

## About the Author

### Pope Shenouda III

Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria is the 117th Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic See of Saint Mark the Evangelist of the Coptic Orthodox Church. He has served as Pope of Alexandria since November 14, 1971, presiding over a worldwide expansion of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

A graduate of Cairo University and the Coptic Orthodox Seminary, Nazeer Gayed joined the Syrian Monastery of the Ever-Virgin Mary the Theotokos and became a monk under the name Fr. Antonios the Syrian, later to be elevated to the priesthood. In time, Pope Cyril VI summoned Fr. Antonios to the patriarchate where he ordained him Bishop of Christian Education and Dean of the Coptic Orthodox Theological University, whereupon he assumed the name Shenouda. On November 14, 1971, His Holiness was chosen to be the 116th successor of St. Mark the Evangelist.

During his papacy, Pope Shenouda III has appointed the first-ever Bishops to preside over North American dioceses, as well as the first Bishops in Australia, France, England, Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and the first Coptic Churches in South America. He is known for his commitment to Christian unity and has, since the 1970s, advocated inter-denominational Christian dialogue.

In 1973, Pope Shenouda III became the first Coptic Orthodox Pope of Alexandria to meet with the Pope of Rome in over 1500 years. In this visit, Popes Shenouda III and Pope Paul VI signed a common declaration on the issue of Christology and agreed to further discussions on Christian unity. He has also had dialogues with various Protestant churches worldwide.

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. Christian people, being fed up with divisions, are pushing their church leaders to do something about church unity and I am sure that the Holy Spirit is inspiring us." His Holiness is one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches and pursues Christian Unity worldwide.

In the year 2000, His Holiness was awarded the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence by UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura on the recommendation of an international jury.

In August, 2007, Pope Shenouda III received an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from the University of Lawrence in Michigan, USA for his efforts in spreading the values of peace, human love and tolerance in the world. This is the eighth Honorary Doctorate which His Holiness has received in his life. The Letter from the Institute declares that Pope Shenouda is a "man of peace who works in his utmost efforts to maintain more understanding between the Middle Eastern people, regardless their religions or nationalities". The letter continues by saying that His Holiness "shows us the way of reconciliation in that region which is torn apart by wars".

A prolific author, His Holiness has authored over 100 books in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and German. His Holiness offers a unique ability to speak to the multitudes, drawing on over thirty years in the pontifical See of St Mark. Moreover, he draws on the entire Bible as a vehicle to bring the reader to a better understanding of their spiritual life.

The solitude of the barren desert provided His Holiness with the strength necessary meditate on the Holy Scriptures and solidify his union with the Lord. It is from these years of monasticism in the Egyptian desert of Saints Antony, Macarius and Pachomius that His Holiness emerges and radiates experience in love and union with our Lord. Since becoming Pope in 1971, His Holiness delivers weekly addresses at St. Mark's Cathedral in Cairo, defending the faith in this overwhelmingly Muslim society, promoting love and peace.