Vatican
Vatican News



Pope Francis arrives to meet the members of the 2023 World Youth Day organizing committee, in the Pope Paul VI hall at the Vatican, Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

by Associated Press

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Pope Francis said on Nov. 30 that he is suffering from acute, infectious bronchitis and that doctors recommended he cancel his planned visit to Dubai this weekend to avoid the quick changes in temperature that would be involved.

"As you can see, I'm alive," Francis quipped at the start of an audience with participants of a symposium on health care ethics.

It was one of nine audiences Francis had scheduled for Nov. 30, suggesting he was still managing to carry a heavy workload despite his illness.

Francis, who turns 87 in a few weeks and had part of one lung removed as a young man, came down with the flu last week and is on antibiotics. On Nov. 28, the Vatican announced he was cancelling his planned participation in the U.N. climate conference on doctors' orders.

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"The reason is that it's very hot there, and you go from heat to air conditioning," Francis told the health care workers. "Thank God it wasn't pneumonia. It's a very acute, infectious bronchitis."

Previously the Vatican had said Francis was suffering from lung inflammation and the flu. Francis had a previous case of acute bronchitis in the spring, when he was hospitalized for three days at Rome's Gemelli hospital so he could receive intravenous antibiotics.

The Vatican No. 2, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said Nov. 30 the Holy See was still trying to figure out how it would be represented at Dubai, where the U.N. climate conference, or COP 28, is underway. Parolin, the secretary of state, recalled that he had represented the Vatican at past U.N. climate conferences and could do the same in Dubai.

Francis was supposed to have left Rome on Dec. 1, spoken at the conference Dec. 2, presided over the inauguration of a faith pavilion on the sidelines of the meeting Dec. 3 and then returned to Rome. Parolin said doctors recommended against the trip "to avoid any deterioration [in his condition] and so he can recover as soon as possible."