

Egypt pope to be treated in US for broken leg

Contributed by Egypt News
Wednesday, 11 June 2008

The head of Egypt's Coptic Church, Pope Shenuda III, was to be flown to the United States on Tuesday for urgent medical treatment after breaking his leg, an aide said

The 84-year-old patriarch suffered a fall on Monday evening and spent the whole night without medical attention to a broken femur, said Tharwat Bassily of the Coptic Orthodox Lay Council which manages the church's affairs.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak provided Pope Shenuda with the use of his presidential jet so that he could be flown for treatment in Cleveland, Ohio as swiftly as possible, he added.

"The patriarch slipped on a carpet in his home and fell, breaking his thigh-bone," Bassily said. "He was unable to reach the telephone so he remained on the floor from 10 pm to 6 am.

"He was taken to the Al-Salam Hospital (in Cairo) for tests, but was not given treatment as he is to be flown to Cleveland."

The patriarch suffers from back and kidney problems and has made repeated trips abroad for medical tests or treatment, most recently in Cleveland in May.

Shenuda is the 117th successor of Saint Mark, who according to tradition founded the Coptic Church in the first century AD. He has headed the church since 1971.

Copts are estimated to make up six to 10 percent of Egypt's 76 million people and are the largest Christian community in the Middle East.

EGYPT NEWS