Vatican

Vatican News



Nuns look at Pope Francis on a giant monitor set up in St. Peter's Square at The Vatican, Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023, as he blesses the faithful gathered in the square for the traditional Angelus noon prayer. Francis skipped his weekly Sunday appearance at a window because suffering from a mild flu. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

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Vatican City — December 4, 2023

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For a second Sunday, an ailing Pope Francis skipped his popular window appearance to the public in St. Peter's Square, but in televised remarks said he's doing better even though his voice wouldn't let him read all his comments aloud.

As he did a week earlier, Francis delivered very brief remarks from the chapel of the Vatican hotel where he lives and where he is recovering from what he has said is infectious bronchitis. Thousands of people in the square followed his words from giant screens set up outdoors.

Francis, whose 87th birthday is later this month, also said he is following from afar the workings of the U.N. climate conference in Dubai. The pontiff was due to go to the COP28 conference on Dec. 1 to address the gathering.

During his first chapel appearance on Nov. 26, he insisted he would make the trip despite his illness. He instead canceled it following his doctors' orders and stayed at the Vatican, where he has received antibiotics intravenously.

"Dear brothers and sisters, good day. Also today, I won't be able to read everything. I'm getting better, but the voice still isn't" enough to read everything, Francis said. He then passed the microphone to a priest who read prepared remarks, including about the end of the truce in the Israeli-Hamas war.

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"It's painful that the truce has been broken,'' Francis said in the remarks read by the priest. "That means death, destruction and misery,'' the pontiff said. He called for the release of the remaining hostages who were seized from Israel in the Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, and lamented the lack of basic necessities of life in Gaza after Israel launched its war against Hamas.

On Nov. 30, Francis told an audience of health care workers that he was advised against making the Dec. 1-3 trip to the United Arab Emirates because "it's very hot there, and you go from heat to air conditioning." Of his current illness, Francis told

that audience: "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 so he could receive intravenous antibiotics.

Francis said that "even from a distance, I am following with great attention the work of COP28 in Dubai. I am close" to the conference. He said he was renewing his appeal so that "climate change is answered by concrete political change."

In his Nov. 3 remarks about climate change, Francis urged the end of what he called "bottlenecks" caused by nationalism, and "patterns of the past." He added: "let's embrace a common vision, committing all of us and now, without delay, to a necessary global ecological conversion."