Fourth Sunday of Advent (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 1:39-45): During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit (...)

The Visitation: John, before his birth, begins his mission as Jesus' precursor

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
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Today, the annunciation of the birth of Jesus is linked chronologically with the story of John the Baptist, by the reference to the time that has elapsed since the Archangel Gabriel's message to Zechariah. The two events are also linked in this passage by the indication that Mary and Elizabeth, and hence their offspring too, are blood relatives.

Mary's visit to Elizabeth occasions - even before they are born – an encounter in the Holy Spirit between Jesus and John, and this encounter makes visible the relationship between their respective missions: Jesus is the younger of the two, the one who comes later. But he is the one whose proximity causes John to leap in his mother's womb and fills Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit.

— In Luke's narrative what the Baptist was to say in John's Gospel is already objectively present: "This is He of whom I said: after me comes a man who ranks before me for He was before me".