

# Mahipal



St. Francis Xavier  
Patron of Ranchi Archdiocese

## Monthly News Letter of Ranchi Archdiocese

December 2018

No. 4

### Archbishop's Message



### Spiritual Significance of Christmas



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are two most significant feasts in Christianity : Christmas and Easter. While with Christmas we celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, In the Easter we celebrate His Passion, Death and Resurrection. The mystery of both the feasts reveals God's unlimited, indescribable and profound love for us. Let us now reflect on the mystery of Christmas.

We consider the mysterious spiritual truths of Christmas as in the Gospel according to John, chapter 3, verse 16. Here we read, "God so loved the world

that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." In the context of Christmas let us reflect over the following expressions : God, world, love, gave his only Son, faith and eternal life.

**God and His love :** Not having been created by anyone, God exists on His own and that He is without end. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, creator of all, supremely divine, unknowable yet knows all and is

everlasting. In addition, He is affectionate Father, all merciful, all forgiving and all merciful. God is Love. As He created human being on account of His love, He immensely loves them. He said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you." (Jer 31:3) He also said, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands." (Isaiah 49:15-16)

**World and the man :** Here 'world' is intended to mean the entire human race. "God created humankind in His image" (Gen 1:27). He put His own soul in him, granted him eternal life, freedom, will and ability to discern good from evil. In addition, He granted him the Ten Commandments through Moses. These Commandments are the ten wills of God. Through their observance we may always remain in His company and may finally reach heaven. In fact, it is God's will that all of us upon the earth and beyond adore, worship and glorify Him.

**Sin and Salvation :** Humankind revolted against its own God,

the Creator. He went against God's commandments. The third chapter of the Book of Genesis symbolically describes the humankind, God's commandments to Adam and Eve, temptations by the Evil one, fall of the humankind and eventual punishment. Even as the Just God punished him, He did not destroy him. But in the eyes of God man's sin is so grave that it could not be expiated by sacrificing animals. Therefore God gave His own Son who would offer His own life as sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sin of humankind. Unprecedented is His mercy. Beyond words is

His love! He gave His own Son to liberate us from sin. The death of Christ was essential for destroying our sins.

**Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God :** Evangelist John makes the following note regarding Jesus Christ, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (John 1:1-3). Lord Jesus Christ is the second person of the

Blessed Trinity. He indeed is God. He is all powerful, creator of all, omniscient, embodiment of all virtues, omnipresent and all pervasive. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Liberator. He is the Hight Priest, Royal Shepherd and Prophet-teacher. He is the Lamb of God. He is the Saviour. He is the promised Messiah. Prophet Isaiah describes Him as, "He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

**God offered His own Son :** The depth of God's immense love lies in the fact that He "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Punishment by crucifixion was synonymous to utmost insult and cruelty. That is why such a punishment was awarded only to the greatest of all culprits. The immense pain of carrying the cross, climbing it to the top of Calvary, being nailed on the cross and thus remain suspended till death is beyond imagination. Additionally, mental, spiritual and psychological suffering of the convicted person is also beyond description. God offered His Son to endure such suffering and

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WISHES TO  
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2019!**



ignominious death in order to liberate the World from sin.

**Incarnation of the Divine Son :** Despite being the invisible God, the Divine Son incarnated in the human nature. The Lord who transcends time, is now being reckoned within it. Through His incarnation God's plan for our salvation has now been revealed. With the timeless Word assuming frail human nature, the latter was not only glorified, but also became part taker in the eternal glory; we were made parttaker in Christ and confident of eternal life. (Cf. Preface of Christmas, No. 2-3) The angel's message to the shepherds is for the entire human race, "Do not be afraid; for see -- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11) The chorus of the angels is similarly significant, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:14) Christmas is the mystery of God's love and the beginning of our salvation. Therefore it is appropriate for us to gratefully celebrate the occasion both inwardly and outwardly.

**The Virgin Mother Mary :** The role of Mary, the Virgin and Mother, is extremely significant during Christmas. The Angel said to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High ... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you ..." (Cf. Luke 1:30-35) Thus Mary became mother of the Lord. Having understood such an immense grace of the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth exclaims, "Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" (Luke 1:43)

My dear Brothers and Sisters, it is necessary for us to believe in the mysteries of Christmas so as to part take in the eternal life. I wish you a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year in the name of the same "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6)!

**Your Servant and Friend,  
+Felix Toppo, S.J.**

## News & Views

**At the First Catholics' Village**

### **Annual Remembrance of Mother Mary at Khuntpani**

**Khuntpani. 8 November, Thursday.** While commemorating the 6 charcoal making Munda Catholic families of Khuntpani, the first in Chotanagpur to have embraced Lord Jesus in 1873



as their Messiah, an annual devotion to Mother Mary was held here with solemnity and thanksgiving. The celebration started at 8 in the morning with devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. An hour later the ladies of Chaibasa led Archbishop Felix Toppo, S.J., and 60 priests with devotional song and traditional dance to the commemorative stone slab erected in front of Mother Mary's

shrine. The Archbishop lit ceremonial torch at the venue. The ladies then gave a traditional ritual bath to the stone slab before anointing it with oil. Rev. Fr. Augustine Topno, Administrator of Jamshepur Diocese, offered prayers in Ho dialect. Ahead of the solemn Mass, Archbishop Toppo and all concelebrants paid their respects to Mather Mary in the shrine.

