News
Pope Francis greets Bishop David O'Connell of Trenton, N.J., during a meeting with U.S. bisho

Pope Francis greets Bishop David O'Connell of Trenton, N.J., during a meeting with U.S. bishops from New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Nov. 28, 2019. (OSV News photo/Vatican Media)



by OSV News

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Trenton, N.J. — January 5, 2024
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Bishop David O'Connell of Trenton, 68, suffered a heart attack Jan. 4 while in Rome and was taken to Santo Spirito hospital where he had emergency surgery to open a completely closed artery, according to a Jan. 5 diocesan statement.

"Bishop O'Connell is resting comfortably after a successful surgery. He asks that you keep him in your prayers as he recovers," the diocese said.

Accompanied by four priests from the Trenton Diocese, the bishop traveled to Rome a few days ahead of a Jan. 4-12 pilgrimage for 20 priests and two diocesan staff members. The four clergymen include Msgr. Thomas Gervasio, vicar general and moderator of the curia, and Msgr. Sam Sirianni, director of the Office of Worship.

"Every few years, I offer a pilgrimage for priests in our parishes to go with me to Rome, usually after the Christmas holidays when there is a break in the busyness of their schedules," O'Connell told the TrentonMonitor.com, Trenton's diocesan news outlet, before the pilgrimage.

"On this trip, I am especially eager to pray at the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis whom I designated as patron of young people in our diocese, especially those in our Catholic schools and religious education programs," he added.

Advertisement

The scheduled itinerary included Mass with Pope Francis on Epiphany, Jan. 6, and a visit to Assisi, Italy, and the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. The pilgrims also planned to be in St. Peter's Square Jan. 10 for Pope Francis' general audience.

A native of Philadelphia and a priest of the Eastern province of the Congregation of the Mission, also known as the Vincentian order, O'Connell is the 10th bishop of Trenton. He was president of The Catholic University of America in Washington from 1998 until the end of the 2009-2010 school year. On June 4, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed then-Father O'Connell as coadjutor bishop of Trenton, and he was ordained to the episcopacy by Bishop John Smith in St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral, Trenton, on July 30, 2010.

When Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignation of Smith on Dec. 1, 2010, O'Connell automatically succeeded him as the 10th bishop of Trenton.