



Confirmation is Not a Passage into Adulthood

Reflections on the Original Order #4

Diocese of Honolulu

Questions? kdeneve@rcchawaii.org

Many Catholic Christians see Confirmation as a rite of passage into adulthood. Yet Confirmation is a sacrament of beginning, of initiation. It is not a sacrament of transition, of becoming an adult.

The Catechism states, “Although Confirmation is sometimes called the ‘sacrament of Christian maturity,’ one must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth. Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood one can attain spiritual maturity.” (no. 1308)

In the Eastern Catholic Churches, infants are routinely confirmed (“Chrismation” in the eastern traditions). In the Roman Catholic Church, young children in danger of death are confirmed. At the other end of the age spectrum, if an elderly person is baptized, then he or she is immediately confirmed. The fact that infants, children, teenagers, young adults and the elderly can all be confirmed shows that Confirmation is not about becoming an adult. It is about being sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Soon, seven-year-olds who were baptized as infants will complete their sacraments of initiation in this original order. (When this will happen depends on your parish plan.) Specifically, children will be confirmed prior to receiving First Communion. They will not “transition” into adulthood. They will be fully initiated into our faith.

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