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Pope Francis leaves hospital after 10-day stay for colon condition

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Pope Francis is greeted by hospital staff as he sits in a wheelchair inside the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, Sunday, July 11, 2021, where he was hospitalized for intestine surgery. (Credit: Vatican Media via AP.)

ROME — After a 10-day hospital stay following colon surgery, Pope Francis was discharged Wednesday and has returned to the Vatican, where he will

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likely spend the remainder of his summer resting and continuing his recovery.

In a July 14 statement, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the pope was discharged just after 10:30a.m., making a stop at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major “where, before the icon of the Virgin *Mary Salus populi romani*, he expressed his gratitude for the success of his surgery and offered a prayer for all the sick, especially those he had met during his stay in hospital.”

He arrived back at the Vatican shortly before noon local time, and returned to his residence at the Vatican’s Casa Santa Marta guesthouse.

The pope was admitted to Rome’s Gemelli hospital on July 4, where he underwent what the Vatican described as a planned surgery for “stenotic diverticulitis,” meaning a restriction of the colon with possible inflammation or infection of pouches inside the walls of the large intestine.

Francis has endured mild ailments such as colds and headaches in the past, and he also suffers from chronic sciatica and is often short of breath due the removal of part of a lung when he was a young Jesuit, but this was his first hospital stay as pope.

Throughout his stay the Vatican described his condition as normal, saying in daily bulletins that the pope’s condition continued to improve post-surgery.

It was originally estimated that he would stay in the hospital for around seven days following his operation, but the Vatican on Monday said he would be there a “few more days” in order to “optimize medical and rehabilitative therapy.”

During his stay at Gemelli, where Pope Saint John Paul II was also admitted ten times for medical treatment, Pope Francis delivered his July 11 Sunday

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Angelus address from the 10th floor, where he his room was located, using the occasion to pray for Haiti after the assassination of its president and to advocate for universal healthcare.

On Monday night, the pope also made a brief stop by the pediatric oncology unit, located on the same floor as his own room, to spend time with sick children and their families.

This article was updated at 12:28p.m. with a statement from the Vatican.

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