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Pope Francis gives a rosary to a member of the medical staff at Gemelli hospital in Rome July

Pope Francis gives a rosary to a member of the medical staff at Gemelli hospital in Rome July 11, 2021, as he recovers following scheduled colon surgery. The pope was in the hospital for 10 days. (CNS photo/Vatican Media via Reuters)



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Rome — June 7, 2023
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Pope Francis on June 7 was hospitalized at Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he is scheduled to have surgery on his intestine later today and is expected to remain for a recovery of several days.

News of the unexpected operation was announced by the Vatican just after 10am following the pope's weekly general audience, and one day after the pope made an unannounced visit to the hospital on June 6 for what the Holy See Press Office later described as clinical tests.

The 86-year-old Francis is scheduled to undergo surgery on his abdominal wall under general anesthesia to correct an incarcerated incisional hernia, which the Vatican described as causing recurring and worsening pain.

In July 2021, Francis underwent intestinal surgery where he had half of his colon removed due to a condition known as "stenotic diverticulitis," which leads to inflammation inside the intestine. At the time, Francis spent 11 days in Rome's Gemelli hospital before returning to the Vatican.

During a Jan. 2023 interview with the Associated Press, the pope revealed that the bulges in his intestinal wall had returned.

"I might die tomorrow, but it's under control," he joked at the time. "I'm in good health."

Throughout the last year, the pope's primary health difficulties have stemmed from limited mobility, primarily related to a bone fracture in his knee. Last year, he said he did not want to have the knee operated on due to the side-effects he experienced from anesthesia during his July 2021 hospitalization.

Although the pope underwent a three-night hospitalization at the beginning of April for bronchitis, his June 7 operation will be the first time he has undergone anesthesia since his July 2021 surgery.

According to the Holy See Press Office, the pope's current hospitalization had been arranged "in recent days" and he is expected to have a "full functional recovery."