Vatican

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People pray for the ailing Pope Francis during a special evening Mass Feb. 23, 2025, in Rome's Basilica of St. John Lateran. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)

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The morning after Pope Francis' doctors said that he remained in "critical" condition and showed initial signs of renal insufficiency, the Vatican press office said the pope was in "good spirits" and continuing his treatment.

The press office also announced that Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, would lead a public recitation of the rosary at 9 p.m. Feb. 24 in St. Peter's Square.

The prayer is a moment "to show the closeness of the church to the pope and all who are sick," said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

Pope Francis, who celebrated his 88th birthday in December, has been an inpatient at Rome's Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14; his doctors diagnosed double pneumonia.

The Vatican's morning update on the pope's condition Feb. 24 was as brief as all the morning statements have been; it said, "The night passed well, the pope slept and is resting."

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The Vatican press office said the pope is in "good spirits," is continuing his treatment and is not in pain. The pope can and still does get out of bed.

The press office publishes a longer statement every evening, which the doctors said they write and give to the pope for his approval before publication.

Francis' condition remained "critical" the evening of Feb. 23, his doctors had said, with blood tests showing "initial, mild renal insufficiency, at present under control."

The pope did not have a repeat of the "respiratory crisis" he experienced Feb. 22, the doctors' bulletin had said, but he continued to use supplemental oxygen through

a nasal cannula.

A blood transfusion administered Feb. 22, the bulletin said, did prove beneficial "with a rise in the value of hemoglobin." However, it added, his platelet count was still low.

"The complexity of his clinical picture, and the need to wait for the drug therapies to provide some result, dictate that the prognosis remains reserved," the doctors had said late Feb. 23.

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