

Update: What to Know About Pope Francis' Health Condition

The Vatican reported that the 88-year-old pontiff suffered two episodes of acute respiratory distress. Pope Francis experienced further respiratory complication Monday, requiring a return to noninvasive mechanical ventilation. Doctors performed two bronchoscopies to clear his airways. The Vatican reports he is now using high-flow ventilation again.

Despite these setbacks, Pope Francis remains in stable condition at Rome's Gemelli Hospital. According to the Vatican, he was awake, had breakfast and was receiving therapies after a restful night.

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Questions remain about his overall prognosis. While the Vatican insists the pope is alert and cooperating with medical staff, no photos or videos have been released since he was hospitalized Feb. 14, for a severe lung infection. This marks the longest public absence of his 12-year papacy.

The Vatican has defended the decision to allow Francis to recover privately, releasing only brief medical updates. Meanwhile, the pope has continued to sign documents, signaling he is still engaged in his duties.

Looking ahead, Pope Francis is scheduled to canonize Carlo Acutis on Apr. 27, recognizing the late Italian teenager as the first millennial saint. However, given his ongoing health struggles, it remains uncertain whether he will be able to preside over the ceremony.

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Earlier this week, Francis had received respiratory therapy while alternating between high-flow supplemental oxygen and a mask. He also prayed in the chapel, had breakfast and read the day's newspapers.

However, in the early afternoon, his condition suddenly worsened due to respiratory complications, prompting doctors to take immediate action and put him on a ventilator. While he has since stabilized, his medical team remains cautious about his prognosis.

The Vatican has already adjusted his upcoming schedule to accommodate his recovery. Cardinal Angelo De Donatis will preside over the Ash Wednesday ceremony and procession on Mar. 5, taking over for the pope.

A Holy Year audience scheduled for Saturday has been canceled, and it remains uncertain whether Francis will deliver his Sunday noon blessing for the third consecutive week.

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