

WORLD & NATION



CNS/Reuters
Pope John Paul II waves from a window of Rome's Gemelli Hospital Oct. 13. It was his first public appearance since having his appendix removed Oct. 8

Pope departs hospital; urged to ease activities

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

ROME — Pope John Paul II left Rome's Gemelli hospital Oct. 15 at 6:05 p.m. to return to the Vatican.

He took the hospital elevator to the lobby, where he walked without support, accompanied by chief surgeon Dr. Francesco Crucitti and Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state. The pope waved to onlookers, who shouted, "Long live the pope!"

Two days earlier, looking fit and sounding animated, the pope blessed thousands of well-wishers from his hospital room, five days after he had his appendix removed.

"I would call this 'Vatican No. 3,'" the pope joked from his window above a plaza crowded with fellow Poles, Italian faithful and hospital workers Oct. 13.

He said "Vatican No. 1" was at St. Peter's Square, No. 2 was at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo and No. 3 has become Gemelli hospital.

"Let's hope next Sunday we'll have the Angelus blessing from Vatican No. 1," he said. The Vatican press office said that after his return to the Vatican he would undergo an unspecified period of convalescence and rest.

Doctors said the 76-year-old pope was making an excellent recovery from the 50-minute operation Oct. 8, a "textbook" appendectomy in which adhesions or scar tissues from previous surgery were also re-

moved.

Crucitti ruled out any more serious intestinal disease and took the opportunity to tell journalists he was tired of media speculation about possible papal cancer.

"It's time to put an end to all these fantasies we've read," he said. Microscopic tissue examination confirmed the doctors' diagnosis of recurrent inflammation of the appendix, he said.

However, when asked about a separate papal health problem, a nervous system disorder which many believe may be Parkinson's Disease, Crucitti simply said that other specialists were following it.

Doctors said that just four days after the surgery, the pope was walking, eating solid foods and discussing church affairs with top aides. He was sleeping well and showed no sign of fever or abdominal pain.

"The pope is made of strong stuff," Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, the pope's personal physician, told reporters Oct. 11 after visiting his patient. The pontiff's other doctors agreed, and said he appeared to be in very good spirits.

"We are all very happy that things have gone well," said Dr. Corrado Manni, chief anesthesiologist on the pope's surgical team. "His recovery is progressing, and we are content with his overall condition."

But Manni said he had been asked by colleagues to suggest to the patient that he ease his pace a bit during recovery in the interest of maintaining his good health. The pope responded with a brief laugh, he said.

Bishop awarded Nobel Prize for promoting human rights

By Nancy Hartnagel
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The first Catholic bishop to win the Nobel Peace Prize said the award is a recognition of those with whom he has struggled for peace.

"This is a recognition, not of me, but of all the people of Timor, for the Catholic Church which works in Timor, and for all those who work for peace and reconciliation between people," said Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo in a statement issued Oct. 11 in Rome by his order, the Salesians.

The 48-year-old apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Dili, East Timor, who has been twice nominated for the award, was celebrating Mass in Dili at the time of the Nobel announcement.

He told reporters he learned about the prize after Communion. "I can say that I am surprised, but at the same time, not," he said. "I am surprised because there are many other people in the world who deserve this recognition more than I do. I am not surprised because I live the ordinary life of a bishop and all events are the same before God."

Bishop Belo shares the 1996 prize with Jose Ramos-Horta, 51, an exiled East Timorese activist based in Australia. They will receive the \$1.2 million award at a Dec. 10 ceremony in Oslo, Norway.

A Salesian spokesman said, "The Nobel prize will be an important support for the work the entire Timor Catholic Church and its bishop are contributing towards an oppressed minority."

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said Bishop Belo's award "constitutes a recognition of his activity as a man of the church, marked by the untiring search for dialogue always aimed at peaceful solutions."

Bishop Daniel P. Reilly of Worcester, Mass., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy, called the shared prize "a cause for true rejoicing."

The Nobel committee, which announced the winners Oct. 11 in Oslo, accused Indonesia of persecuting the people of East Timor, according to an Associated Press report. The committee said the prize was given to "spur efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in East Timor based on the people's right to self-determination."

Coming Attractions

Grief & Bereavement

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Our Grief & Bereavement supplement will offer readers information on grief and the grieving process. Stories may address the traditions ethnic communities draw upon at times of loss; the role parishes play as comforters of the bereaved; church guidance on end-of-life choices; and the growth of hospice care.

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Bishop Belo has been a champion of human rights for the East Timorese.

In a 1986 pastoral letter, he sharply criticized the Indonesian government for its East Timorese birth control program, charging that family planning workers were distributing contraceptives indiscriminately to poor people who were inadequately informed about the program.

The bishop was instrumental in bringing the East Timorese situation to the attention of the international community following a 1991 massacre in which troops shot and killed up to 200 marchers at a funeral procession in Dili, and again in 1994, after hundreds of mainly Catholic protesters were beaten by police.

In 1994, Bishop Belo said Indonesia had turned East Timor into "hell" through arrest, intimidation and Islamic proselytizing among the territory's Catholics. East Timor is 89 percent Catholic, while Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population.

East Timor, a Portuguese colony for four centuries, occupies half of Timor, an island in the Malay Archipelago northwest of Australia. Indonesia invaded East Timor during a civil war in 1975, after East Timor declared its independence from Portugal, and annexed it as the country's 27th province in 1976. The other half of the island, formerly a Dutch colony, is now Indonesian Timor.

Neither the Vatican nor the United Nations has recognized the annexation and most countries still view Portugal as territorial administrator.

A spokesman for the Indonesian government expressed "regret" that the peace prize was given to Bishop Belo and Ramos-Horta, accusing the latter of "inciting and manipulating the people of East Timor."



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