

Pope Francis hospitalized for abdominal surgery

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The 86-year old pontiff is at a hospital in Rome for the second time in weeks.

The Vatican, June 7 (RHC)-- Pope Francis is at a hospital in Rome preparing for abdominal surgery, the Vatican press office has said. "The Holy Father went to the Gemelli University Hospital where in the early afternoon he will undergo a surgical operation of laparotomy and plastic surgery of the abdominal wall," read a Vatican statement published on Wednesday.

The procedure was agreed in previous days by the medical team assisting the pontiff due to “a lacerated incisional hernia which is causing recurrent, painful and worsening sub-occlusive syndromes”, the Vatican said.

The Pope, who is 86, is expected to remain in the hospital for “several days” to allow full recovery.

This is the second time in recent months that Francis has been admitted to hospital. At the end of March, a storm of television news crews and reporters gathered in front of the Gemelli where the pope was recuperating after a bout of bronchitis. He was discharged after three days.

In July 2021, he spent nearly two weeks at the same hospital for a delicate intestinal surgery.

Born in Argentina, Francis started his papacy in 2013 after then-pope Benedict XVI shocked the world by resigning. Francis is the first pope to hail from the Global South, a term meaning Latin America, Africa and much of Asia, which is today home to the bulk of Christians worldwide.

He has stripped the Vatican of some of its opacity and opened up the Catholic Church, bringing it closer to the people.

In recent years, Francis has focused on pleading for peace amid the situation in Ukraine more than a year ago. He has offered himself as a broker between Russia and Ukraine, saying he is willing to visit Kyiv and Moscow.

“I am willing to do everything that has to be done. There is a mission in course now but it is not yet public. When it is public, I will reveal it,” the pope told reporters in April after visiting Hungary.

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi wrapped up a two-day mission to Ukraine on Tuesday at the behest of the pope. The Vatican peace envoy met and spoke with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

“The results of these talks ... will be brought to the Holy Father’s attention and will undoubtedly be useful in evaluating the steps to be continued to take both at the humanitarian level and in the search for paths to a just and lasting peace,” the Vatican said.

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