

Dear Padre,

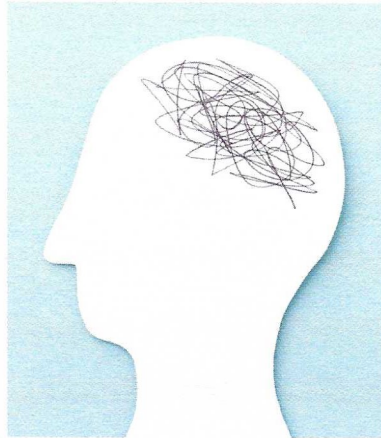
My husband has vascular dementia and is unable to make an examination of conscience. Part of the anointing of the sick involves the confession of sins, so will it be valid when he receives it?

If circumstances permit, the sacrament of anointing of the sick may be preceded by the sacrament of penance and followed by the sacrament of the Eucharist (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1517).

However, when conditions such as your husband's don't allow this, judgment on the suitability for anointing is to be made prudently and without scruple (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 8). For example, anointing is conferred on people who have lost consciousness or the use of reason if, as Christian believers, they would have "at least implicitly asked for it when they were in control of their faculties" (*PCS* 14). Therefore, because of the degree of brain-function loss in this circumstance, the sacrament of anointing also absolves any sins.

When a habitual desire to die as a faithful Catholic is implied before a person's illness, the special grace of the sacrament of anointing has this as one of its effects: "the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance" (*CCC* 1532).

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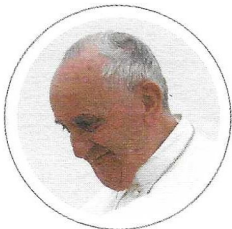
Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to submit your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

When someone is sick, we at times think: "Let's call for the priest to come"; "No, then he will bring bad luck. Let's not call him."...The idea is floating about that the undertakers arrive after the priest, and this is not true....It is Jesus himself who comes to relieve the sick person...and also to forgive his sins.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, FEBRUARY 26, 2014



Calendar

Monday

AUGUST 23

Weekday

1 Thes 1:1–5, 8b–10

Mt 23:13–22

Tuesday

AUGUST 24

St. Bartholomew,

Apostle

Rv 21:9b–14

Jn 1:45–51

Wednesday

AUGUST 25

Weekday

1 Thes 2:9–13

Mt 23:27–32

Thursday

AUGUST 26

Weekday

1 Thes 3:7–13

Mt 24:42–51

Friday

AUGUST 27

St. Monica

1 Thes 4:1–8

Mt 25:1–13

Saturday

AUGUST 28

St. Augustine,

Bishop and Doctor

of the Church

1 Thes 4:9–11

Mt 25:14–30

Sunday

AUGUST 29

Twenty-second Sunday

in Ordinary Time

Dt 4:1–2, 6–8

Jas 1:17–18,

21b–22, 27

Mk 7:1–8, 14–15,

21–23