

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

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



Before Spanish colonization, the Andean region of Bolivia was part of the Inca Empire while the northern and eastern lowlands were inhabited by independent tribes. Spanish conquistadors arriving from Cuzco and Asunción took control of the region in the 16th century. During the Spanish colonial period Bolivia was administered by the Royal Audiencia of Charcas. Spain built its empire in great part upon the silver that was extracted from Bolivia's mines.

After the first call for independence in 1809, 16 years of war followed before the establishment of the Republic, named for Simón Bolívar. Since independence, Bolivia has endured periods of political and economic instability, including the loss of various peripheral territories to its neighbors, such as Acre and parts of the Gran Chaco. It has been landlocked since the annexation of its Pacific coast territory by Chile following the War of the Pacific (1879–84), but agreements with neighboring countries have granted it indirect access to the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

The country's population, estimated at 11 million, is multiethnic, including Amerindians, Mestizos, Europeans, Asians, and Africans. The racial and social segregation that arose from Spanish colonialism has continued to the modern era. Spanish is the official and predominant language, although 36 indigenous languages also have official status, of which the most commonly spoken are Guarani, Aymara, and Quechua languages. (from Wikipedia)

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

Sisters Gabriella and Madina write:

On June 24, 2017, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, Sister Zelinda Rosin received the title of "Manager and Defender of the Cultural Heritage" the State of Bolivia. This recognition and tribute were conferred by the National Confederation of Bolivian Folklore (CONFOBOL), located in La Paz. Sister Zelinda was recognized for her contributions and unconditional devotion to national integration, her spirit of service and her commitment to the society of Cochabamba and Bolivia.

Sister Zelinda Rosin is a native of Vacaria in southern Brazil, and, since 1989, she has lived her mission as a Sister of Saint Joseph on Bolivian soil. Since she arrived in Cochabamba, in addition to formation activities, she has devoted herself to the poorest, assuming the coordination of 14 soup kitchens. "Comedores" is the name given to the social project that aims to meet one of the basic needs of people, food. For many children and elderly, these sites provide the only meal of the day. Of the 14 soup kitchens, only four are in operation today, because resources are scarce, and 10 of them had to be closed. The four locations are open Monday through Friday, serving 450 children and 35 seniors. The parents contribute with maintenance and some give a weekly donation of seven Bolivian pesos, the equivalent of a dollar.

The medal and certificate conferred on Sister Zelinda speak of her great apostolic zeal, love for the poor and commitment to promoting the values and culture of the Bolivian people.

From the CSJ Journal, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry (2015 - n. 3) we read about Sr. Ieda Maria Tomazini's visit as General Councilor:

"In January this year, Sister Philomena and I visited the region of Bolivia. We were delighted with how close the hierarchical Church is with our Sisters. On that occasion, the Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Cruz, in addition to presiding at Mass in the tiny chapel in the house of the Sisters, devoted an entire afternoon explaining the local ecclesial organization, as well as the priorities, concerns, and challenges of the Catholic Church in Bolivia.

During his presentation, he said that he had asked directions to the house of the Sisters, because he didn't know where they lived. A teenager said, "I don't know the Sisters of Saint Joseph, but if you're looking for the Sisters who serve the poor, they live on Palmeras Street."

The teenager had explained their work This made me reflect on what people say about us, how they see us, and if they know where we live. The echo of the answer to the question, "Where do the Sisters of Saint Joseph live?" continues to resonate within me and creates a hymn of praise to God, praise for the presence of our Sisters in the midst of the materially poor, in places where there is intolerance and religious conflicts, where Christians are part of minority groups, and where materialism and religious indifference generate an individualism that dehumanizes relationships."

We also learn of Sr. Aldenora's visit to Bolivia



Sr. Aldenora

with craft group

On December 17, 2014, I left Brazil for Bolivia, to live a missionary experience, a long-standing wish and desire, to feel, see and share life with the people of another country. I arrived in Santa Cruz de La Sierra, in the company of Sister Antonia Mandro, Coordinator of the Region of Bolivia. I was welcomed warmly by the Sisters who were preparing for their retreat and annual assembly, a great opportunity for me to get to know the life, mission and the work of all the communities in the region.

Everything was new to me: climate, customs, spirituality, and language. In fact, speaking Castilian Spanish, necessary to live with the Sisters and the people, was the biggest challenge. Sometimes I understood some words, other times we communicated only through the heart, eyes, and smiles - and nothing else. But, little by little, I was adjusting, seeing, listening and trying to say something.

I spent a month in Santa Cruz and then went to the State of Beni, passing through the capital, Trinidad, to reach San Ramon, where I lived for six months in the community of Sisters Darcy and Bernadette. It was a rich experience of fraternity, of communion and good wishes, for which I am very grateful. With these people I got to know the reality more closely, including their way of living and their characteristic way of sharing. I joined a group of 18 women which Darcy accompanies and saw the crafts they had brought to share. Through this group, I was brought face-to-face with the gifts and the creativity of Bolivia.

I also had the opportunity to visit San Joaquin where we had had a mission, and Magdalena, where Sisters Santana, Francisca and Jacinta live and minister. There, I stayed a week, sharing crafts techniques with another group of 15 women, coordinated by Sister Santana. It was another rewarding experience to meet with interested women, who were available morning and afternoon, enjoying their time and the days that were too short days for what they wanted to learn. It was clear that they all wanted to learn something new and to pass on to others what they learned, multiplying knowledge. Having been sent by the N/NE Region of Brazil, I gave this mission entirely to God upon leaving Brazil, and I was given the strength to overcome homesickness, and to adapt and live with joy all that happened each day. I made a commitment

to live the mission, bearing in mind three attitudes that are important upon arriving at a new place: sharing, listening and compassion. These values accompanied me during the time I was in Bolivia, trying to witness to the presence of the love of God and the Congregation.

I can say that this was a special time of living experiences and challenges, so much so that I'm not saying I'm not going back to Bolivia. I did not say, "Goodbye," but rather, "See you later."

AND NOW WE REMEMBER OUR SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF SAULT STE MARIE WHO ALSO MINISTERED IN BOLIVIA.

Sisters Carolyn Schan and Margaret Cushman ministered in an orphanage for girls from 1987-89 inclusive. Later Sister Carolyn went back to Bolivia and worked under Mennonite sponsorship setting up a library in a remote area from 1991-94 inclusive.



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