Vatican
Vatican News
A woman smiles as she holds an image of Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Fe

A woman smiles as she holds an image of Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Feb. 26, 2025, as he continues his treatment for double pneumonia at Rome's Gemelli Hospital. The 88-year-old pontiff had a "restful night" and was sitting upright in an armchair, the Vatican said early Feb. 26. (OSV News/Reuters/Claudia Greco)



by Christopher White

Former Vatican Correspondent (2021-2025)

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

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

Rome — February 26, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Pope Francis has shown "further slight improvement" in his battle with double pneumonia and earlier concerns over possible kidney failure have been resolved.

According to a Vatican statement released at 6:30 p.m. local time on Wednesday, Feb. 26, blood tests on the 88-year-old pope also show continued improvement.

Tonight's medical bulletin marks the first time since Feb. 22 that the pontiff's condition has not been described as "critical," although the Vatican statement noted that his overall prognosis "remains guarded."

Yesterday's medical bulletin noted that on Feb. 25 the pope underwent a CAT scan on his chest — the third of his 13-day hospitalization — and that the pontiff's medical team said the results revealed a "normal evolution" for an individual being treated for double pneumonia.

While the pontiff continues to receive occasional supplemental oxygen, the Vatican said he has not experienced any further asthmatic attacks since last weekend and he is continuing respiratory physiotherapy.

Tomorrow, Feb. 27, will mark two weeks since Francis entered the hospital on Feb. 14 for respiratory difficulties that developed into double pneumonia.

Vatican sources say that despite his condition, the pope continues to eat normally and is moving around the papal suite on the 10th floor of Rome's Gemelli Hospital and he continues to engage in work activities.

Advertisement

On Tuesday, Feb. 25, the Vatican announced that the pope had signed decrees related to the canonization of new saints during a Feb. 24 hospital visit by Francis' top two deputies.

The Vatican statement also said that the pope has decided to convene a consistory, a Vatican administrative meeting, to discuss the upcoming canonizations. Such an announcement — from the hospital — set off a fury of speculation, given that it was during a similar meeting in 2013 that Pope Benedict XVI announced his shock resignation.

Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, the prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of the Saints, sought to tamp down on such rumors in an interview earlier today with the Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

"At least someone will be convinced that he is not dying," Semeraro said of the pope's decision to advance the sainthood causes. "It is a sign of hope."

"Jokingly, I would say that all this will perhaps serve as a lesson for him, to calm down a little and look after himself in the future!" he added.

Rosary prayers in St. Peter's Square for Francis' health and recovery will continue this evening for a third night in a row. The evening prayer service, which began on Feb. 24, is being led by Rome-based cardinals and Curia officials, along with any faithful, are invited to participate.

The dean of the College of Cardinals, 91-year-old Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, will preside over tonight's service.

The National Catholic Reporter's Rome Bureau is made possible in part by the generosity of Joan and Bob McGrath.

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