News




Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley, right, walks with Eduardo Martínez Díaz, president of BioCubaFarma, as they walk Sept. 9 through Cuba's Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center where the island's locally developed COVID-19 vaccines are made in Havana, Cuba. (AP/Ramon Espinosa)

by The Associated Press

View Author Profile

## Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

HAVANA, CUBA — September 9, 2021

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley met with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Sept. 9 and visited a Cuban COVID-19 vaccine laboratory at a time of tense relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

Cuban state media published images of the meeting, but gave no details on what had been discussed, though a battery of senior Cuban officials attended, including Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, the Communist Party's ideology chief and the head of the Foreign Ministry's office of U.S. affairs.

The cardinal made no public comments on politics. Cuba so far has been disappointed in its hopes for a more relaxed relationship with the United State under President Joe Biden following former President Donald Trump's policy of severely tightening the U.S. embargoes of the island.

O'Malley's visit to the Center of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology followed a Sept. 8 evening Mass in honor of Cuba's patron saint, the Virgin of Charity.

Advertisement

"For us as Catholics, health is a very important subject, beginning with the example of Jesus Christ, who dedicated so much of his ministry to caring for the sick," said O'Malley, adding that the church operates hospitals and clinics around the world.

Cuba is the only country in Latin America to have developed its own vaccines against COVID-19 — three of them so far — and it is hoping to win World Health Organization approval for their use in other nations.

The cardinal planned to visit the Dominican Republic later Sept. 9 and then head to Haiti to observe aid efforts for victims of the recent earthquake that killed more than 2,000 people.