

Vatican announces Pope Francis hospitalized in Rome with bronchitis

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The Vatican, February 14 (RHC)-- Pope Francis has been admitted to a hospital in Rome for tests and treatment for bronchitis, the Vatican announced, confirming the latest threat to the 88-year-old pontiff's health.

“This morning, at the end of his audiences, Pope Francis was admitted to the Policlinico Agostino Gemelli for some necessary diagnostic tests and to continue his treatment for bronchitis, which is still ongoing, in a hospital environment,” his office said on Friday.

Before his hospitalization, Francis still managed to meet with Vatican officials as well as other guests, including visiting Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, the statement said.

Francis was diagnosed with bronchitis a week ago, but he has continued to hold daily audiences in his Vatican hotel suite, preside over general audiences and even presided at an outdoor Mass last Sunday. He has however handed off his speeches for an aide to read aloud, saying he was having trouble breathing.

Francis has been the leader of the 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide since 2013. He has suffered from influenza and other health problems several times over the past two years.

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