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Vatican mourns Taylor as 'last diva of cinema'

by Francis X. Rocca by Religion News Service

VATICAN CITY -- The Vatican's official newspaper eulogized actress Elizabeth Taylor as the "last remaining star in the firmament of old Hollywood," and praised her contributions on AIDS and other charitable causes.

"The curtain falls on the violet eyes of Hollywood," read the headline over Taylor's obituary in the today's edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Lauding her as a "great actress who became too soon an icon of the star system," the article noted that Taylor's career, which began in childhood, was later marked by an "impressive series of health problems and accidents on the set."

Author Emilio Ranzato lamented Taylor's turbulent private life, including her eight marriages and "abuse and addictions," as well as poor artistic choices later in her career. But he wrote that Taylor managed to "redeem herself thanks to an ever more decisive commitment to charity work, often in tandem with her friend Michael Jackson."

"In recent years her great contribution to the struggle against AIDS would win her important prizes and honors, but above all a newfound energy," Ranzato wrote. That success allowed Taylor "to be stronger despite poor health, and despite the label of living legend that always weighed on her shoulders."

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