Vatican
Vatican News
A white man in a white doctor's coat with scrubs peaking through stands next to a white man

Dr. Sergio Alfieri, the chief surgeon who operated on Pope Francis, left, speaks at a news conference alongside Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, right, at Rome's Gemelli hospital June 10, 2023. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

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Rome — June 14, 2023
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A week after undergoing abdominal surgery, Pope Francis' recovery is going well enough that his doctors are making plans to discharge him from Rome's Gemelli hospital, the Vatican press office said.

"The medical staff reports that his clinical course is proceeding smoothly, without complications, and is therefore planning to discharge him in the next few days," Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters June 14.

Bruni's statement came the morning after Il Fatto Quotidiano, an Italian newspaper, reported that Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, informed members of the college that Francis "is recovering well" and was likely to return to the Vatican June 15 or 16.

Francis underwent a three-hour surgery to repair a hernia June 7. The procedure, under general anesthesia, was performed using a surgical mesh to strengthen the repair and prevent the recurrence of a hernia. Surgeons also removed several adhesions or bands of scar tissue that had formed after previous surgeries decades ago, according to Dr. Sergio Alfieri, the chief surgeon operating on the pope.

According to Vatican News, Francis underwent an appendectomy around 1950 and another surgery in 1980 to remove his gallbladder. Those are in addition to the surgery he underwent in 1957 when a piece of his lung was removed. In 2021, he spent 10 days at Gemelli after surgery that included the removal of the descending part of his colon to treat diverticulitis.

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The Vatican press office has been providing updates on the pope's health at midday and in the evening while he has been hospitalized.

In addition to the news about the pope's upcoming release from the hospital, Bruni's midday update June 14 said the pope had rested well overnight and spent the morning working.

"Before lunch, he went to the chapel of the private apartment" the Gemelli maintains for the popes, where he prayed "and received the Eucharist."

Soon after the surgery, Alfieri had told reporters that most patients are hospitalized for about seven days after similar hernia repair surgery. But Vatican News reported that the pope's audiences have been canceled until June 18 as a "precaution."

A version of this story appeared in the **June 23-July 6, 2023** print issue under the headline: Doctors begin planning pope's discharge from hospital.