

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CANADA

RESOURCES FOR

THE GLOBAL COORDINATING GROUP PRAYER CALENDAR

Beginning January 28, 2019 we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **BELGIUM** in our prayer.



Belgium is a sovereign state in Western Europe, bordered by the Netherlands to the north, Germany to the east, Luxemburg to the southeast, France to the southwest, and the North Sea to the northwest. It covers an area of 30,528 square kilometres (11,787 sq mi) and has a population of more than 11.4 million. The capital and largest city is Brussels; other major cities are Antwerp, Ghent, Charleroi and Liège.

Belgium is divided into three highly autonomous regions: Flanders in the north, Wallonia in the south, and the Brussels-Capital Region. Brussels is the smallest and most densely populated region, as well as the richest region in terms of GDP per capita.



Belgium is home to two main linguistic groups: the Dutch-speaking, mostly Flemish Community, which constitutes about 59 percent of the population, and the French-speaking Community, which comprises about 40 percent of all Belgians. A small German-speaking Community, numbering around one percent, exists in the East Cantons. The Brussels-Capital Region is officially bilingual (French and Dutch), although French is the dominant language. Historically, Belgium was part of an area known as the Low Countries with its name being derived from the Latin word *Belgica*, after the Roman province of Gallia Belgica.

From the end of the Middle Ages until the 17th century, the area of Belgium was a prosperous and cosmopolitan centre of commerce and culture. Between the 16th and early 19th centuries, Belgium served as the battleground between many European powers. The country emerged in 1830 following the Belgian Revolution when it seceded from the Netherlands.

Belgium is one of the six founding countries of the European Union and hosts the official seats of the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, and the European Council, as well as a

seat of the European Parliament in the country's capital, Brussels. Brussels hosts several of the EU's official seats as well as the headquarters of many major international organizations such as NATO.

Belgium is a developed country, with an advanced high-income economy. It has very high standards of living, quality of life, healthcare, education, and is categorized as "very high" in the Human Development Index. It also ranks as one of the safest or most peaceful countries in the world.

Sisters of St. Joseph in Belgium

Three congregations have a total of 43 Sisters of St. Joseph serving in Belgium: **Institut de Souers de Saint Joseph, Chambéry**, and **Lyon**. Their works include education, pastoral care and various social activities.

The **Lyon** mission in Belgium has an interesting history: The **Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Bourg** grew out of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon which had been disbanded during the French Revolution. In 1819 a daughter house was established in Bourg, which became an independent congregation in 1823. By 1962, the Bourg Congregation had six provinces, three in Europe: Bourg, Switzerland and **Belgium**, and three in the United States. In 1996 the Bourg congregation re-joined the founding congregation of **Lyon**, as part of the latter's European Province.

Institut de Souers de Saint Joseph - Enjoy a tour of the French Institute's web site: <https://www.soeurs-st-joseph-institut.fr/> Don't forget to lick on the translator button.



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