

Vatican Denies Report Pope Francis Has Brain Tumor



Vatican City, October 21 (RHC)-- The Vatican on Wednesday categorically denied a report in an Italian newspaper that Pope Francis has a small, curable brain tumor, saying he is in good health and that his head is "absolutely perfect."

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said the report Wednesday in the National Daily was "completely unfounded and seriously irresponsible and not worthy of attention."

Citing unnamed nursing sources, the National Daily said the 78-year-old pope had traveled by helicopter to the San Rossore di Barbaricina clinic near Pisa in recent months to see a Japanese brain cancer specialist, Dr. Takanori Fukishima. The newspaper said the doctor determined that the small dark spot on Francis' brain could be treated without surgery.

In subsequent versions, the paper reported that Fukishima had instead come to the Vatican to see the pope in a Vatican helicopter. The ANSA news agency, citing unnamed sources in Pisa, said the trip was in January and that Fukishima had traveled by helicopter to the Vatican to diagnose the pope.

Lombardi categorically denied the reports to reporters Wednesday, and said he was doing so after having spoken to the pope himself about them. He said no Japanese doctor had visited the pope, no tests of the type described in the paper had been performed and that no helicopters had landed in the Vatican from the outside.

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