Vatican

Vatican News



Pope Francis greets visitors gathered to pray the Angelus in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Feb. 25, 2024. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Saying Pope Francis was continuing to experience "mild flu-like symptoms," the Vatican announced he had canceled his appointments again Feb. 26.

The 87-year-old pope had led the recitation of the Angelus prayer as usual Feb. 25 and seemed to have no difficulty speaking or breathing, and he did not cough.

The previous day, though, he canceled a meeting with transitional deacons from the Diocese of Rome. The Vatican press office had put out a note Feb. 24 saying, "Due to a mild flu-like condition, as a precautionary measure, the pope canceled his audiences scheduled for today."

The press office provided no further information and did not indicate what those symptoms were.

The only information the press office added Feb. 26 was that the pope did not have a fever.

The cancellation came after Francis and top officials of the Roman Curia took five days off for their Lenten spiritual reflections.

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In November and January when the Vatican said the pope had "flu-like symptoms" they were respiratory difficulties, which Francis described as bronchitis.

At a Jan. 12 meeting with Catholic communicators from France, the pope skipped reading his prepared text because, he told the group, "I have a bit of bronchitis, and I can't speak well."

In late November and early December, he also suffered from what he described as a very serious bronchial infection.

"Thank God it was not pneumonia," he told a group of health care managers. "I no longer have a fever, but I am still on antibiotics and things like that," he had said.

He had canceled his appointments Nov. 25 because of what the press office described as "flu-like symptoms" and went that afternoon to a Rome hospital for a CT scan of his chest. In the following days, he canceled some appointments and had aides read his prepared texts at other events.

That bout of respiratory difficulties also was what led him to cancel his plans to travel to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates Dec. 1-3 to address the U.N. Climate Change Conference.

Suffering from a respiratory infection, he also spent four days in March at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

He had undergone surgery in 1957 to remove part of one of his lungs after suffering a severe respiratory infection. He has insisted the operation has had no lasting impact on his health.

Francis usually does not have any formal audiences on Tuesday; he was scheduled to hold his weekly general audience Feb. 28.