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## *The Gift of Joy and Wonder!*

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

Have you every prayed for someone to receive the gift of joy and wonder! Yes! You probably have, if you have said “Amen” after the priest has delivered one of the strongest prayers from our 1979 Book of Common Prayer. It’s easily one of my favorite phrases there, appearing in our service of Holy Baptism (page 308). Just after the new saint has been baptized, the celebrant thanks God for the new life of grace, and then prays: *Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works.*

I love praying for joy and wonder! Surely, joy and wonder are the marks of a Christian living fully in the Spirit! And, surely, holy baptism is full initiation into that joy and wonder.

Did you know, however, that that set of words has roots in the Book of Isaiah? Here is how the development occurs. Isaiah 11:1-3 goes something like this:

*A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1–3)*

Over time, those words, “wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, (piety), and holy fear” came to be considered as the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit. (As you can see, “fear of the Lord,” mentioned twice, came to be translated in two different ways in the tradition, once as “piety,” and once as “holy fear.”)

The Early Church Fathers enumerated them that way, too. In Latin, the seven gifts of the Spirit came to be: *sapientia, intellectus, consilium, fortitudo, cognitio, pietas, and timor Domini*. Given at baptism, they were encouraged to be developed throughout the Christian life.

However, when the liturgy of confirmation gradually, and regrettably, became separated from the liturgy of baptism, those sevenfold gifts of the Spirit came to be understood as being delivered, not at baptism, but later at confirmation. It was only the bishop who said those words, and confirmation came to be understood as some sort of completion of baptism. This division existed through the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. For instance, here is the bishop’s prayer, in the confirmation service of the 1928 BCP:

*ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins; Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen (1928 Book of Common Prayer, page 297).*

Ah, but something glorious occurs in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, in one of its major principles. Holy Baptism is restored as “full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church.” The principle is that we lack nothing in Christ, once we are baptized. We are complete. At baptism, we are given all the gifts of

the Spirit that we need. That is why baptized infants and children have every right to receive communion, once they are baptized. They do not need to wait until confirmation, as if their baptism is incomplete until then.

Moreover, in the 1979 BCP, that prayer which was once reserved for bishops at confirmation, is to be said by any priest, at baptism. Thus, it is baptism that delivers the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit; they are not reserved until confirmation.

As you can see, the 1979 BCP delightfully translates these seven gifts of the Spirit into phrases that we might better understand better, too. "Wisdom and understanding" become "an inquiring and discerning heart." "Counsel and strength" become "the courage to will and to persevere." "Knowledge and piety" become "a spirit to know and to love you." And, finally, "holy fear" becomes "the gift of joy and wonder in all your works."

You know, it doesn't have to be just bishops and priests and deacons who say those words. Try saying the prayer yourself for someone you love, maybe for your child! It does not have to be in the context of a formal church service at all. Pray for the gifts of the Spirit for someone you love. It's great fun. Indeed, it is a joy and a wonder!

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon [this your servant] the forgiveness of sin, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Sam Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip