

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

During the **FIRST WEEK OF APRIL** we *listen to the heard of the world* and hold the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **CZECH REPUBLIC** in our prayer.



The Czech Republic is a landlocked nation state in Central Europe bordered by Germany to the west, Austria to the South, Slovakia to the east and Poland to the northeast. With an area of 78,866 square kilometres (30,450 sq mi) it has a mostly temperate continental climate. With 10.6 million inhabitants, the capital and largest city is Prague, with 1.3 million residents. The Czech Republic is a member of the European Union (EU), NATO, the OECD, the United Nations, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe.

It is a developed country with an advanced, high income export-oriented social market economy, based in services, manufacturing and innovation. The Czech Republic is a welfare state with a continental European social model, a universal health care system and tuition-free university education. It ranks as the 6th safest or most peaceful country and is one of the most non-religious countries in the world. The Czech Republic includes the historical territories of Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia.

History

The Czech state was formed in the late 9th century as the Duchy of Bohemia under the Great Moravian Empire. In 1002, the duchy was formally recognized as part of the Holy Roman Empire, becoming the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1198 and reaching its greatest territorial extent in the 14th century. In 1546 Bohemia was gradually integrated into the Habsburg Monarchy alongside the Archduchy of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary. The Protestant Bohemian Revolt (1618–20) against the Catholic Habsburgs led to the Thirty Years' War. After the Battle of the White Mountain, the Habsburgs consolidated their rule, eradicated Protestantism and reimposed Roman Catholicism, and also adopted a policy of gradual Germanization. With the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, the Bohemian Kingdom became part of the Austrian Empire and the Czech language experienced a revival.

The Republic of Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I. Czechoslovakia remained the only democracy in this part of Europe in the interwar period. However, the Czech part of Czechoslovakia was occupied by Germany in World War II, while the Slovak region became the Slovak Republic; Czechoslovakia was liberated in 1945 by the armies

of the Soviet Union and the United States. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia won the 1946 elections. Following the 1948 coup d'état, Czechoslovakia became a one-party communist state under Soviet influence. In 1968, increasing dissatisfaction with the regime culminated in a reform movement known as the Prague Spring, which ended in a Soviet-led invasion. Czechoslovakia remained occupied until the 1989 Velvet Revolution, when the communist regime collapsed and market economy was reintroduced. On 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully dissolved, with its constituent states becoming the independent states of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004. The Czech Republic ranks as the 27th most environmentally conscious country in the world in Environmental Performance Index.

Sisters of St. Joseph

There are 5 Sisters serving in the Czech Republic from the Chambéry and Lyon congregations. Their ministry includes: home and institutional nursing with Caritas, and education.

1. **A very interesting article entitled: Czech University Students Learn About Love, can be found at:** http://www.csjchambéry.org/site/upload/csjournal/csjournal_79_en.pdf

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2. **From CSJournal September – October, 2017 – Ministry of Unity**

The annual meeting of the International Interconfessional Congress for Religious took place from August 24th to 29th. The aims of this congress are to live the joy of Christian unity expressed in religious life, to know each other's traditions, history and churches in the hope of creating friendships and to deepen our common life in Jesus Christ, in fidelity to the different Churches and following Scripture. The emphasis of the Congress is always on sharing the common life and worshipping together in the different traditions. These are the traditions of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Church, different protestant Lutheran Churches, different orthodox churches.

This year the congress was held in the community of the Casteller Ring, a protestant religious community in Bavaria (Germany). As the place is not very far from the community in Plzen/Czech Republic (only 3 hours by car) all three members of the community in Plzen participated in this important ecumenical event. Women and men religious from all over Europe (France, Germany, England, Switzerland, Sweden, Ireland, Belgium, Greece, Czech Republic, Spain, Romania), the United States and Australia gathered in order to pray and share the Word together, to listen to each other and to explore the different Christian traditions of religious life. Sharing the traditions of so many brothers and sisters is a pure gift – the gift of experiencing that God is One, and that Christians are One in God. The theme of this year's congress -“renewal”- was inspired by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (begun in 1517 by Martin Luther in Germany).

Being in a place with a Lutheran tradition, the group opened itself to the inspiration offered by Lutheranism. In one of the keynote addresses, Sr. Anna-Maria aus der Wiesche, CCB, prioress of a protestant sister-community of the “Brotherhood of Christ,” offered five important points for the ecumenical renewal of religious life: (1) Living the Gospel authentically, which is at the root of who we are and goes beyond our different spiritualities [Benedictine, Ignatian, Dominican, Augustinian, Orthodox ...]; (2) The Com/passionate Love of God, which, enflamed by the Holy Spirit, keeps religious life burning for God and neighbour; (3) Adoration of the Triune God, which is a source of religious life and includes intercessory prayer for those who no longer know how to pray; (4) Offering a place of silence, a gift not only to religious, but also to the “busy world”; (5) Living in community, since, as the society is more and more individualized and even “atomized”, the witness of life in community has a healing power.



The Congress was invited to celebrate the Eucharist with the catholic Bishop of Würzburg, Friedhelm Hofmann, in St. Kilian`s Cathedral at Würzburg. With an overall length of 105 metres this is the fourth largest Romanesque church building in Germany, and a masterpiece of German architecture from the Salian period (1024–1125). At the same time it is among the oldest cathedrals in Germany. During this precious moment of celebrating the Mystery of Death and Resurrection, the Bishop said: “If we have the courage to “go out to the roads and hedges” (Luke 14, 24) and are not afraid of dented churches, as Pope Francis said, the Church will stay alive and will continue to be alive among people”.

Article by S. Gisela Heitz, Czech Republic. Permission to reprint article given by Sr. Barbara Bozak, CSJ Chambéry



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