Coronavirus confirmed at Vatican

The Vatican health clinic was closed temporarily after a person tested positive for the coronavirus, the Vatican announced.

In a statement released March 6, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said services were halted "in order to sanitize the area after a patient tested positive for COVID-19."

"The Directorate of Health and Hygiene is informing the competent Italian authorities and, in the meantime, the foreseen health protocols have been initiated," Bruni said.

While no policy to prevent the spread of coronavirus has been made public by the Vatican, an Italian journalist posted on Twitter a copy of what he said were the preventative measures issued by the Vatican City State governor's office.

The measures, dated March 6, said the Vatican health service issued guidelines Feb. 25 on how to prevent the spread of the virus and that those guidelines "should be posted in every office and at the entrance of services open to the public."

It also suspended "meetings and social events involving health personnel or personnel in charge of essential public services" within the world's smallest country.

Residents of Vatican City State were also told to schedule in-house visits from a doctor and avoid going to the health clinic "if flu-like symptoms occur — dry cough, cold, sore throat, fever, respiratory difficulty."

After the Diocese of Rome announced regulations to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in parishes March 5, the Vatican said that "measures to avoid the spread of COVID-19 are being studied (and were) to be implemented in coordination with those adopted by the Italian authorities."