

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF CANADA
RESOURCES FOR
THE GLOBAL COORDINATING GROUP CALENDAR

During the **FIRST** week of **SEPTEMBER**, we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayer the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **MEXICO**.



Mexico is a federal republic in the southern portion of North America. It is bordered to the north by the United States; to the south and west by the Pacific Ocean; to the southeast by Guatemala, Belize, and the Caribbean Sea; and to the east by the Gulf of Mexico. Covering almost two million square kilometers (over 760,000 sq mi), the nation is the fifth largest country in the Americas by total area and the 13th largest independent state in the world.

With an estimated population of over 120 million, the country is the eleventh most populous and the most populous Spanish-speaking state in the world while being the second most populous nation in Latin America. Mexico is a federation comprising 31 states and a special federal entity, Mexico City, which is also its capital and most populous city. Other metropolises include Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, Toluca, and Tijuana.

Mexico is crossed from north to south by two mountain ranges known as Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental, which are the extension of the Rocky Mountains from northern North America. From east to west at the center, the country is crossed by the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt also known as the Sierra Nevada. A fourth mountain range, the Sierra Madre del Sur, runs from Michoacán to Oaxaca.

The majority of the Mexican central and northern territories are located at high altitudes, with the highest elevations found at the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt: Pico de Orizaba (5,700 m or 18,701 ft.), Popocatepetl (5,462 m or 17,920 ft) and Iztaccihuatl (5,286 m or 17,343 ft) and the Nevado de Toluca (4,577 m or 15,016 ft). Three major urban agglomerations are located in the valleys between these four elevations: Toluca, Greater Mexico City and Puebla.

Pre-Columbian Mexico dates to about 8,000 BC, is identified as one of seven cradles of civilization and was home to many advanced Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Olmec, Toltec, Teotihuacan, Zapotec, Maya, and Aztec before first contact with Europeans. In 1521, the Spanish Empire conquered and colonized the territory from its politically powerful base in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, which was administered as the viceroyalty of New Spain. Three centuries later, the territory became the current nation following recognition in 1821 after the colony's Mexican War of Independence. The tumultuous post-independence period was characterized by economic inequality and many politically intensive changes. The Mexican–American War (1846–1848) led to a territorial cession of the extensive northern

territories to the United States. The Pastry War, the Franco-Mexican War, a civil war, two empires, and the Porfiriato occurred through the 19th century. The Porfiriato was ended by the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which culminated with the promulgation of the 1917 Constitution and the emergence of the country's current political system.

The Mexican economy is strongly linked to those of its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners, especially the United States. Mexico was the first Latin American member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), joining in 1994. It is classified as an upper-middle income country by the World Bank and a newly industrialized country by several analysts.

Due to its rich culture and history, Mexico ranks first in the Americas and seventh in the world by number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Mexico is a megadiverse country. In 2016 it was the eighth most visited country in the world, with 35 million international arrivals. Mexico is a member of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the G8+5, the G20, the Uniting for Consensus, and the Pacific Alliance. (Information from Wikipedia. Flag and map from Google)

Sisters of St. Joseph in Mexico

Between the Sisters of St. Joseph of **Lyon** and the United States Sisters of St. Joseph of **Orange**, there are 44 sisters and 16 Associates in Mexico. They are involved in education, pastoral work and work with migrants.

From the LYON website

Because of the separation of Church and State in France in the 19th century, Religious Institutes were no longer recognized in the teaching profession. Consequently, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon began to seek new horizons in Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

On October 6, 1903, Mother Marie Flavie Arnaud and five Sisters arrived in Veracruz, one of the 31 states of Mexico, and were welcomed by Father Félix de Jesus Rougier.



On October 15, the Sisters opened a college in Mexico City, and the following year, a college in the center of the city. Moved by the extreme poverty of their surroundings, the Sisters not only wished to serve the poor but to live among them. Their zeal inspired young women to enter the Novitiate in Lyon, France, and in South Berwick, Maine, USA. Mexico opened their novitiate in 1941.

The Mexican Sisters enriched the Congregation through their presence with the poor. In 1946, they opened two free primary schools as well as schools in rural areas. They were also engaged in various ministries: the orphans, street children and a hospital. In 1958, Mexico received the status of Province.



First Postulants in Mexico 1941

Following the Second Vatican Council questions and concerns arose which led the Religious to choose a preferential option for the poor, resulting in experiments of community life, insertions in poor neighborhoods - both urban and rural areas - and with indigenous people.



At the General Chapter of 1987, the Congregation strongly supported the "Option for the Poor." To this day, the Province has faithfully lived according to this orientation.

United in prayer the Global Joseph Family, 11,000 sisters in 54 countries, listening to the heart of the world.

