

Pope Francis Remains in Critical Condition Amid Failing Health

Pope Francis remains in critical condition after suffering a prolonged asthmatic respiratory crisis, requiring high-flow oxygen therapy and blood transfusions due to a low platelet count, according to an official statement from the Vatican.

The 88-year-old pontiff, who was hospitalized at Rome's Gemelli Hospital on February 14, has been battling a complex lung infection and pneumonia, leading to increased concerns about his health. Doctors have warned that due to his age, chronic lung disease and weakened immune system, his condition remains high-risk and unpredictable.

The Vatican confirmed that Pope Francis is alert and conscious, though in significant pain. Despite his weakened state, he has been sitting upright in an armchair, rather than lying in bed, which medical professionals believe may help with his breathing.

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Doctors say the greatest immediate threat to his recovery is the possibility of sepsis, a life-threatening blood infection that can develop as a complication of pneumonia.

Dr. Sergio Alfieri, the head of medicine and surgery at Rome's Gemelli Hospital, explained that if bacteria from his ongoing respiratory infection were to enter his bloodstream, sepsis could lead to organ failure and death.

"Sepsis, with his respiratory problems and his age, would be really difficult to get out of," Alfieri told reporters during

a press conference. "We are monitoring him closely."

Doctors have been aggressively treating the Pope's infection with a combination of cortisone and antibiotics, alongside high-flow oxygen therapy to ease his breathing. However, Saturday's medical update revealed that he has also developed thrombocytopenia (low platelet count), which affects blood clotting and increases the risk of internal bleeding or complications.

The Pope's condition remains "touch-and-go," with medical experts refraining from offering a clear prognosis at this stage.

Vatican's Response & Papal Resignation Rumors

With Pope Francis in critical condition, speculation has emerged about whether he might resign due to health concerns, similar to his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI.

However, Vatican officials have moved swiftly to shut down these rumors.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State, gave a rare interview to *Corriere della Sera*, responding to claims that a secret meeting took place between Vatican officials and Pope Francis regarding his possible resignation. The Vatican flatly denied these reports, insisting that the Pope remains fully conscious, actively working and making decisions despite his illness.

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In the past, Pope Francis has acknowledged that he has a letter of resignation prepared in the event that he becomes medically incapacitated. However, no such steps have been taken at this time, and the Vatican has confirmed that he

continues to lead the Church from his hospital room.

Doctors are continuing to closely monitor Pope Francis' condition, with his medical team remaining cautiously hopeful that his body will respond to treatment.

The Vatican has promised to release regular updates, though officials acknowledge that his fragile health, advanced age and existing lung condition make recovery uncertain.

While Pope Francis has battled numerous health issues in the past, this marks one of the most serious medical crises of his papacy, leaving the Catholic world on high alert as he fights for his life.

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