

Cardinal George returns home after breaking a femur

CHICAGO – Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George returned home from the hospital on Easter after falling and breaking the upper part of his right leg while blessing food baskets a day earlier.

Cardinal George, 70, apparently slipped on water on the marble floor at St. Ferdinand Catholic Church April 7, landing on his hip and breaking the top of his femur, according to an April 9 statement from the archdiocese.

Cardinal George uses a brace on his right leg because of complications from polio and has said it's not uncommon for him to fall because of the brace, so he resumed the service. As that proved painful, however, he later was taken to the Loyola University Medical Center, where the break was found.

After spending the night in the hospital, Cardinal George went home the next morning, but did not participate in the scheduled Easter celebrations. The statement said the cardinal celebrated Mass in the private chapel at his residence.

He is expected to maintain his regular work schedule from home, the statement said, though his public appearances for a few days would be postponed.

Cardinal George was scheduled to accompany a pilgrimage to Rome later in the week, marking his 10th anniversary as archbishop of Chicago. Local media reported he would not make the journey, though the group would go on without him.

Last August, Cardinal George had surgery to remove his cancerous bladder. He has been back on an active schedule for months.

The ceremony in which Cardinal George was participating at St. Ferdinand is a tradition among some cultures, notably Polish, of blessing baskets of food that have been prepared for Easter celebrations. He also had been scheduled to bless food at a second traditionally Polish parish later on the day he was injured.