

January 11, 2025 -- Saturday after Epiphany

[1John 5,14-21: Jn 3, 22-30](#)

## H O M I L Y

It is often said that in order to be a good hermit someone needs first to be a good community person. John the Baptist, a solitary man, living in the desert, gives us a good example of the attitude required to live a real community life.

John is a very free person -- free from personal ambition, totally detached from personal achievement. He is a man with a deep sense of responsibility, totally dedicated to his mission and ready to disappear when the mission is accomplished, without waiting to be acclaimed.

The first manifestation of this is how John sends his disciples to Jesus, right after Jesus' Baptism. We know how a spiritual guide can become attached to his disciples. If he has transmitted to them his spiritual experience, if he has brought them to spiritual life, and especially if they are good and faithful disciples, it is normal that it will be hard for him to let them go. A spiritual guide that is not free becomes attached to his disciples in such a way that he makes them dependent on him. John, on the contrary, because he is totally free, does not only let them go, but he *sends* them to Jesus: "*Here is the lamb of God*", he says.

Then, in today's gospel, we have another example. Some of John's disciples came to him to warn him that the man he had baptized and to whom he had given witness was also baptizing, like him, and everyone was going to him. If John had not been pure of heart, he would have been grieved by that development. On the contrary, because his heart is pure and detached, he is happy. He considers himself the friend of the bridegroom. His mission was to announce him. Now that he is there he may disappear. "*He must grow greater, I must grow smaller*".

This attitude is the one on which a community can be built. The community grows greater when the personal ambitions or aspirations of each one grow smaller, when everyone is happy to serve without claiming any right, when the desire of all is to see Christ being more totally born in the heart and in the life of each sister or brother.

This is the grace we should ask for each other in these last days of the Christmas Season.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

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