

JANUARY 9, 2021
Saturday after Epiphany
John 3: 22-30

“I MUST DECREASE”

John the Baptist is the personification of humility and respect. Humility because he knew who he is compare to the Messiah whom he said: “I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals.”¹ Respect to Jesus, the real Savior not him whom he recognized: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”²

Our gospel from St. John the Evangelist “sums up in two phrases the honour paid to Jesus by John the Baptist: ‘He must increase; I must decrease.’ This is the spirit required by his God-given role as forerunner to the Messiah. John the Baptist shows authentic deference, of knowing his place in the order of things. He did not seek celebrity, nor to be the centre of attention, or cling to power and prestige at all costs. The 4th Gospel (the Gospel of John) credits the Baptist with a great spirit of honesty. While many were prepared to revere the Baptist as the awaited Messiah, he stubbornly refused to claim that honour for himself. He called himself the signpost pointing to Jesus, the Voice in the Desert preparing the way of the Lord. He was to Christ as the best-man is to the bridegroom, the reliable, supportive friend. He is honoured by Christians everywhere and is listed in our roll of honour directly after our Blessed Lady, just ahead of the apostles Peter and Paul.”³

So, my brothers and sisters, the gospel and in particular, John the Baptist is teaching us how to become a good example and model of humility and respect for others. We must be an instrument of simplicity and others may see in us that God is great not our own selves. So, as we celebrate the Season of Christmas, the Lord is giving us a complete image of humility and simplicity: Jesus in the manger. Let us therefore ask in this Eucharist that we may serve Him and our brothers and sisters with love and humility.

¹ Luke 3: 16 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

² John 1: 29 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

³ www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie