

# **Bishop Ricard recovers from surgery to treat brain hematoma**

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Bishop John H. Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee was resting in a Florida hospital Feb. 15, five days after undergoing surgery to remove a hematoma that had formed on his brain.

The Feb. 10 procedure to remove blood that had collected outside of his brain occurred at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola. It came after Bishop Ricard fainted Feb. 5 while celebrating the funeral Mass for a fellow priest at a Panama City church, said Peggy DeKeyser, diocesan spokeswoman.

“His recovery from surgery is going as expected,” DeKeyser told Catholic News Service Feb. 15.

“He’s in excellent spirits,” she said. “He has repeatedly expressed how grateful he is for all the people who have prayed for him and all the people who have taken care of him.”

The 69-year-old bishop, who was an auxiliary in the Archdiocese of Baltimore from 1984 to 1997, suffered a stroke Dec. 22 and was hospitalized. On Dec. 27 doctors successfully implanted a permanent shunt to remove excess fluid from his brain. It replaced a temporary shunt implanted Dec. 22.

The diocese announced Jan. 19 that Bishop Ricard had returned to a limited work schedule and was undergoing physical therapy as part of his recovery.

DeKeyser said Bishop Ricard initially was taken to Bay Medical Center in Panama City from the funeral Mass. A neurosurgeon who coincidentally was at the funeral tended to him at the church, she added.

A priest took the bishop to Sacred Heart Hospital Feb. 8.

“We would encourage people to keep the bishop in their prayers,” DeKeyser said.