Beat: Local

Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church chooses new pope

-, 05.11.2012, 02:29 Time

USPA News - A blindfolded boy picked the name of Bishop Tawadros from a crystal chalice during a ceremony Sunday filled with prayer, chants and incense at a cathedral in the Egyptian capital of Cairo, making him the new pope of Egypt`s Coptic Orthodox Church. There are around 8 million Christian Copts in Egypt who represent about 10 percent of the population, but many are increasingly anxious about the community`s future because of a rise in Islamists after the deadly revolution last year which led to Mohamed Morsi being elected as the country`s first Islamist president.

Thousands of worshipers erupted in applause, tears and prayers when Bishop Pachomius, the acting head of the church, took the ballot from the hands of a blindfolded young boy and showed it to the crowd inside the Cairo cathedral. The blindfolded boy had to pick from three ballots in a crystal chalice which contained the names of three papal candidates chosen in an earlier vote. Bishop Tawadros, of Beheira in northern Egypt, will assume his new position on November 18 as Pope Tawadros II. On behalf of U.S. President Barack Obama, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney extended his "warm congratulations" to Coptic Orthodox Christians and all Egyptians. "The United States shares Bishop Tawadros` commitment to unity, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue," he said. "We wish him great success in leading the Middle East`s largest Christian community during a time of great change in the region, and reaffirm our strong support for religious freedom and mutual respect among people of all faiths." Pope Shenouda III, who led the church for more than 40 years, died on March 17 at the age of 88 as a result of both health complications and old age. He had been suffering from liver, lung and colon problems for years and repeatedly traveled to the United States for medical treatment. Shenouda was praised by both Christians and Muslims for his efforts to contain sectarian tensions amidst incidents such as the burning of churches. But the religious leader was also criticized for using the church for political purposes and his handling of the uprising in Egypt last year. In February 1981, Shenouda was among more than 1,500 people who were placed under house arrest by then-Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The move was highly controversial, and Sadat was enraged after the Pope suggested that Egyptian Christians were subject to discriminatory treatment by authorities. Sadat was assassinated later that year, and his successor Hosni Mubarak released Shenouda from house arrest in 1982 before restoring his full authority in 1985. This resulted in a friendly relationship between Mubarak and Shenouda, but the Pope later praised the successful ouster of Mubarak in February 2011. He had earlier called on protesters to end their rallies. Shenouda was also criticized last year after 26 people were killed and more than 300 others were injured when security forces opened fire at Egyptian Christians who were marching in Cairo against religious persecution. The protest followed an attack on a Coptic church days earlier in the southern Egyptian province of Aswan, but some said Shenouda failed to condemn Egypt`s ruling military council over the deaths.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-180/egyptund39s-coptic-orthodox-church-chooses-new-pope.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.

3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com