

JANUARY 11, 2020  
Saturday after the Epiphany of the Lord  
John 3: 22-30

“HE MUST INCREASE, I MUST DECREASE!”

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had their own way of attracting people. Both were baptizing people especially those who are poor and abandoned. They announced the good news of the Kingdom of God to all. But the popularity of Jesus was overwhelming, and the disciples of John the Baptist experienced a certain envy and went to him and informed him of what Jesus was doing in the River Jordan.

St. John's response to his disciples revealed his great spirit: his amazing humility. “John helps his disciples to see things more objectively. He uses three arguments: 1) Nobody receives anything which is not given by God. If Jesus does such beautiful things, it is because He receives them from God. Instead of having envy, the disciples should feel joy. 2) John reaffirms once again that he is not the Messiah but only the precursor. 3) In the end, he uses a comparison taken from the wedding feast. At that time, in Palestine, on the day of the wedding, in the house of the bride, the so called “friends of the bridegroom” waited for the arrival of the bridegroom to present him to the bride. In this case, Jesus is the bridegroom, the crowd is the bride, John the friend of the bridegroom. John the Baptist says that, in the voice of Jesus, he recognizes the voice of the bridegroom and can present him to the bride, to the crowds. At this moment, the bridegroom, the people, leave the friend of the bridegroom and follow Jesus, because they recognize in Him the voice of their bridegroom! And for this reason, the joy of John is great, “complete joy”. John wants nothing for himself! His mission is to present the bridegroom to the bride! The last sentence summarizes everything: “He must increase, I must decrease!”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> ocarm.org

My sisters and brothers, decreasing is difficult to do, so is giving and forgiving. For the Lord, it means to love more, to give more and to forgive more. Jesus Christ did that – He is the first to decrease by becoming man, coming down from heaven to become one with His people, His own creation. That is also what Jesus Christ is asking us: to come down, to become small, to always practice humility, love and compassion, and to be like a child.

So, let us imitate St. John the Baptist in saying “He must increase, I must decrease!”, a program for anyone who follows and would like to follow Jesus Christ.