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Chicago Cardinal George to undergo new round of chemotherapy

Brian Roewe | Mar. 7, 2014 NCR Today

Chicago Cardinal Francis George will undergo a new regimen of chemotherapy as he continues his fight with urothelial cancer.

According to a statement posted on the Chicago archdiocese?s website [1], the decision came after George met with his medical team, who recommended an additional round of chemotherapy with stronger drugs than those used during his previous chemo treatment in 2012. George was diagnosed with cancer in August 2012, and according to the release, the cancer remains confined to his right kidney.

In a column published on the website of the archdiocesan newspaper, the *Catholic New World*, the cardinal addressed his current situation [2]:

> ?If I may speak personally, this Lent finds me once again in poor health. My cancer, which was dormant for well over a year, is still confined to the area of the right kidney, but it is beginning to show signs of new activity. ? As I prepare for this next round of chemo, I ask for your prayers, which have always sustained me, and for your understanding if I cannot always fulfill the schedule already set for the next several months. While I am not experiencing symptoms of cancer at this time, this is a difficult form of the disease, and it will most probably eventually be the cause of my death. Chemo is designed to shrink the tumor, prevent symptoms and prolong life.?

George is expected to maintain his current administrative and public schedule, though it may reduce at times due to his lowered immunity.

In his column, George said he anticipated the news would bring increased speculation about his retirement. Now at age 77, he submitted his resignation in 2012, per canon requirements, and he said the formal consultation between Pope Francis and the U.S. apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, has yet to begin.

?In the meantime, Lent gives me a chance to evaluate not only my life of union with the Lord but also my life and actions here as Archbishop of Chicago. Every life is more tactics than strategy, i.e., each day is filled with activities that meet the needs of the hour and that respond to people in front of you,? he wrote.

George went on to express gratitude for a number of people and councils who have assisted him since he became archbishop of Chicago in 1997 in reforming personnel formation programs. He also said he was grateful for the pastors and parishioners he has met, saying ?they encourage me in my conviction that the grace of God is not given in vain. There are a lot of holy people, missionary disciples of the Lord, in our archdiocese. I am grateful for this, even as I acknowledge with sorrow my own sins and failings.

?One of the great pleasures in being Archbishop of Chicago is the chance to meet and cooperate with pastors of other churches and faiths, with people from all walks of life and varied ideas, with those who keep us in touch

with the universal church and the world beyond this city and its environs. To all of them, I am grateful,? the cardinal said.

[Brian Roewe is an *NCR* staff writer. Follow him on Twitter: **@BrianRoewe** [3].]

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