

Today, on this twentieth week (May 23) of our 2022 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and pray for the 21 Sister serving in **Haiti** as well as for the people of that island nation.



The Sisters belong to the CSJ St. Vallier (Quebec) Congregation whose history is detailed on [this Laval University webpage](#). It recounts that the St. Vallier Congregation originated from the Sisters of Saint-Joseph of Vienne (the first branch of the CSJs founded in 1650). In 1688, the Count of Saint-Vallier -- who soon afterwards became the second bishop of Quebec-- asked the Bishop of Vienne to take responsibility for the small hospital that he had just founded at Saint-Vallier (France) which had been in the charge of the Sisters since 1683. The

Sisters were given leadership of the hospice and also soon opened a small school for young girls. In acknowledgement of their work, the Sisters were recognized by the Church as teachers and hospital workers in 1829. However, the Combes laws (in 1901 and 1904) forced the closure of France's congregational schools; so, Sr. Thérèse of Jesus (Cécile Drolet), of Quebec origin, suggested to the Superior General that they go to Canada. On August 17, 1903 twelve Sisters of Saint-Joseph arrived at Saint-Jean-Port-Joli (Quebec) where they took charge of the village school. The Sisters taught in primary and secondary schools until 1948; after which they served primarily in the care of the infirm. As of 2010, 76 Sisters resided at the Motherhouse on Ste-Foy Road in Quebec City (left [image source](#)), and the International Centre currently reports 23 CSJ St. Vallier Sisters ministering in Haiti. The Sisters in Haiti live near Lemonade where they serve in education, healthcare, pastoral ministry and poverty relief. In addition to St. Vallier, other CSJ Congregations have also been active in Haiti. For example, between 1986-2015, the CSJ-Toronto Congregation operated a mission with the ministry of several Sisters: Sr. Rosemary Fry (1987 – 2013) in health and pastoral care; Sr. Mary Alban Bouchard (1989-2013) in pastoral work; Sr. Cecelia Tallack (1991–2001) in education; Sr. Lorraine Malo (1989-1991, 2001 – 2008, and 2010) in health and pastoral care; Sr. Mary Alban Bouchard who was in Haiti during the 2010 earthquake; and, Sr. Ann Delaney (2018) at the Mission Haiti project. The [Mission Haiti](#) (2010-2020) was a joint Canadian and US Federation development project in response to the tragic January 2010 earthquake.

Country Background: Haiti is a sovereign state located on the island of



Hispaniola in the Great Antilles archipelago of the Caribbean Sea. It occupies three eights of the western side of the island with a population of 11.4million (2020) - making it the most populous country in the Caribbean. The region was originally inhabited by the Indigenous Taino people but in 1492

Christopher Columbus' flagship *Santa Maria* ran aground north of what is now Limonade (note: where the CSJ-St. Vallier have their Haiti mission). Spain claimed the island naming it La Española and ruled it until the early 17th century. However, competing claims and settlements by the French led the western portion to be ceded to France, who renamed it Saint-Domingue. In the midst of the French Revolution (1789 – 1799), slaves and free people of colour revolted during the Haitian Revolution (1791 – 1804), culminating in the abolition of slavery. In fact, Haiti is the only nation in the world established as a result of a successful slave revolt with the sovereign nation having been established on January 1, 1804. As an island prone to violent earthquakes and hurricanes, with destructive storms in 2004 2008 and 2016 as well as a devastating 2010 earthquake, literally thousands of people have been killed or internally displaced. Today, the [UN World Food Program reports](#) 4.4million people (more than one quarter of the population) at risk of hunger, and ranks Haiti as third among countries most affected by extreme weather events from 2000 to 2019. In its [2020 report](#), Human Rights Watch noted that “political instability in 2019 continued to hinder the Haitian government’s ability to meet the basic needs of its people, resolve long-standing human rights problems, and address humanitarian crises.” This [January 2022 Global Sisters Report article](#) recounts the “multitude of dangerous daunting challenges” facing Haiti today.



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 7850 Sisters, 5700 Associates, 34 Agrégées in 44 countries, listening to the heart of the world.