The choir of Chaibasa through melodious hymns effectively turned the solemn liturgy devotional. The parish priests of Chaibasa and Khuntpani deserve appreciation for organizing and conducting the celebration smoothly. At least 10 to 12 thousand devotees participated in the occasion and visited the shrine. Located on the Chakradharpur Road, Khuntpani village is 12 KM away from Chaibasa.

While writing to his superiors, Jesuit Fr. Augustus Stockman, the first Catholic messenger of the Gospel to have stepped in the Chotanagpur soil, had informed that 28 Munda speaking Adivasis of 6 charcoal making families in Khuntpani had embraced Christianity on 9th November 1873. He added that they were baptized on this date by the Archbishop of Calcutta. They were arguably the first Catholics of Chotanagpur. The community has since grown phenomenally to now constitute an unprecedentedly large church.

### **Gumla Diocese celebrates her 25-year Jubilee**

**Gumla. 11 November, Sunday.** The 25-year jubilee celebration of the institution of Gumla Catholic Diocese commenced today. The commemorative solemn Mass presided over by His Grace, Felix Toppo, SJ, Archbishop of Ranchi was held at St. Patrick's ground. He was flanked by 5 Prelates and Diocesan Administrators at the Altar. Prominent among thousands of the faithful and well wishers participating in the event were Mother



General of the Daughters of St. Anne, Sr. Linda Mary Vaughan, Provincial Superiors of various religious congregations and distinguished civic officials.

While congratulating all Christian believers, Archbishop Felix Toppo exhorted them to evaluate the last 25 years of Diocese as per the purpose of Jubilee. While reiterating thanksgiving and reconciliation as specific expressions of faith, he said the current social conditions are as challenging as in the time of great Apostle Paul. While dismissing allegations of certain divisive elements, he urged the faithful to undauntedly tread the path of justice, love and peace with a discerning spirituality. His Lordship, Paul Alois Lakra, the Bishop of Gumla Diocese extended welcome and gratitude particularly to the guests. While wishing the Local Church a better future, he exhorted them to stay united for pursuing the path of uprightness, as always.

After the solemn Eucharist, a cultural programme was held for felicitating the guests. President of the diocesan Catholic Sabha, Mr. Seth Kumar Ekka recounted the history of Gumla Diocese and the aspirations of the community thereof.

## Pallium granted to Archbishop Felix Toppo

**Ranchi. November 27, Tuesday.** The believers and well wishers filled the Immaculate Conception of Mary Cathedral this evening to witness the investiture of Pallium upon their new Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ. On the outset His Excellency, Archbishop Giambattista Diquatro, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal ceremonially placed the Pallium upon Archbishop Toppo's shoulders in fulfilment of the juridical requirement of the Holy See. He pronounced the Papal mandate thereof and beseeched God's favour upon the new Archbishop of Ranchi. His Excellency also conveyed the prayers, blessings and affectionate wishes of Pope Francis both to Archbishop Toppo and the Local Church.



Telesphore Bilung, SVD, and Most Rev. Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas, SFX. While His Excellency occupied a distinct throne, the eight Bishops of the region accompanied the main celebrant at the Altar.

In his exhortation, Archbishop Felix had recourse to a well known declaration of Prophet Isaiah, which Lord Jesus had embraced as His own — "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me ..." (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18) As for the Gospel reading (from John 5:1-11), the Archbishop reflected over Lord Jesus' call to the fisherman Peter, inviting him to partake in the proclamation of Good News. While commenting on the special Apostolic or Episcopal duty towards community building, he recalled what Lord Jesus said to Apostle Peter — "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." (Luke 5:10).

After the Eucharistic celebration the Faithful kissed the new Archbishop's ring, wished him well and received his blessings. The Ursuline Sisters had commendably decorated the altar and the parish choir added devotion through their singing. As the master of ceremony, Rev. Fr. Sebastian Tirkey did



**“ The Bishop who owes special allegiance to the successor of Saint Peter through the Pallium, is supremely obliged to nourish the Church's Faithful with spiritual food and water. This implies that he sustain their Faith, love them and discharge peace and justice to them; he is obliged to partake in their joys and sorrows, ensure safety against wolves (implying the enemies of souls) to those who have gone astray; bring them back to the sheep fold. May he dedicate his entire life to this noble task. ”**

*(From Archbishop Felix Toppo's exhortation at the Pallium investiture ceremony)*

The remaining Holy Mass was presided over by Archbishop Felix Toppo, flanked by his Auxiliaries, Most Rev. Bishop

a commendable job. So did Rev. Fr. Theodore Toppo, the Parish Priest, in raising a vote of thanks.



