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Cardinal Raymond L. Burke walks in the ninth national March for Life in Rome May 18, 2019. The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wis., reported Aug. 21, 2021, that the cardinal, who remained hospitalized for COVID-19, was removed from a ventilator, taken out of ICU and returned to a regular hospital room. (CNS photo/courtesy Marcia per la Vita)



by Catholic News Service

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La Crosse, Wis. — August 23, 2021

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Cardinal Raymond L. Burke remained hospitalized for COVID-19 but as of Aug. 21 he was taken off a ventilator that he had been on for some days and taken out of the ICU to be returned to a regular hospital room, according to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse.

Father Paul N. Check, executive director of the shrine in Cardinal Burke's home diocese, relayed an announcement about the cardinal from his family on the cardinal's official Twitter account and on the shrine website.

"Praised be Jesus Christ!" the priest said. "His sister spoke with him on the phone this morning, and His Eminence expressed his deep gratitude for the many prayers offered on his behalf."

"His family asks that we continue those prayers for his full and speedy recovery," the priest said, "and they are grateful to God for the exceptional medical care

the cardinal has received from the dedicated doctors and nurses who continue to assist him."

Father Check did not give the cardinal's location. In an earlier statement, he said the cardinal's family "does not plan to disclose his location" but thanked the faithful for prayers and rosaries being said for him.

"The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the cardinal's media will provide further updates as directed by his family," Father Check's Aug. 21 statement said.

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In an Aug. 14 tweet, Cardinal Burke's official Twitter account said the 73-year-old prelate had been admitted to the hospital with COVID-19 and was "being assisted by a ventilator. Doctors are encouraged by his progress."

The cardinal had first tweeted Aug. 10: "Praised be Jesus Christ! I wish to inform you that I have recently tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Thanks be to God, I am resting comfortably and receiving excellent medical care. Please pray for me as I begin my recovery. Let us trust in Divine Providence. God bless you."

The cardinal has not made it public knowledge on whether he was vaccinated for the 2019 coronavirus.

The Vatican had started offering all Vatican residents, retirees and employees the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech mid-January 2021. The cardinal was eligible for the vaccine as a member of the College of Cardinals and a member of the Apostolic Signatura, which he led as prefect from 2008 until his resignation in 2014.

Cardinal Burke has expressed concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines, including that it is "never morally justified to develop a vaccine through the use of the cell lines of aborted fetuses. The thought of the introduction of such a vaccine into one's body is rightly abhorrent."

He also said, "Vaccination itself cannot be imposed, in a totalitarian manner, on citizens."

In December, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, citing church teaching, said that when alternative vaccines are not available, it is morally

acceptable to receive vaccines developed or tested using cell lines originating from aborted fetuses, in this case, including COVID-19 vaccines.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines did not use abortion-derived cell lines in developing or producing their vaccines, but they did in lab testing.

Cardinal Burke is a native of Richland Center, Wisconsin, in the La Crosse Diocese, and served as bishop of that diocese from 1995 to 2004, as archbishop of St. Louis from 2004 to 2008, and as prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Signature from 2008 to 2014.

While he was La Crosse's bishop, Cardinal Burke founded the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe

While the cardinal often resides in Italy, he travels extensively and was in the United States at the time of sharing the news about contracting the virus.