

In his own words: Pope' views on resigning changed over time

AP, ROME: Pope Francis entered his fourth week in the hospital with double pneumonia, increasingly handing off his day-to-day duties to cardinals as questions swirl about the near and long-term future of his papacy.

On Saturday, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, took Francis' place to celebrate Mass for a pro-life group. On Sunday, another Vatican official, Cardinal Michael Czerny, is stepping in for the pope to celebrate a Holy Year Mass for volunteers.

There is no reason why such delegation of papal obligations cannot continue, especially since Francis remains conscious and working from the hospital. But the 88-year-old pope has spoken about the possibility of resignation, though his position has changed over time, especially after the death of Pope Benedict XVI.

Here's what Francis has said about pope's retiring, in his own words:

On Benedict's resignation:

In his 2024 memoir, *Life*, Francis recounted how he first learned about Benedict's resignation, the first in 600 years. He said a Vatican journalist had called him in Buenos Aires on February 11, 2013, and told him the news as it was breaking.

"For a moment I was paralysed. I could hardly believe what I was hearing," Francis wrote in *Life*. "This was news I had never expected to receive in my lifetime: the resignation of a pope was un-



The Vatican's Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin leads a mass for the Movement for Life (MpV) association in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican

imaginable, although it was provided for in canon law. In the first few moments I said to myself, I must have misunderstood, it's not possible. But then I understood that Benedict had surely meditated and prayed for a long time before making this brave and historic decision. Faced with his declining strength, he had evidently realised that the only irreplaceable element in the Church is the Holy Spirit, and the only Lord is Jesus Christ. This is why he was a great pope, humble and sincere, who loved the church until the end."

During the 10 years they lived together in the Vatican as a reigning and retired pope, Francis repeatedly praised Benedict's courage and humility for resigning and said he had "opened the door" to future popes also stepping down.

On the chance he might follow:

In a 2022 interview with Spain's ABC daily, Francis

revealed that he had written a letter of resignation soon after he was elected pontiff. The letter laid out his resignation if medical problems impeded him from carrying out his duties or from freely announcing a resignation.

The text of the letter has not been released and it's not known what sort of medical impairment or lack of consciousness might trigger a resignation. Canon law has no provision for what to do if a pope is permanently impaired and canonists are divided on whether a pre-written letter of resignation would be valid.

Canon 332.2 says that for a pope to resign his office, "it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely and properly manifested but not that it is accepted by anyone."

Francis has repeated the existence of his resignation letter as recently as last year. But in *Life*, which was published a year ago this month, Francis said he had no plans to resign and was at least at that time enjoying good health.

"But this is, I repeat, a distant possibility, because I truly do not have any cause serious enough to make me think of resigning," he said. "Some people may have hoped that sooner or later, perhaps after a stay in the hospital, I might make an announcement of that kind, but there is no risk of it. Thanks be to God, I enjoy good health, and as I have said, there are many projects to bring to fruition, God willing."

Nepal hit by three quakes, no loss of lives

PTI, KATHMANDU: Nepal was hit by three earthquakes, a strong one in eastern Nepal areas bordering Tibet in the afternoon and two of mild intensity in western Nepal in the morning on Saturday.

There were no immediate reports of loss of lives or damage of any kind from either of the quake-hit areas, the officials said. A 5.9 magnitude earthquake was recorded at 2.35 pm local time.

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12 injured in Toronto pub shooting by 3 gunmen, say police

AP, TORONTO: A dozen people were injured in a shooting at an eastern Toronto pub in what police called a reckless act of violence by three men who entered the bar and fired randomly without warning.

Superintendent Paul MacIntyre of the Toronto Police Service said police received numerous emergency calls reporting a shooting at the Piper Arms around 10:40 pm Friday.

A preliminary investigation determined three males entered the pub and began shooting at custom-

ers, MacIntyre said during a news conference at the scene. There were no immediate arrests.

"One male was armed with what appears to be an assault rifle, the other two males were armed with handguns, and they walked into the bar; they produced their guns and they opened fire indiscriminately on the people sitting inside," MacIntyre said, adding there were no fatalities.

Police arrived at the scene and found 12 people suffering from various injuries. The victims were transported to local hos-

pitals and six were confirmed to have gunshot wounds that were not life-threatening, MacIntyre said, calling the victims "extremely lucky." The remaining six victims were hurt by flying and broken glass.

The motive was not immediately clear, MacIntyre said, calling the shooting "a brazen and reckless act of violence that's really shaken our community and the city itself."

MacIntyre said he and other officers were "horrified" by what they saw on a security video. "These guys just looked at the ground and opened fire,"

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