

Bishop Pelotte reflects on his recovery

GALLUP, N.M. – In a letter posted on the Diocese of Gallup Web site Oct. 18, Bishop Donald E. Pelotte spoke philosophically about his health problems after he was injured in a fall at his home July 23.

“So much of what happens in our lives is out of our control: wars, illness, unemployment, family divisions, accidents and injuries,” he wrote. “However, we do have the promise of a loving God to sustain us through the difficult times in our lives.”

Bishop Pelotte, 62, has had a lengthy recovery from a July fall down the stairs at his home, in which he sustained severe bruises and head trauma. After stays in hospitals in Phoenix and Houston, and a few more weeks of recuperation at a private home in Florida, he returned to Gallup Sept. 20.

His letter reflected on his recovery and thanked the people of the diocese for their calls, letters, e-mails and gifts. “I could never directly thank each of you for your kindness, but your care and concern has been a great consolation to me,” he said.

Matt Doyle, interim communications director for the Gallup Diocese, said Bishop Pelotte has slowly returned to work over the last few weeks. He told Catholic News Service the bishop has been intermittently coming into the office for short periods of time, taking on limited work.

Doyle said Bishop Pelotte intends to attend the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore Nov. 12-15, assuming his recovery continues to progress and his doctors agree. Bishop Pelotte sits on the USCCB’s Committee on Consecrated Life and the Ad Hoc Committee on Native American Catholics.

Bishop Pelotte’s letter acknowledged that much has been written about his health and welfare over the last few months, and that he shares those concerns.

“I want to assure you that I am constantly reviewing medical care with doctors and other medical professionals and intend to take whatever steps are necessary,” he said. “As you might imagine, my health is foremost on my mind and I constantly pray that God will sustain and guide me during these difficult times.”

A few days after Bishop Pelotte returned to New Mexico, the Gallup Police Department said he phoned in a report that masked intruders, 3 to 4 feet tall, were in his home and refused to leave. Police investigated and found no sign that anyone other than the bishop had been in the house.

The diocese has offered no explanation for the incident except to say Bishop Pelotte’s recovery continues and that details of his medical treatment are a private matter between him and his doctors.

Doyle told CNS he ran into the bishop himself in the office recently and the two – who had not previously met – had a pleasant conversation about their shared connections to Worcester, Mass., where Bishop Pelotte’s religious order, the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, previously had a facility. Doyle cited their conversation as an example of the bishop’s progress toward full recovery.

The letter from Bishop Pelotte said he has turned to God over the last several weeks, asking for help.

“I have prayed for you as well – as I do always,” he said. “This faith in a loving God has helped me endure the injuries I have suffered. The Lord will remain with me as I continue this long process of recovery. Of that I am certain.”

He encouraged others to “seek comfort and consolation in the same God who loved us so much that he became a part of our human history.”