

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF CANADA

RESOURCES FOR

THE GLOBAL COORDINATING GROUP CALENDAR

During the **THIRD** week of **MAY**, we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayer the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **FRANCE**.



The French Republic is a country whose territory consists of metropolitan France in Western Europe as well as several overseas regions and territories. The metropolitan area of France extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the English Channel and the North Sea, and from the Rhine to the Atlantic Ocean. The country's 18 integral regions span a combined area of 643,801 sq. kilometres with a total population of 67.15 million.

During the Iron Age, what is now metropolitan France was inhabited by the Gauls, a Celtic

people. Rome annexed the area in 51 BC, holding it until the arrival of Germanic Franks in 476, who formed the Kingdom of France. The country emerged as a major European power in the Late Middle Ages following its victory in the Hundred Year's War (1337 – 1453). During the Renaissance, French culture flourished and a global colonial empire was established, which by the 20th century would be the second largest in the world. The 16th century was dominated by religious civil wars between Catholics and Protestants (Huguenots). France became Europe's dominant cultural, political and military power under Louis XIV. In the late 18th century, the French revolution overthrew the absolute monarchy, established one of modern history's earliest republics, and saw the drafting of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, which expresses the nation's ideals to this day.

Through the 19th and 20th centuries France endured a tumultuous succession of governments. After World War II a Fourth Republic was established and later dissolved in the course of the Algerian War. The Fifth Republic, led by Charles de Gaulle, was formed in 1958 and remains today. Algeria and nearly all the other colonies became independent in the 1960's and typically retained close economic and military connections with France.

France has been a global centre of art, science, and philosophy. It hosts Europe's third-largest number of cultural INESCO World Heritage Sites and leads the world in tourism, receiving around 83 million foreign visitors annually.

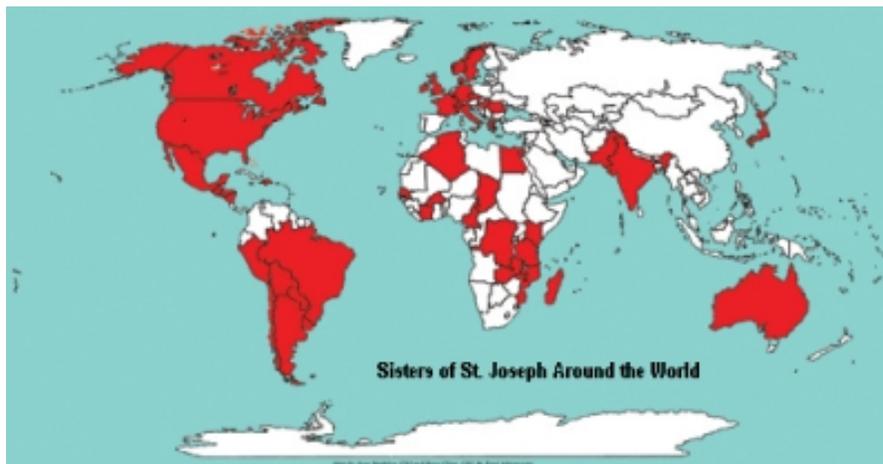
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Birth place of our Congregation, our statistics acknowledge that presently there are 1206 sisters and 29 associates in France, from among the Congregations of Annecy, Chambéry, Lyon, St. Vallier, Champagnole and Institut des Souers de Saint Joseph. Their ministries include parish and pastoral work, work in the Caritas Clinic, with asylum seekers, care of the elderly and disabled, education of youth and catechesis, volunteer services with NGO's and occasional participation in various Associations.

On October 15, 2004, which is the day annually that Sisters of St. Joseph around the world celebrate their founding in Le Puy, France, the International Centre of Saint Joseph opened its doors. On October 15, 2013, the global community of St. Joseph began a yearlong celebration of the first ten years of the International Centre, its accomplishments, the present reality and the future planning.

It was on another very significant anniversary, the 350th celebration of the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph that the idea to create an International Centre was born. Representatives of the four federations and three international congregations began the work that has led them to today.

Since 2004 a number of CSJ's from around the globe have staffed, volunteered, served on the Board, and given programs, and participated in programs at the Centre. We are grateful for the opportunity to experience this endeavour, knowing that many strong international relationships have been formed in that hallowed space.



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 11,000 sisters in 52 countries, listening to the heart of the world.