

Mahipal



St. Francis Xavier
Patron of Ranchi Archdiocese

Monthly News Letter of Ranchi Archdiocese

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No. 9

Archbishop's Message

Mother Mary, the Icon of Mercy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The month of May is dedicated every year to the devotion of Mother Mary. It is so, because in our salvation history the holy name of Mother Mary is intimately associated with her Son, Lord Jesus our Saviour. While He is our Redeemer, she is our co-redeemer. That is why while we, the Christians, praise, adore and show devotion to Lord Jesus, we give similar honour to Mother Mary as well.

True, Mary is physical daughter of St. Anna and St. Joachim. Yet, it is also eternally true that in accordance with His plan, God created Mother Mary even before the creation itself. Moreover, she is the most unique and most beautiful creature of God. Since Mother Mary was created even before Adam and Eve, she was spared from the stain of Original Sin. She is the Immaculate Conception. She remained immaculate all her life.

Followers of many Protestant sects do not regard Mother Mary as the Mother of God. Yet the Scripture clearly declares, "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me?'" (Luke 1:41-43) Indeed, having been filled with the Holy Spirit Elizabeth hailed Mary as the mother of God. Unfortunately followers of many Protestant sects choose not to believe in this great truth.

Many Catholic faithful consider Mother Mary as rustic and illiterate woman. This is totally wrong. Our Lord Jesus has revealed to certain Maria Bhaltorta of Italy in an apparition that the parents of Mary had dedicated her at Jerusalem temple when she was three. According to a custom of the time, for ensuring overall development of their daughters, the parents used to dedicate them in the temple.

The girl-child was to be thus adequately educated, taught how to pray and grow into a home maker. The girls in the temple were vigorously educated in the essential truths enshrined in

the scriptures. Hence we may certainly presume that not only did Mother Mary know how to read and write, but she also reasonably grasped the content of the scriptures. She definitely knew of the advent of the Messiah, his controversial life, his painful death and his eventual victorious resurrection, because the prophets have predicted all these developments. Not only is she endowed with wisdom, she herself is also wisdom. It is wrong to consider Mother Mary as uneducated. Her parents were also respectable persons of Nazareth.

In those days, the people, in accordance with the prophecy of Prophet Daniel, were waiting for the advent of Messiah. Mary too awaited the Messiah. Indeed, she wished to serve the Messiah as a maid servant. Even as the Messiah was to be born in David's dynasty, the marriage of King David's decedents had been decreed by the high priest as mandatory. Therefore, as members of the royal family tree, Joseph and Mary were obliged to get married. However, Joseph, a Nazarene, and Mary, a dedicated Virgin, agreed to remain perpetually chaste and virgin. Such was the mysterious plan of God for Joseph and Mary.

Mercy is one of the attributes of God. His heart abounds in mercy for His creation, the human being. God sacrificed His own Son on the cross so as to save the sinful man. Mercy also abounds in the heart of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In fact, mercy is one of the names of God Himself. In order, therefore, to save man, He chose to be incarnated as man. He even went ahead to suffer immense pain before laying down His life on the cross so that the sin of all humanity may be forgiven. In the like manner, Mother Mary's heart abounds in mercy. This is why she consented to be mother of the Redeemer and become co-redeemer of all humanity, while she said to the angel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) The hearts of Lord Jesus and Mother Mary are united, they are one. Their heart jointly abounds in mercy

for the sake of the redemption of humanity.

Our Lord Jesus is God. He is vested with "all authority in heaven and on earth." (Mt 28:18) If so desired, He could have



ruined his adversaries during his Passion by a mere wish. He did none of that, because He is merciful and desires for man's determined amendment. After death no sinner may implore for forgiveness. The Lord God forgave all who sought forgiveness for murdering His Son. If the traitor, Judas Iscariot, were to implore God's mercy for his misdeeds instead of committing suicide, the Lord would have certainly forgiven him. Similarly, the heart of Mother Mary abounds in mercy and forgiveness for all sinners regardless of their crime. Like the Lord, neither does she wish that a soul perish in hell, because having been created by God, every soul is very precious to His eyes. God created the soul so that it may praise and honour Him both in this life and in the life to come. That precisely is the man's true joy — both on this earth and beyond. God's mercy is a glimpse of His infinite love.

The merciful heart of Mother Mary thirsts for man's redemption even now. That is why she shows herself at various locations and gives the message of turning to God through repentance for sins. The world is plagued by sin of all kinds. The Lord said to a pious lady, Vasulla Ryden, "With evil weighing heavy in the world, the cup of God's justice is filled to the brim." In such a situation, Mother Mary alerts the world through her apparitions. The Church has authenticated a number of such apparitions after rigorous scrutiny. The following apparitions are ranked as significant:

1. At Tepeyak near Mexico city, Mother Mary appeared four times to Juan Diego in 1531. She imprinted her figure upon

his tunic.

