



Pope Leo XIV thanks the faithful during his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at The Vatican, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2026. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

Giada Zampano

[View Author Profile](#)

Associated Press

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

Vatican City — October 23, 2026

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Pope Leo XIV will miss a planned trip to Assisi next week after doctors advised against the helicopter journey to the Italian town as he recovers from lung cancer surgery, the Vatican said Friday.

The pope had been due to attend a gathering on Tuesday marking the 40th anniversary of St. John Paul II's World Day of Prayer for Peace.

The Vatican said Leo, 71, was advised not to travel "to facilitate his recovery" from last week's operation. The pope will instead send a message to the organizers, interfaith leaders and guests attending the "Disarmed and Disarming Peace" event.

In a separate statement, the pope's doctors said a follow-up chest X-ray confirmed he's recovering well, but given the short time that has elapsed since the operation, they recommended as a precaution that he not make the helicopter trip.

The Vatican said Leo wants to express his closeness to participants and reaffirm his belief that the "spirit of Assisi," dialogue and the search for words and gestures of peace remain valuable resources at a time of conflict.

The Assisi meeting commemorates the landmark interfaith peace gathering convened by St. John Paul II in 1986.

The cancellation is the latest change to Leo's schedule since last week, when surgeons removed a lobe where the nodule later diagnosed as malignant was located, in the first major health event of his 17-month pontificate. The surgery confirmed he had adenocarcinoma, the most common type of lung cancer.

The pope will need no further treatment for lung cancer after tests confirmed the disease was localized, but his activities will be guided by medical advice during his recovery, the Vatican said.

Leo returned to the Vatican last Saturday and his surgeon said there are "no clinical reasons" to prevent him from traveling to Latin America next month.

Thoracic surgeons often advise patients not to fly for three weeks after surgery — which would give the pope just the interval needed to make his planned Nov. 6-17 trip to Uruguay, Argentina and Peru, involving a dozen flights and two helicopter rides to high altitudes.

In his public appearances since returning to the Vatican, Leo appeared in good health, speaking with a strong and clear voice.

Advertisement