Vatican
Vatican News
Votive candles, including some bearing a photo of Pope Francis, are seen on the base of a sta

Votive candles, including some bearing a photo of Pope Francis, are seen on the base of a statue of St. John Paul II outside Rome's Gemelli hospital on Feb. 15. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)



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Rome — February 17, 2025
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Pope Francis' treatment for a respiratory tract infection "will require adequate hospitalization" to address what the Vatican is now describing as a "complex clinical picture."

According to a Vatican bulletin released at 1 p.m. local time on Feb 17, ongoing test results have shown a "polymicrobial infection of the respiratory tract." The statement said that the pope's medical team has modified the treatment for the 88-year-old pontiff following the latest developments.

Francis, who has battled bronchitis since the start of the month, was first hospitalized on Feb. 14. In the previous weeks, Francis had been short of breath and struggled to speak during many of his public appearances.

While the Vatican has previously stated that the pope's condition has improved since he was first admitted, the latest update indicates the pontiff's situation remains serious. The pope's medical team has ordered complete rest for the octogenarian pontiff.

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A Vatican news bulletin released at 7 p.m. on Feb. 17 said that the pope remained without fever and that his clinical condition is "stable." Earlier in the day, the pope received the Eucharist.

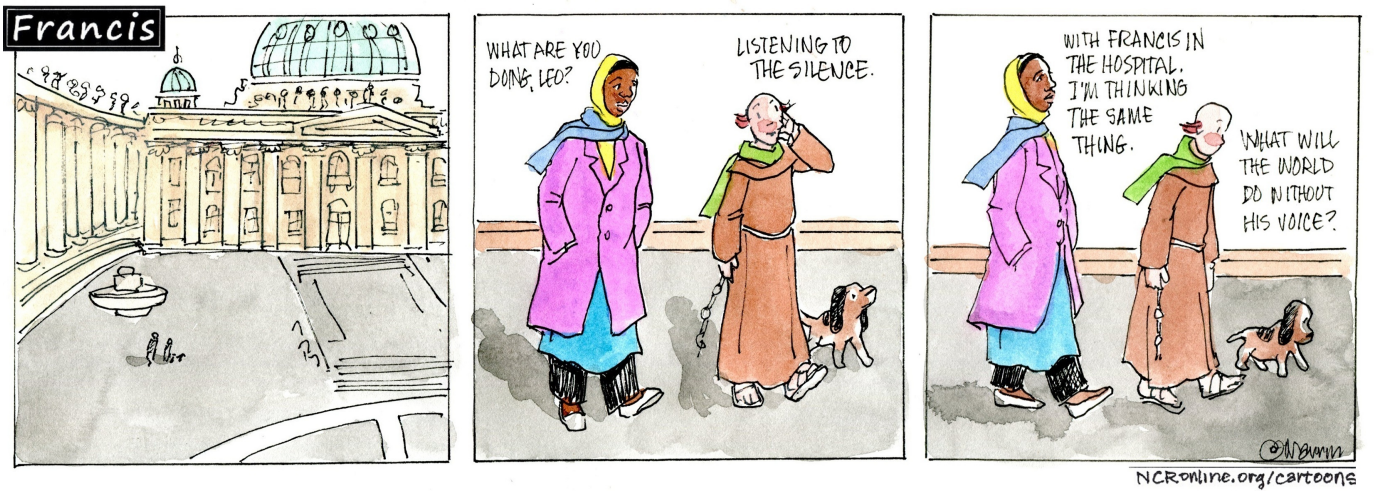


The south side of Rome's Gemelli hospital where Pope Francis is an inpatient is seen Feb. 17, 2025. (CNS/Robert Duncan)

On Sunday, Feb. 16, the pope did not recite his weekly noontime Sunday Angelus prayer, marking only the second time he has missed it during his 12-year pontificate. The last occasion was in 2023, following an operation on his intestine.

Outside of Rome's Gemelli hospital where Francis is being treated in the special 10th floor wing reserved for popes, a number of votive candles have been left by well-wishers offering prayers for the ailing pontiff.

This is now the second longest hospitalization Francis has undergone. The first, in 2021, required a 10-day stay following the removal of a portion of his colon.



Click the image above to enlarge the cartoon by Pat Marrin.

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This story appears in the **Pope Francis' health crisis** feature series. View the full series.