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The Catholic Vocation



"He must increase; I must decrease."

A Beautiful Paradox

Six Words and a Summary

In these six words, St. John the Baptist summarizes our vocation as Catholics, indeed, the vocation of every Christian at all times, in every place, and in every situation – in all we think, say, and do which, if we are serious about Christ, ought to be *everything*.

The people would have had St. John tell them that he was the Christ, the Awaited One, and had St. John yielded to this inducement to anoint himself the Messiah – and not the one preparing His way – what increase John would have known! But John – who commanded the crowds, and whom Herod himself feared – *rejoices* at the coming of the King – and exults in his own diminution!

At the coming of the King, the Herald becomes unnecessary. Those that gathered around him in great multitudes would go to another, to the King Himself – and the herald would fall to the side, his voice would cease, and to those late in coming, he would point away from himself to the King Whom he awaited in anticipation, had immediately acknowledged, and boldly announced.

Such humility!

But greater humility still: the *King* kneels before the *Herald* – and is baptized by him!

"***I*** ought to be baptized by ***Thee***, and comest ***Thou to me?***"² Saint John the Baptist protests — and the Christ of the Living God *kneels* before him in the River Jordan, that all things may be fulfilled.

Two examples are given us: that of the Herald who rejoices in the exaltation of the King and the diminishing of himself ... and that of the King Who humbles Himself to *fulfill* His exaltation as King.

And ***you*** would you make yourself great, esteemed, notable, in the eyes of men?

John knew the way to Christ even before He came. And you *still* do not --- even after He has come?

He must increase ... and we must decrease. It is the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel; it is the summary of your life in Christ. Except that He increase and you decrease, your life in Christ is pretension.

¹ St. John 3.30

² St. John 3.14

