Weekdays of Advent: December 23th

Gospel text (*Lk* 1:57-66): When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, “No. He will be called John.” (…) Throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, “What, then, will this child be?” For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

John, the Baptist

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Today, we ask ourselves: "Who will be this child?". His appearance carried with him something completely new: from his conception to his circumcision —with the name of John— to his ministry, everything is unique. John will announce someone Greater than he is to come. He has been sent to prepare the path for this mysterious Other; that his whole mission is directed towards Him.

In the Gospels this mission is described with passages from the Old Testament (Isaiah, Malachi, Exodus): "A voice cries in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord!"; "Behold, I send my messenger, who will prepare thy way”. These ancient words of hope were bought into the present with the Baptist’s preaching: great things are about to unfold.

—At last there was a prophet again, and his life marked Him out as such. God’s hand was at last plainly acting in history again. John baptizes with water, but One even Greater, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and "fire", is already at the door.