

Cardinal Keeler Out of Surgery

Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, is out of surgery after Dr. Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center, inserted a Right Ventricular-Peritoneal Shunt in the Cardinal's brain to correct a condition diagnosed as Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus—a build up of excess cerebrospinal fluid on the brain. The operation is expected to improve the Cardinal's mobility, which has been impaired for the past several months.

The surgery began at 12:30 p.m. and lasted approximately 90 minutes. Doctors indicated to members of the Cardinal's family that the surgery went very well and that he will be evaluated Tuesday before making a determination on his rehabilitation needs. In approximately 3 weeks, doctors will evaluate the flow of fluid from the Cardinal's brain, which can be adjusted based on his condition and progress.

The Cardinal was awake and reported no pain or discomfort following the surgery. He was speaking with family members in the recovery room who described the Cardinal as being in very good spirits and telling jokes. He will remain in the hospital approximately 3 days.

The shunt, or tube, drains the excess fluid from the brain to the abdominal cavity, where the body can safely absorb it. The lining of the membrane in the skull can no longer absorb the fluid as it should—possibly due to trauma suffered in October of 2006 when the Cardinal was in an automobile accident in Terni, Italy. The Cardinal's good friend, Father Bernard Quinn, of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was killed in that accident.

The Cardinal is 76-years-old and has served as the Archbishop of Baltimore since 1989. He was elevated by Pope John Paul II to the College of Cardinals in 1994.