

---

## *Have You Changed Your Mind Yet This Year?*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by Dean Sam Candler**

The popular verse, Luke 2:52, says that “Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.” It’s a verse we typically associate with the growth of the young boy, Jesus. But we pray it often for any of our young children: may they increase in wisdom and in maturity, and in divine and human grace! I tend to prefer the word “grace” over “favor.” The Greek of Luke 2:52 definitely says “charis.” Jesus increased in “charis,” or grace.

Consider, however, what we are saying when we claim that Jesus increased in something. How can that be? Don’t we consider the divinity of Jesus to mean that he must already be divinely perfect? Why would he need to increase in anything at all?

Well, I have come to believe that both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus include growth and increase. A whole and healthy person is always growing, and Jesus’ humanity shows that to us. If Jesus grows in wisdom and in life, then surely we are supposed to grow in wisdom and in life, too. We are not supposed to stand still. In fact, the most important indication that you are alive is that you are growing. In the biological world, the only things not growing are dead!

What, then, in this new year are you doing to grow? Taking piano lessons for the first time? Reading a new book? Learning healthier foods to eat? Learning a new piece of history? Building something in your workshop? Or, better yet, teaching some new subject to a child? (For, remember, the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone.)

Maybe you are even growing in wisdom. Learning new ideas and new perspectives can actually change your mind. One of the most important indications of wisdom is the ability to change your mind!

That’s why John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching repentance, and it is why Jesus began his ministry with the same emphasis on repentance. The word “repent” means, literally, to “change one’s mind.” People who know how to repent know how to change their minds.

In the Bible, repenting – or changing one’s mind – is not a sign of weakness, by any means. It is a sign of strength. And it is certainly a sign of wisdom. To change our minds means we are growing. And growing means we are staying alive!

Some of our New Year’s resolutions might well coincide (coincidentally!) with the appearance again of John the Baptist this January, when we keep the feast of the Baptism of Christ (January 12). Repent! Said John the Baptist. Change your mind, say our New Year’s resolutions! Changing our minds means we are growing, and growing in grace. And, growing in “divine and human grace” means we are staying alive!



The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

---

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*