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## **Netherlands: Mgr. Smeets, Bishop of Roermond, diagnosed with brain cancer. Solidarity from the whole Dutch Church**

Since Mgr. Harrie Smeets, Bishop of Roermond in the Netherlands, has a brain tumour, he will have to undergo an aggressive therapy and no prognosis can be made on his full recovery, the diocese informed in a statement. In late May, the Bishop was admitted to the Laurentius Hospital in Roermond; he was discharged on 11 June and underwent further medical examinations at the University Hospital of Maastricht which have led to the unfavourable diagnosis. "At his request, Mgr. Smeets received the Sacrament of the Sick before undergoing the medical examinations in Maastricht. This gave him great strength", the statement reads, explaining that the Bishop can neither receive visits nor personally respond to messages, but he is "deeply grateful for the many good wishes and prayers he received, which he hopes will continue". Since 11 June, the diocese has been administered by the vicar general, Mgr. René Maessen. The Bishops of the Netherlands, through their president, Mgr. Hans van den Hende, "assured Bishop Smeets and the faith community of the Diocese of Roermond of their solidarity in prayer, that they may have the strength to endure this time".

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