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My dear Friends,

"Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people of goodwill..." (Lk.2:14) is an immortal song sung by the angels on the birth of Jesus. Echoing the same sentiments, I wish you a Christmas filled with blessings and peace. While, I take this opportunity to thank the Lord for the fruitful year 2013, I wish you a brilliant and grace-filled New Year 2014! May the Babe in the manger brighten the paths of our life as we re-commit ourselves to the service of God's people and to compassionate love embodied in Jesus.

Leaves from my Diary

January- February

The year 2013 began for me at the feet of Mary Mother of God, in the Minor Basilica of our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, Ulhatu. I remembered you to her seeking her intercession and motherly care. The months were packed with plenty of activities like the installation of Most Rev. Binay Kandulna as the Bishop of Khunti; the inauguration of the Faith Year in the Archdiocese of Ranchi; the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Parish at Doranda; the 25th Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) at Vailankanni; the beginning of the Centenary Year of St. Albert's Seminary, Ranchi, my Alma Mater etc.

The Archdiocese was blessed with the visit of His Eminence Cardinal Fernando Feloni, Prefect of

Propaganda Fide and His Excellency Salvatore Pennachio, Apostolic Nuncio to India. He presided over the Holy Eucharist on Ash Wednesday participated by more than 10000 people. Indeed, it was a moment of grace for all. After the Eucharist, he also blessed the Foundation Stone for the CBCI Medical College and Hospital, North India in the presence of all gathered which looked as though a great dream was receiving its roots.

I recall with pleasantness the meeting of the Cardinals for the last time with Pope Benedict who took a historic decision to step down rocking the world by surprise. His humility is lesson for humanity.

March- April

I participated for the second time in the Conclave electing the Pope, first during the election of Pope Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis. It has always been a humbling moment calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide and lead the Church. I was so fortunate that just a day after his election, on 14th March 2013, I had an audience with Pope Francis along with 2 priests and 3 seminarians from Ranchi. He welcomed them warmly, spoke to them very personally, blessed them, accompanied them to the

lift, and saw them off. Then he returned to me and made me to sit on the best of the chairs while he chose a humble one. We had a heart to heart chat. The warmth that radiated from him is fresh in my memories.

I had an important errand in the diocese of Dumka, to lead the diocesan priests into spiritual process to strengthen their collegiality with their Local Ordinary. It was a fruitful mission and I was happy for the same as I

was ordained a bishop for the diocese of Dumka and after 8 years of a happy mission was transferred to the Archdiocese of Ranchi. The months also had many other

national and international meetings besides the usual pastoral engagements in the Archdiocese.

May- July

I spent the major portion of these two months in the Archdiocese except for few meetings in and outside the country. I was engaged in many pastoral activities like confirmations, meeting of the consult, recollections, blessings etc.

fanaticism etc. We resolved to do all that is within our reach to engage in the awakening of the tribal souls.

We also had the annual meeting of the bishops of the region. I was very much touched as well as disturbed by a workshop, 'Awakening the Tribal People' conducted just a day before the annual meeting that vividly captured for the participants, the bishops and major superiors of the region, the issues of the tribal people like migration, trafficking, poverty, land alienation, Maoist menace,

The issue of a statue of Mother Mary in red border saree rocked a conflict in the Archdiocese kicked off by fundamental groups. The non-Christian Adibasi brothers hold that such a saree is their cultural property and belong exclusively to them. It is farce used to create a division by fundamental forces. They came in thousands to destroy the statue but the government brought the situation under control though anything may simmer at anytime.

August – October

This period witnessed the installation of Bishop Franco as the Bishop of Jalandhar; the Installation Ceremony of Most Rev. Victor Thakur as the Archbishop of Raipur; the Episcopal ordinations of Mgr. Niranjan Sualsing (Sambalpur) and Mgr. Kishore Kumar Tirkey (Rourkela).

solidarity with them.

I was very much moved by the youth gathered in Jalandhar for the National Youth Convention. They are the future of the Church and they need constant guidance and support. Ranchi Archdiocese too conducted many programs for the youth this year and I tried my best to be present in some of the workshops to express my

The BIJHAN region had a grand celebration of Prabhu Yesu Mahotsav (Mission Congress) at Ranchi, which re-captured the faith journey of the dioceses in dance drama. It was very impressive.

I was also very happy to celebrate my 74th Birthday on 15 October thanking the Lord for all that he has done for me and accomplished through me. I also recall with joy the celebration of the 175th year of MISSIO Munich. It was a unique experience.

November- December

Every year, the celebration of the death anniversary of the Apostle of Chotanagpur Fr. Constant Lievens, reminds us of the accomplishments of this great son of the Lord. His dedication and determination is unequalled. What a great Apostle he was!

faced by the Christian minority especially in the field of education. Did this motivate him that he has convened a

I took up the invitation to deliver a keynote address on "Asian Christian Leadership of Tomorrow" in a conference organized by the CCC at Chennai. I based the talk on my experiences and the future possibilities.



Christmas get-together for the first time in the State? Delivering the key message, I called everyone to commit to the cause of the suffering poor. I also gave a message in the All India Radio for broadcast. Now I am looking forward to the celebration of Christmas and the feeding of the poor of the city the next day.

The bishops of Jharkhand met the Chief Minister of the State to wish him well and presented some of the burning issues of the State and the problems

Peace, blessings and love! God bless you!

December 2013

+ Teles. P. Card. Toppo

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