

## Case Study: Roman Catholic Patient and Religious Ritual Request

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An elderly patient was admitted to the hospital for a cardiac valve replacement. The patient could not have anything to eat or drink for eight hours prior to surgery due to precautions around aspiration. She was a devout Catholic and requested to see the hospital's Roman Catholic priest three hours prior to surgery. The patient told the nurse that she would like to receive the Anointing of the Sick and Holy Eucharist from the priest prior to the procedure. The nurse was concerned and understood this request to be in conflict with the order to fast before the procedure.

### **Reflection:**

What are the sacraments of Anointing of the Sick and Holy Eucharist? Why might it be important for a Catholic patient to receive these sacraments prior to a major surgery?

What members of the hospital staff or interdisciplinary team may be helpful in attending to this patient's ritual needs? Describe the role and function of these team members.

Have you ever encountered this request in a clinical setting? If not, how would you respond?

### **Additional Resources:**

Handzo, Rev George, and Harold G. Koenig. "Spiritual care: whose job is it anyway?." *Southern Medical Journal* 97.12 (2004): 1242-1245.

Realin, A.P., & Preston Jr., L.R. (2017). *Personalizing Patient Care: enhancing the patient experience by understanding differences in cultures, religions, disabilities, and generations*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Advent Health Press.