

NOTES ON THE LITURGY

Office of Divine Worship - Archdiocese of Newark

Ministers of the Sacraments of Initiation

Who Can Initiate

Any priest in good standing who presides at the Easter Vigil may administer the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and first Communion to a catechumen of the age of reason or older (7+). Delegation is given by law and no further permission is required.

Any priest in good standing who presides at the Easter Vigil or, preferably, at a Mass on the Sundays of Easter may receive into the Church and must confirm a baptized non-Catholic of the age of reason or older (7+), unless they are already validly confirmed as would be the case with the Eastern orthodox. Delegation is given by law and no further permission is required.

In the Archdiocese of Newark, delegation is given upon written request to **pastors only** to confirm on the Sundays of Easter, including Easter Sunday itself through Pentecost, adult baptized Roman Catholics (18+) who have participated in a process of catechesis modeled on the catechumenate. Requests should be made in writing to the regional bishop or vicar. *Permission is not given to confirm adult Catholics at the Easter Vigil.*

Presiding at the Easter Vigil.

There is only one presider at a given liturgy, and one and the same presider presides at the entire celebration. At Mass, for example, one priest would never preside over the Liturgy of the Word and another preside over the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is also true for all sacramental celebrations that occur within a particular liturgy.

Therefore, at the Easter Vigil, it is the presider at the Vigil who celebrates all of the sacraments of initiation which take place at that particular liturgy. The same priest who presides over the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist also baptizes, confirms and administers the Eucharist to all being initiated at the Easter Vigil.



At the Easter Vigil, the practice of one priest presiding over the Mass while another priest or deacon baptizes the catechumens and another confirms is not permitted. Or, for example, it is not permitted for one priest or deacon to baptize some catechumens and another priest or deacon to baptize others as if they were taking turns.

An exception to this might occur when such great numbers are to be initiated that it becomes necessary for other priests or deacons to assist by baptizing simultaneously. What is envisioned here is not a “taking turns” baptizing or confirming, but simultaneous baptisms at different stations throughout the church. The purpose of this is to not unduly prolong the rite; it is not to give each priest an opportunity to baptize, confirm, etc.

Confirming Adult Catholics

Since only the pastor is given delegation to confirm adult Catholics (18+) on the Sundays of Easter, the pastor must be the one to preside at Masses at which the confirmations are to take place.

Note: As stated, no delegation is required for any priest to receive into full communion and confirm a validly baptized **non-Catholic**.