## Lievens' 125th Death Anniversary celebrated

**Lohardaga, 17 November, Saturday.** Lievens Academy, Lohardaga, celebrated today the 125th Death Anniversary of its Patron, Servant of God, Fr. Constant Lievens with a colourful programme. The day began with an Art & Science Exhibition by the students. Added attraction of the occasion was a pencil sketch exhibition on the life of Fr. Lievens. Most Rev. Telesphore Bilung, SVD, Auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi, presided over the function and Mr. Priyadarshi Alok, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Lohardaga, was the chief guest. Distinguished guests, parents, teachers and students from the neighbouring schools visited the exhibition.



Glimpses of the life of Fr. Lievens were presented through a dance drama in the evening. Choreographed by Mrs. Nupur Kashyaap, the School's dance teacher, it reminded of the ways God still keeps the fire of love, as propagated by Fr. Constant Lievens, aflame in the hearts of people down the century and quarter. His Grace, Felix Toppo, SJ, Archbishop of Ranchi and Most Rev. Telesphore Bilung, SVD, were among a host of dignitaries, priests, sisters and parents to grace the occasion and pay tribute to the Apostle of Chotanagpur. About 150 students participated in the show.

## Celebration of Consecrated Life for 12 Samaritan Sisters

**Ranchi, 17 November.** His Grace, Felix Toppo, S.J., Archbishop of Ranchi, was the main celebrant at the Holy Eucharist in which 12 Samaritan Sisters celebrated their consecrated life. While 5 among them pronounced their final vows received by Sr. Annie Thomsia, Superior General of the Congregation, other 5 celebrated their silver jubilee of religious life. The remaining 2 golden jubilarians commemorated their



fifty years of religious commitment. Sr Clementina the General councilor was also present at the occasion. A short Felicitation programme and a fellowship meal followed successively.

## Archbishop's pastoral visit to McMandro

**McMandro, 4 November, Sunday.** His Grace, Felix Toppo, SJ, the new Archbishop of Ranchi, made his first pastoral visit to McMandro today. He was warmly greeted by Rev. Fr. Edwin Minj, the Parish Priest, and the parishners with cultural pleasantries, songs and dance. The commemorative Holy Eucharist was celebrated in the parish quadrangle, as there is as yet no church or multi-purpose hall constructed here. After a short felicitation, His Grace held a meeting with the parishners who made an ardent plea to construct a multi-purpose hall. That they have already raised sufficient fund for the purpose is indeed admirable, said the Archbishop. Before leaving the place, he blessed the proposed site for the envisaged multi-purpose hall. Parish Priest and the parishners said that they will forthwith dig the foundation and conveniently build the edifice. Obligated for affectionate welcome, His Grace encouraged the community to lead a good Christian life. He also thanked Fr. Edwin for the latter's effective leadership.

*Conducted in Hindi by Ranchi Archdiocese Faith Formation Team*  
**5-Day Marriage Preparation & Retreat Programme**  
**12th December 9.00 AM to 16th December 4.30 PM**  
 Venue : SDC, Ranchi / Registration cum Total Fee — Rs. 1500/-  
 Contact : Fr. Praful Tigga, Gram Guru Education Centre, Dr. Camil Bulcke Path, Ranchi-834 001.  
 Phone: 9708547278  
 Please Note : Written recommendation / prior permission of the local Parish Priest essential

## Programme of Archbishop Felix Toppo December 2018

Dt	Events	Time	Place
01	Meeting with Notre Dame Sup. Gen.	10.00 am	ABH
02	Golden Jubilee of St. Barbara Church	09.00 am	Mosaboni
03	Mass at St Xavier's College Auditorium	06.30 am	Ranchi
03	Meeting with SND Provincial	11.00 am	ABH
07	Parents' Day Programme at SDB School	04.45 pm	Kokar
08	Mass DSA Sisters, First Profession	08.30 am	Samlong
10	Golden & Silver Jubilee of MC Sisters	10.30 am	Doranda
14	Mass with OCDs in Carmel Niwas at Chuna Bhatta	10.30 am	Kokar
15	Blessing of new priests' residence, Govindpur	10.00 am	Dhanbad
16	Annual School Function	04.30 pm	Kumardhubi
22	Annual School Function	01.30 pm	Aragate
30	Mass, Golden Jubilee of Fr. Xavier Lakra, S.J.	08.00 am	Samlong

## Programme of Archbishop Felix : Jan-2019

06	Priestly Ordination, Dn. Edwin Dung2 (by F.T.)	08.00 am	Kanke
8-14	XXXI CCBI Plenary Assembly. Till 1.00 pm.		Chingleput

## Bishop Telesphore Bilung's Programme December 2018

1-7	Retreat		Indore
8	Final Profession	10.30 am	Mariam Toli Samlong
9	Village Chapel Blessing	08.00 am	Jaratoli
26 to 28	SVD Gathering		Jharsuguda
30	Ordination	09.00 am	Aragate

## Programme of Bishop Bilung : Jan-2019

4 - 6	Ordination		Rourkela
7 - 15	CCBI Plenary		Chennai