Vatican

Vatican News



Pope Francis' suite sits on the top floor of Rome's Gemelli hospital, whose entrance is pictured here, March 30, 2023. The pope was admitted to the hospital March 29 due to concerns over breathing difficulties and was diagnosed with a "respiratory infection," according to the Vatican. (CNS photo/Justin McLellan)



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Rome — March 31, 2023
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Pope Francis is expected to be released from the hospital on April 1, pending final examinations, according to the latest update from the Vatican on the pope's health condition.

The 86-year-old pontiff entered Rome's Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic on March 29 for what was first described as a respiratory infection. On March 30, his doctors said he was responding well to antibiotics that were treating bronchitis.

Throughout the pope's three-day hospital stay, the Vatican has said that the pope continues to work and pray in between periods of rest.

In a March 31 statement, director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, said that on the evening of March 30, Francis had a pizza dinner with the doctors, nurses and staff of the Gendarmerie who have been assisting him during his hospitalization.

"His Holiness's return home to Santa Marta is expected tomorrow, following the results of the latest tests this morning," said Bruni.

While the Vatican has not offered a full update on the pope's plans for Holy Week celebrations at the Vatican in the lead-up to Easter, Bruni said that given the pope's anticipated release from the hospital, the pope is scheduled to attend the Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square. In what is the busiest and holiest week of the year for Catholics, the pope is currently scheduled to celebrate at least seven public liturgies over the next 10 days.

In a March 31 interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri said that Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, was already scheduled to celebrate Mass on Easter Sunday and that Sandri would celebrate Palm Sunday Mass on April 2.

Sandri, who is vice dean of the College of Cardinals, noted that this was already decided prior to the pope's hospitalization in keeping with recent papal Masses, where Francis attends as the celebrant, but does not preside over the liturgy of the Eucharist, given that his knee pain makes it difficult for him to stand for long periods of time.

Francis has continually struggled with mobility issues over the last year, often using a wheelchair or a cane to get around, but in a January interview said that despite a return of bulges in his intestinal wall, his health issues are under control.