



# Together in Mission

## INTRODUCTION

### ...to Connect and Inspire

#### IN THIS ISSUE

##### INTRODUCTION

*To Connect and Inspire Unity, Tolerance and Reconciliation— a message of hope from our Sisters in Lebanon*

**T**he

Global Coordinating Group values the connections that are made within the Global Joseph Family. We continue to be inspired by the examples and stories of Sisters in various aspects of mission. With this issue our method of making these accounts available is altered. Stories will be published as they become available and translated into the many languages of our Sisters and Associates for distribution. However, the purpose of supporting each other and being united in mission is not changed. For this connection we turn to our

Sisters in Lebanon and listen to their experience. Let us keep them in our prayer and heart. —Anne Karges, CSJ/

Whatever our ministry, be it one of action or prayerful support, let us connect, dialogue with each other and

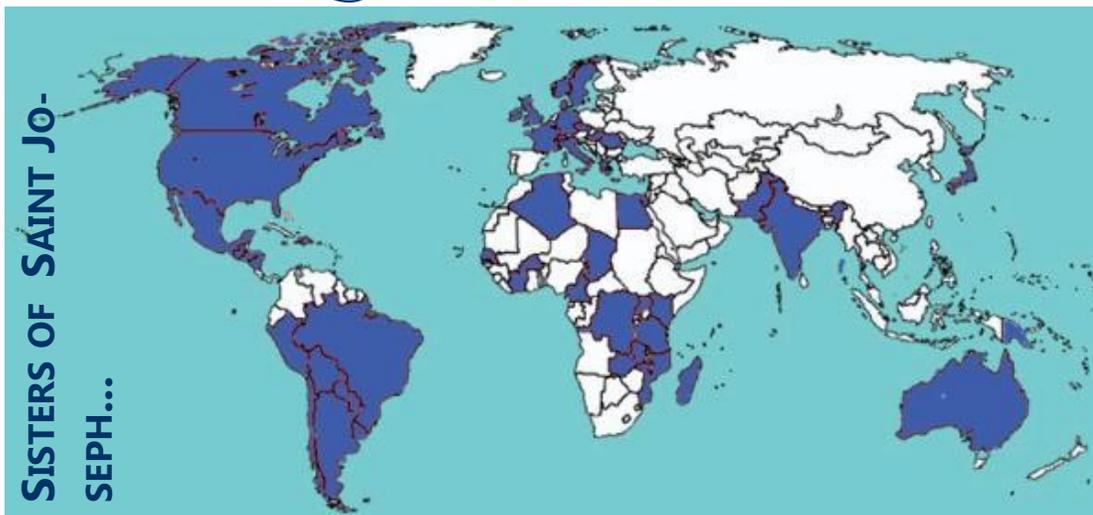
establish ties that will support and energize us in our common purpose. We invite each Sister and Associate on the five continents to read *Sisters of St. Joseph: Together In Mission*, consider

**...let us connect, dialogue with each other and establish ties**

sharing your own story, and participate in the great flow of energy for mission enlivening us still today.

-Global Coordinating Group

## ...throughout the world.



**SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH...**

Graphic designed by Baya Claire, csj/Carondelet-St

You are invited to study this image of our world. The countries shaded in blue indicate where our spirit and mission is alive and active through the presence of Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates who live and minister in these countries.



## THE REGION OF LEBANON

### UNITY, TOLERANCE AND RECONCILIATION

—SR. MARIE REGINA ACHKAR, CSJ/LYON



This article is to give you some idea of the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon which is established in three areas in Lebanon, a small country of 4 million inhabitants with 12 million living abroad.

In 1923, French Sisters arrived from Armenia in Turkey. The Sisters' presence was requested and welcomed by the Jesuit Fathers who were in charge of the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Beirut. The hospital needed the Sisters to care for those ill in body and spirit. Some young Lebanese women came to know the Sisters and entered the Congregation.

In 1936, they built a small primary school which still continues to this day at **Deir el- Harf**, a small village.

Later, in 1958, another primary school was built in southern Lebanon at Klaya, on the border of Israel and where several other congregations have refused to go. A barrier separates the two countries so that on the left we see the Israeli soldiers and farmers working on their land while on the right we see the Lebanese who are doing the same thing. There are frequent threats from both sides. We have had a lot of wars since 1948 when the Palestinians were driven out of Palestine and settled in camps in Lebanon. – It has created a troubled history for us. Sometimes it is civil war, sometimes religious wars, or war with Israel.

In **Klaya**, beside the school we have a clinic – a pharmacy which looks after everyone, without distinction, and there is a sewing workshop for the young women to develop skills to manage their

households, raise their children, and to lessen their poverty by learning to sew or to do crafts and thus earn some money to meet their personal needs. Unfortunately because of the long war, the advanced age of the sisters and our small number it has been necessary to stop these activities. The leaders who were trained to carry out the works have not persevered and some have left the village for a safer location and better future for their children.

**A barrier separates the two countries so that on the left we see the Israeli soldiers and farmers working on their land while on the right we see the Lebanese who are doing the same thing.**





Our schools are mixed and consist of various religious faiths and we try to teach our students fraternal love, and human relations. We teach tolerance and reconciliation through catechetical instruction. This can help them to build a relationship with God and to erase the effects of religious war, which has left the biggest mark on them and their parents. In addition, we have an environment club to try to form ecologically-minded citizens. They were saddened when fires ravaged almost all the forests and our village as well. They were distraught to see all their tree planting efforts over these last years disappear from their school garden. However, they are not discouraged but rather have replanted beautiful small pine trees. They undertake small ecological projects and are becoming educators for their family circle and friends through skits, and displays of their environmental activities.



We often gather the families for educational meetings on human relationships and current themes with special speakers. We share our “Spirit of Joseph” with the teachers. We visit with parents and families to build mutual understanding. In our parish presence – we work with the parish committees such as liturgy, Choir, Red Cross, youth movements, preparation for first Communion. We engage in three-day Ignatian retreats for the university students, and some meeting days before the great feasts.

“We often gather the families for educational meetings on human relationships”

We have a third location since 1993 when the Sisters were requested by the pastor. It is a large parish, in Ghadir, on the coast. The Sisters are present in the parish by visiting the elderly and abandoned, prayer groups, and take care of church linens.

We have written our goal for the region: “Full of hope for the future, we desire to give an image of God’s goodness and mercy. Helping to build a new world where all people, with the richness of their diversity, will build the one people of God.” (const. 62)✠

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