

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

During the **THIRD** week of June we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **HAITI** in our prayer.



Haiti is a sovereign state located on the island of Hispaniola in the Great Antilles archipelago of the Caribbean Sea. It occupies three eighths of the western side of the island, 27,750 sq kilometres in size and has about 10.8 million people, making it the most populous country in the Caribbean Community. The region was originally inhabited by the indigenous Taino people.

On Christmas Day In 1492 during the first voyage of Christopher Columbus, the flagship *Santa Maria* ran aground north of

what is now Limonade. As a consequence Columbus ordered his men to salvage what they could from the ship, and he created the first European settlement in the Americas, naming it La Navidad. Spain claimed the island naming it La Española and ruled it until the early 17th century. Competing claims and settlements by the French led the western portion to be ceded to France, naming it Saint-Domingue.

In the midst of the French Revolution (1789 – 1799), slaves and free people of colour revolted in the Haitian Revolution (1791 – 1804), culminating in the abolition of slavery. The sovereign nation of Haiti was established on January 1, 1804. Haiti is the only nation in the world established as a result of a successful slave revolt. The rebellion that began in 1791 was led by a former slave and the first black general of the French Army, Toussaint Louverture. His military genius and political acumen transformed the entire society of slaves into an independent country. Upon his death in a prison in France, he was succeeded by his lieutenant, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who declared Haiti's sovereignty and later became the first Emperor of Haiti - Jacques I. the Haitian Revolution lasted just over a dozen years, and apart from Alexander Pétiön, the first president of the Republic, all the first leaders of government were former slaves.

Haiti is a founding member of the United Nations, Organization of American States, Association of Caribbean States, and the International Francophone Organization.

Haiti has the lowest Human Development Index in the Americas. In 2004 a coup d'état originating in the north of the country forced the resignation and exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A provisional government took control with security provided by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. [René Prével](#) was elected President in February 2006, following [elections](#) marked by uncertainties and popular demonstrations. The current President is [Jovenel Moïse](#), who took office on February 7, 2017.

EARTHQUAKES

In 2004, Tropical Storm Jeanne skimmed the north coast of Haiti, leaving 3,006 people dead in flooding and mudslides, mostly in the city of Gonaïves.

In 2008, Haiti was again struck by tropical storms: Tropical Storm Fay, Hurricane Gustav, Hurricane Hanna and Hurricane Ike all produced heavy winds and rain. There were 331 dead and about 800,000 in need of humanitarian aid. The state of affairs produced by these storms was intensified by already high food and fuel prices that had caused a food crisis and political unrest in April 2008.

On January 12, 2010 Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake, the most severe in over 200 years. It was reported to have left between 220,000 and 300,000 people dead and up to 1.6 million homeless. The country has yet to recover from this earthquake. A massive cholera outbreak was triggered when cholera-infected water from a United Nations peacekeeping station contaminated the country's main river, the Artibonite. In 2018 it was reported that roughly 10,000 Haitians had died and nearly a million had been sickened.

On 4 October 2016, Hurricane Matthew made landfall near Les Anglais, making it the worst hurricane to strike the nation since Hurricane Cleo in 1964. The storm brought deadly winds and rain that left Haiti with a large amount of damage to be repaired. With all of the resources in the country destroyed, Haiti received aid from the United Nations of around US\$120 million. Thousands of people were displaced due to infrastructure damage. Also, the cholera outbreak has been growing since the storm hit Haiti. With additional flooding after the storm, cholera continued to spread beyond the control of officials. The storm also caused damage to hospitals and roads, which created a larger problem in helping victims and moving resources. The devastation and damage that Hurricane Matthew caused were sudden and left Haiti in a state of emergency.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

- The [Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Vallier](#) have 23 sisters ministering in Haiti serving in pastoral ministry, education, health and working with the poor.
- Presently the [Canadian and U.S. Federations of the Sisters of St. Joseph](#) are involved in a 10-year joint project, in collaboration with a non-profit organization called Mission Haiti, Inc... This organization is based in a parish in Minneapolis, where a Sister of St. Joseph is on staff.

The *Rebuilding Haiti Through the Empowerment of Girls Project* is a direct response to the tragic January 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti. This 10-year commitment to Mission Haiti, Inc., will provide education for 10 Haitian girls from primary through secondary school; three (3) years of technical education for 10 girls; assist in the salaries for and certification of teachers, and provide partial financial assistance for building Rose de Lima Secondary School.



Information and photo taken from the web page of the sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, <http://www.ssjphila.org/home/about-our-work/justice-and-peace/resources-and-advocacy/mission-haiti-project/mission-haiti/>

- We honour the ministry and presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto who have served in Haiti.

Sr. Rosemary Fry (1987 – 2013) health care and pastoral

Sr. Mary Alban Bouchard (1989-2013) pastoral work

Sr. Cecelia Tallack (1991 – 2001) education

Sr. Lorraine Malo (1989-1991; 2001 – 2008; 2010) health care, pastoral

Sister Mary Alban Bouchard was in Haiti during the 2010 earthquake. To read one of her diary entries, please click the link below.

<http://www.csj-to.ca/story/2010/03/haiti-diary-grief-gratitude-part-2>

- Sr. Ann Delaney, a Sister of St. Joseph of Toronto visited Mission Haiti in January 2018. Her experience will be shared in the September edition of our Canadian Federation Newsletter.

United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 11,000 sisters in 54 countries, listening to the heart of the world.

