copts to expand the community's leadership, analysts said. Under Pope Shenouda, "the church became the de facto political representative of the Copts," Mr. Hanna said. "That became increasingly problematic."

#### OCTOBER BABY: EVERY LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

(Mr. ADERHOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to one of the most important issues of our time and to remind my colleagues and my fellow Americans that "every life is beautiful."

This weekend, a film called "October Baby" will be in theaters across the country to tell the beautiful, heartfelt story of Hannah, a young woman who learns she was adopted after a failed abortion. While this film captures her journey to discover her hidden past and find hope for her unknown future, it takes a clear stand for life, something we often don't see at the movies.

I believe protecting unborn life is a universal issue and has become one of

the most unifying causes in recent decades. I'm grateful to all those that are involved in the making of the movie, especially the Erwin brothers from Alabama for making "October Baby" and their willingness to put this important issue in the spotlight.

#### A FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO JOHN W. ROWE AS HE RETIRES FROM EXELON

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, Mr. John Rowe, as the chairman and CEO of Exelon, is retiring upon closing of the company's merger with Constellation Energy.

John joined Unicom, the parent company of Commonwealth Edison, in 1998. He was hired to help fix its troubled nuclear fleet and prepare the company for deregulation.

In both 2008 and 2009, Institutional Investor named John the best electric utility CEO in America. In the 14 years of John's leadership, Exelon has been named by Forbes as one of "America's Best Companies," a "Global 2000 Company," the "Best Managed Utility Company," to Fortune's list of the World's Most Admired Companies, one of Businessweek's Top 50 companies, and Utility of the Year by Electric Light and Power.

Throughout John's career, he has been an active leading voice in energy and environmental policy, delivering policy addresses and testifying before Congress, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and State regulators.

John and his wife, Jeanne, are committed participants in civic and cultural activities. They are committed to a wide range of a variety of civic activities, with a focus on education and diversity. The Rowes are particularly proud of their substantial commitment to founding the Rowe-Clark Math and Science Academy. And he is a board of trustees chairman of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to know John Rowe during my tenure in Congress. I can say that his impact on the energy industry will be long felt by both policymakers and Exelon customers. I wish him and his family well in their future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about someone that I have come to know through my work on the Energy and Commerce Committee over the years, John W. Rowe. Mr. John Rowe, the chairman and CEO of Exelon, is retiring upon closing of the company's merger with Constellation Energy. His retirement marks the end of nearly 14 years at Exelon and his 28-year tenure as the longest-serving electric utility CEO. It also brings to a close a long career in the utility business in which Rowe has distinguished himself as both an industry and civic leader.

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