

Pope Francis Hospitalized in Rome

Pope Francis, 88, has been admitted to Gemelli Hospital in Rome for diagnostic tests and continued treatment for bronchitis, the Vatican confirmed Friday.

The pontiff had been battling the respiratory infection for over a week but had persisted with many of his papal duties until his hospitalization.

Vatican officials emphasized that the decision to admit the pope was not an emergency measure but a precautionary step following his scheduled audiences, including a meeting with Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico.

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During a public address on Wednesday, the pope's frailty was evident as he struggled to speak.

"Please allow me to ask the priest, the Rector, to continue reading since I cannot do it because of my bronchitis. I hope I will be able to do it next time," he said.

The pope's medical history is extensive, dating back to his early 20s when he underwent a partial lung removal in Argentina due to a severe respiratory infection. In recent years, he has been hospitalized multiple times, including a three-day stay in 2023 for bronchitis and a 10-day recovery following intestinal surgery. He also canceled a planned visit to the United Arab Emirates in December due to illness.

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The Vatican has not provided details on the duration of his hospital stay or the specific course of treatment he is receiving. However, given his age and medical background, close monitoring of his condition is expected as he undergoes further evaluations.

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