

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

During the **FOURTH WEEK OF MARCH** we listen to the heard of the world and hold the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** (CAR) in our prayer.



The **Central African Republic** is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan to the northeast, South Sudan to the east, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the south, the Republic of the Congo to the southwest and Cameroon to the west. The CAR covers a land area of about 620,000 square kilometres (240,000 sq mi) and had an estimated population of around 4.6 million as of 2016.

Two thirds of the country is within the Ubangi River basin (which flows into the Congo), while the remaining third lies in the basin of the Chari, which flows into Lake Chad.

What is today the Central African Republic has been inhabited for millennia; however, the country's current borders were established by France, which ruled the country as a colony starting in the late 19th century. After gaining independence from France in 1960, the Central African Republic was ruled by a series of autocratic leaders, including an abortive attempt at a monarchy; by the 1990s, calls for democracy led to the first multi-party democratic elections in 1993. Ange-Félix Patassé became president, but was later removed by General François Bozizé in the 2003 coup. The Central African Republic Bush War began in 2004 and, despite a peace treaty in 2007 and another in 2011, fighting broke out between various factions in December 2012, leading to ethnic and religious cleansing of the Muslim minority and massive population displacement in 2013 and 2014.

Despite its significant mineral deposits and other resources, such as uranium reserves, crude oil, gold, diamonds, cobalt, lumber, and hydropower, as well as significant quantities of arable land, the Central African Republic is among the ten poorest countries in the world. As of 2015, according to the Human Development Index (HDI), the country had the lowest level of human development, ranking

188th out of 188 countries. CAR is a member of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the Non-Aligned Movement.

There are many missionary groups operating in the country, including Lutherans, Baptists, Catholics, Grace Brethren, and Jehovah's Witnesses. While these missionaries are predominantly from the United States, France, Italy, and Spain, many are also from Nigeria the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other African countries. Large numbers of missionaries left the country when fighting broke out between rebel and government forces in 2002–3, but many of them have now returned to continue their work.

According to Overseas Development Institute research, during the crisis ongoing since 2012, religious leaders have mediated between communities and armed groups; they also provided refuge for people seeking shelter. (from Wikipedia)

## NEWS

February 23, 2018 – VIDEO (2 minutes 35 seconds) - Central African Republic: Half the population needs aid <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/central-african-republic-population-aid-180223142253981.html>

This next link gives insight into the work of some Sisters at St. Joseph's Health Centre in the capital Bangui. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/algae-growing-nuns-in-central-african-republic>

## *Sisters of St. Joseph in the Central African Republic*

Between the *Institut des Sœurs de Saint Joseph* and the *Insituto San Giuseppe* there are 31 sisters serving in CAR, involved in children's education, empowerment of women, parish work and as medical assistants.



*United in prayer, the  
Global Joseph Family,  
11,000 sisters in 53  
countries, listening to  
the heart of the world.*