

Why does the bishop come to confirm kids at their confirmation but the priest confirms adults at the Easter Vigil?

Canon Law states: “The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop; a presbyter (a priest) provided with this faculty in virtue of universal law or the special grant of the competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.” (Canon #882) The bishop is the ordinary minister of confirmation and it is proper for him to confer the sacrament whenever possible, but a priest can be delegated to act in his place when necessary.

With adults being received into the Church at the Easter Vigil, it is impractical for bishops to be present to confer the sacrament at all the parishes of the diocese. Additionally, it is desirable for the priest who baptizes to confer confirmation in the same celebration to show the connection between the two sacraments. The Catechism explains the tradition in the Eastern and Latin rites Catholic Churches: “In the East, ordinarily the priest who baptizes also immediately confers Confirmation in one and the same celebration. But he does so with sacred chrism consecrated by the patriarch or the bishop, thus expressing the apostolic unity of the Church whose bonds are strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation. In the Latin Church, the same discipline applies to the Baptism of adults or to the reception into full communion with the Church of a person baptized in another Christian community that does not have valid Confirmation.” (CCC #1312)