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Worshippers attend a prayer service in St. Peter's Square March 2, while Pope Francis continu

Worshippers attend a prayer service in St. Peter's Square March 2, while Pope Francis continues receiving treatment for double pneumonia after being admitted to Rome's Gemelli Hospital Feb. 14. (OSV News/Reuters/Dylan Martinez)



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Rome — March 4, 2025
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Pope Francis is in stable condition and was temporarily taken off mechanical ventilation following two episodes of acute respiratory failure on March 3, the Vatican said on March 4.

"He did not present episodes of respiratory failure or bronchospasm," said a Vatican medical bulletin released just after 7 p.m. local on Tuesday evening. "He remains without fever, always alert, cooperative with therapies and oriented."

At times following the pope's Feb. 28 and March 3 respiratory crises, his doctors have introduced non-invasive mechanical ventilation to aid his breathing. According to the latest medical bulletin, the pope was again taken off ventilation earlier this morning and reduced to high-flow oxygen therapy. He is slated to be put back on a ventilator overnight.

According to Vatican sources, the pope's periodic bronchial spasms are not unexpected for a patient battling double pneumonia. They also note that doctors no longer raised concerns about possible kidney failure.

During his 19th day of hospitalization for double pneumonia, the 88-year-old pope underwent respiratory physiotherapy, spent time in prayer and received the Eucharist.

As has been the case for two weeks now, the pontiff's "prognosis remains reserved," meaning he is not yet out of danger.

The Vatican also announced on March 4 that the Roman Curia's annual Lenten spiritual exercises will begin on Sunday, March 9, and take place over the next week "in spiritual communion" with Francis.

The daily reflections for the Vatican-based cardinals, bishops and other officials will be led by the preacher of the papal household, Franciscan Fr. Roberto Pasolini. His meditations will focus on the theme "the hope of eternal life" — a topic chosen long before the pontiff's hospitalization on Feb. 14.

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As has become custom during the pope's hospitalization, a rosary prayer service will take place tonight in St. Peter's Square for the pope's health and recovery. English

Cardinal Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and Disciple of the Sacraments, will preside at the service.

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