2. In 1846, Mother Mary appeared to Maximin Giraud, 11, and Melani Calvat, 14, at La Salet village in France. She gave the message of repentance.
3. In 1858, Mother Mary appeared 18 times to Bernadette Subiru, 14, at a grotto of Massabiell near Lourdes city, France. Having introduced herself as the "Immaculate Conception", she instructed to pray for the conversion of sinners.
4. At Fatima, Portugal, Mother Mary appeared six times in 1917 to Lucia de Santos, 10, Francisco Marto, 9, and Jacinta Marto, 7. She directed them to abnegate and pray for the conversion of sinners.
5. In the course of 1961-1965, Mother Mary appeared several times at Garabandal in Spain to girls aged between 11-12 years. They are Marie Loli Mazon, Jacinta Gonzales, Marie Cruze Gonzales and Conchita Gonzales. The message of repentance for sins again emerged prominently. Even as the Church has not yet attested the claim, I personally consider these visions as authentic.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Mother Mary is the icon of mercy. She is our true and dear mother. At every moment she is concerned with our salvation. Let us love her and in keeping with her counsel, let us repent for sins. Let us also thank God for having given so kind and merciful Mother to us. Let us dedicate ourselves to her devotion in the month of May.

✠ Felix Toppo, S.J.

Archbishop of Ranchi

News & Views

Ranchi Archbishop makes a pastoral trip to Andamans

Port Blair. March 27—April 2. On the invitation of Rev. Fr. Viswasam Selvaraj, the Administrator of Port Blair Diocese, Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ, of Ranchi made a pastoral visit to the Island diocese during 27th March— 2nd April. In an exhortation to the priests and religious sisters at Port Blair on March 27, the Archbishop commented on "You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world." (Mt 5:13-14) He said every priest and religious sister should attain personal holiness and thus present an ideal to others. In the following evening he officiated at Chrism Mass at the Star of the Ocean Cathedral, Port Blair. The celebration was devoutly participated by a house full of believers. In his homily the Archbishop encouraged the priests to strive forging intimacy with Lord Jesus.

The remaining days of the Archbishop in the Island were dedicated to an itinerary of Baratang, Rangat and Mayabander. Accompanied by Rev. Fr. Selvaraj, the Administrator, the Archbishop offered Holy Mass for the public at every location. At all places the faithful welcomed him with great love, respect and enthusiasm. He admitted to have been profoundly touched by their faith and devotion. He also sensed that many believers are yet to adopt new and appropriate ways towards progress. On April 1, His Grace met the parish councils, Mahila Sangh and Yuva Sangh members of Port Blair. Issues related to the Local Church were discussed in the meeting. The brief pastoral visit of Port Blair Diocese acquainted the Archbishop with the Church and her Laity. It may be recalled that with the retirement of Bishop Alex Dias, SFX, the Episcopal See of Port Blair is presently vacant.

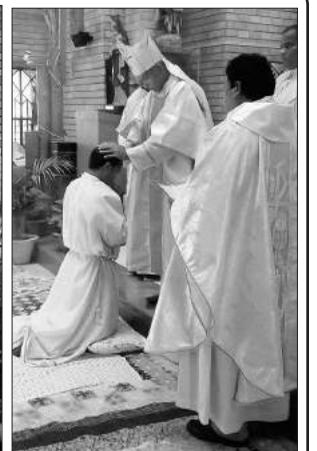
Holy Week observed with devotion in Ranchi

Ranchi. April 14-21. Pre-eminent mystery of Christian Faith, the Holy Week, was observed with customary devotion at Ranchi. With Palm Sunday liturgy, the faithful entered into an intense period of prayer and mortification. His Grace, Felix Toppo, SJ, the Archbishop of Ranchi led the Chrism Mass that was concelebrated by most priests of the region. Sacred oils were consecrated at the liturgy. While exhorting the priests who would conduct various sacraments with the sacred oils, he said they should negate themselves for the sake of God's work and having established intimacy with Christ they should become like Him and lead an otherworldly life on the earth. Already indulged in the Passion of Our Lord Jesus through meditation, intense prayer and reception of sacraments, the Christian Faithful remembered the Saviour's immense mercy for human race. Opportunities were created for sacramental confession at the Cathedral and elsewhere to cater for the increased number of penitents. An overcast sky continued to stoke up apprehension of rain over Loyola ground, the usual venue of Holy Week ceremonies. Undeterred, however, by rain during the Good Friday liturgy, the Faithful stayed put under their umbrellas. Some rituals nonetheless had to be shortened for relentless rain. During the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday, Archbishop Felix referred to Apostle Paul regarding the centrality of faith in the Resurrection. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished." (1 Cor 15:17-18) Roughly 10 thousand people participated in these ceremonies. His Lordship, Telesphore Bilung, SVD, Auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi officiated at the Holy Week celebrations at Muri, Kuru and Lohardage respectively.



Seven were ordained Deacon

Kokar, Ranchi. 24 April, Wednesday. Six candidates from the Indian Missionary Society (IMS) and a seminarian for Shimla-Chandigarh diocese were today ordained deacon by His Lordship, Telesphore Bilung, SVD, Auxiliary Bishop of Ranchi at Holy Angels' Church, Kokar. The IMS deacons are to serve in the Church in Chhotanagpur. The Bishop exhorted them on the responsibilities of diaconate in the Church. "Dedicated to duties of charity and of administration, let deacons be mindful of the admonition of Blessed Polycarp: 'Be merciful, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all.'" (Lumen Gentium, 29)



Sri Lanka Bishops call for restraint after terror attacks

Colombo. April 23, Tuesday. Catholic bishops have urged Sri Lankans to stay calm and act with prudence and restraint following the Easter Sunday (April 21)

violence since its civil war ended in 2009.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka said it expects the government to conduct an immediate inquiry. Bishop Winston S. Fernando, the conference president said, "Following the example of Jesus Christ who underwent undeserved suffering and offered himself to serve humankind, we must also be prepared to have a compassionate heart and prayerfully seek solutions in a human and just manner." Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith told a press conference on April



bombings that killed more than 300 people. The death toll rose to 310 by April 23. The government has blamed a local Islamist group for the suicide bombings that hit three churches and three upmarket hotels. More than 500 people were hospitalized after Sri Lanka's worst

22, "We were informed that the Easter Sunday attacks could have been avoided if the government had acted on the prior information." He urged citizens not to harm any person of any other religious faith. According to the 2012 census, out of Sri Lanka's population of about 22 million, 70 percent are Buddhist, 12.6 percent Hindu, 9.7 percent Muslim and 7.6 percent Christian.

Bishop Mascarenhas reflects on Good Friday

In an AIR message on Good Friday, Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas, Secretary General of CBCI, suitably interpreted the death of Lord Jesus in the light of recent developments nationwide. What may seem a veiled reference to the recent Bombay High Court ruling on the Good Friday as a gazetted Holiday, Bishop Mascarenhas observed, "That fateful Friday, nearly two thousand years ago has not been forgotten and no matter how much rulers and powers try to wipe it away, it will never be forgotten by humanity." It may be recalled that the Administration of centrally administered Union territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli had earlier sought to cancel the Good Friday as public Holiday. The Bishop added, "Good Friday will never be erased from human memory, because it was followed by Easter. Those who thought they had silenced the voice of the innocent, the cries of the deprived and the wails of the marginalized had not imagined that there would be an Easter."

"Lord Jesus was killed", said the Secretary General of CBCI, "because a campaign was launched against him, crowds poised by communal and religious hate turned into mobs that shouted, 'Kill him, kill him'. The murder of Jesus, officially approved by the rulers is the climax of a hate campaign which fortunately for humanity resulted in the defeat of hate by love, of injustice by forgiveness, of darkness by light." The message

To,

continued, "The widowed wives of the Pulwama soldiers, the bereaved family of Prakash Lakra and those eliminated by lynching in the last three years, the survivors of all those killed in senseless violence are the women of our own Good Fridays."

"The pain of Good Friday continues in the lives of many people who are innocently languishing in prison, like the Mother Teresa Sister, Sister Concilia who is in jail for more than nine months in Ranchi on falsified charges only because some powerful people do not like the work being done for the poor and the marginalized." The Bishop, however, is not without hope, "Good Friday continues because it brings Easter. Good Friday is not the end. It is the beginning of a new life, of a victory over death of Easter joy that replaces the darkness preceding and following Good Friday."

Programme of Archbishop Felix Toppo, May 2019

Dt	Events	Time	Place
04	Jubilee of Sr. Usha, DC	10.00 AM	Khuntpani
06	To Bangalore	PM	
07	CCBI Executive Meeting	AM-PM	Bangalore
08	Meeting, Caritas India	AM-PM	Bangalore
09-10	CBCI Standing Committee Meeting	AM-PM	Bangalore
10	Return to Ranchi	PM	
11	Jubilee of SRA Sisters	10.30	Chanho
19	Golden Jubilee of St. Anthony Church	07.00 AM	Rengarih
24	Final Profession of Salesian Sisters		
26	Confirmation in Lapra	06.30 AM	Lapra

Bishop Telesphore Bilung's Programme, May 2019

5	Confirmation		Lalpur
12	Bargari, Village Chapple Blessing		Mandar
14	Confirmation		Khalari
15-16	Visit		Raurkela
18	First Profession SCJM	9.00 AM	Hulhundu
19	Holy Eucharist for Catholic Nurses	11.00 AM	XISS, Ranchi
21-23	Archdiocesan seminarians' gathering		SDC
25	Visit		Gumla
26	Confirmation	6.00 AM	Dighia

Programme of Bishop Telesphore Bilung – June, 2019

2	Confirmation	6.30 AM	Kokar
3	Holy Eucharist, SMI Sisters		Ranchi
9	Village Chapple Blessing, Buribera	8.30 AM	Jaratoli