

Today, on this twenty-sixth week (July 4) of our 2022 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and pray for the 31 Sisters serving in **Japan** as well as for the people of that island nation.

The Sisters belong to two US-based Congregations -- Carondelet and the Congregation of St. Joseph -- and serve in education, counselling, school administration/leadership, Sign Language interpretation at Masses, official translation for foreign workers as well as with residents of nursing homes, the elderly, disabled and Tsunami victims.



The **Carondelet Congregation** began its 'foreign mission' to Japan on August 14, 1955 – when the first four sisters arrived at Yokohama Harbor. They eventually settled in Kyoto, and in 1959 opened the St. Joseph Joshi Gakuen school for girls in Tsu. In April 2011, the Japan Vice Province became a region of the Los Angeles Province and since then a number of Japanese women have entered the community. Today, the Sisters continue to serve in Tsu as well as in Tokyo and, as noted on the [Congregation's website](#) (also the source of photo), *"The majority are involved with the school sponsored by the province, St. Joseph Joshi Gakuen. The remainder serve in the community in parish ministry, chaplaincy, prayer and teaching."* The **Congregation of St. Joseph** offers two wonderful resources to learn about their mission in Japan: you can read about a visit of US Sisters and Associates to Japan in this [ImagineONE article](#), and on the Congregation's [Facebook page](#) are several posts and images of the Sisters in Japan, including a 2021 post of Sisters celebrating 'Respect for the Aged Day' - a Japanese public holiday to celebrate and honour elderly citizens.



Country Background: Japan, often called the 'Land of the Rising Sun', is a stratovolcanic (i.e.: a conical volcano built up by many layers of hardened lava and tephra) archipelago consisting of approximately 6,852 islands. Archaeological research indicates that Japan was inhabited as early as the Upper Paleolithic period (between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago); while the first written mention of Japan is found in Chinese texts from the 1st century AD. From the 12th century until 1868, Japan was ruled by successive feudal military 'shōguns'. A long period of isolation began in the early 17th century and ended in 1853 when a United States pressured Japan to open to the West. After nearly two decades of internal conflict and insurrection, the Imperial Court regained its political power in 1868 through the help of several clans from Chōshū and Satsuma - and the Empire of Japan was established. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, victories in the First Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War and World War I allowed Japan to expand its empire during a period of increasing militarism. The Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937 expanded into part of World War II in 1941, which came to an end in

1945 following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese surrender. Since adopting its revised constitution in 1947 (during the occupation), Japan has maintained a 'unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy' with an Emperor and an elected legislature called the National Diet. With a population of 125.4million (2021), Japan benefits from a highly skilled workforce and is among the most educated countries in the world. Economically, Japan is highly developed with a very high standard of living and human development indicators - such as the highest life expectancy and the third lowest infant mortality rate in the world. Japan is a member of the ASEAN Plus mechanism, the United Nations, the OECD, the G7, the G8 and the G20—and is considered a notable global power. (Sources: Wikipedia; Trading Economics; OECD)



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