

Millions Mourn Death of Coptic Christian Pope

Millions of **Coptic Christians** mourned the death on Sunday of His Holiness Shenouda III. The Coptic Christian pope served for 41 years, most recently in the face of tensions between his followers and Egyptian Muslims. He was 88.

"He is leaving us in a very difficult time for Copts and the whole country in general. Even some Muslims are afraid of the political future, let alone us Copts in case we are ruled by Islamists," Boutros Gad Allah, a Coptic jeweler, told the *Los Angeles Times*. "His presence in critical situations for Copts was always crucial, but we know that God will leave us in someone else's safe hands."

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III is well known for his deep commitment to **Christian Unity**. In an address he gave at an ecumenical forum during the International Week of Prayer in 1974, he declared, "The whole Christian world is anxious to see the church unite."

President Obama expressed his sadness of the pope's passing, calling him a beloved leader of Egypt's Coptic Christians and an advocate for tolerance and religious dialogue.

"We will remember **Pope Shenouda III** as a man of deep faith, a leader of a great faith, and an advocate for unity and reconciliation. His commitment to Egypt's national unity is also a testament to what can be accomplished when people of all religions and creeds work together," Obama said. "On behalf of the American people, we extend our thoughts and prayers to Coptic Christians, Egyptians and all those who mourn Pope Shenouda III today."