

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF CANADA

RESOURCES FOR

THE GLOBAL COORDINATING GROUP CALENDAR

During the **SECOND** week of **SEPTEMBER**, we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayer the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **MOZAMBIQUE**.



Mozambique is a country in Southeast Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west, and Swaziland and South Africa to the southwest. It is separated from the Comoros, Mayotte and Madagascar by the Mozambique Channel to the east. The capital and largest city is Maputo (formerly known as "Lourenço Marques" from 1876 to 1976).

Between the first and fifth centuries AD, Bantu-speaking peoples migrated to present-day Mozambique from farther north and west. Beginning in the 11th century, Arab, Persian, and Somali merchants began settlements and establishing commercial ports along the coast, contributing to the development of a distinct Swahili culture and language.

The voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1498 marked the arrival of the Portuguese, who began a gradual process of colonisation and settlement in 1505. Mozambique gained independence in 1975. After only two years of independence, the country descended into an intense and protracted civil war lasting from 1977 to 1992. In 1994, Mozambique held its first multiparty elections, and has since remained a relatively stable presidential republic.



Mozambique is endowed with rich and extensive natural resources. The country's economy is based largely on agriculture, but industry is growing, mainly food and beverages, chemical manufacturing and aluminium and petroleum production. The tourism sector is also expanding. The country is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in the world, ranking low in GDP per capita, human development, measures of inequality and average life expectancy.

The only official language of Mozambique is Portuguese, which is spoken mostly as a second language by about half the population. Common native languages include Makhuwa, Sena, and Swahili. The country's population of around 29 million is composed overwhelmingly of Bantu people. The largest religion in Mozambique is Christianity, with significant minorities following Islam and African traditional religions. Mozambique is a member of the United Nations, the African Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the Non-aligned Movement and the Southern African Development Community, and is an observer at La Francophonie.

(Information and graphics from Wikipedia)

Sisters of St. Joseph in Mozambique

Presently 5 Sisters of St. Joseph of **Chambéry** are in Mozambique. Their works include: pastoral work with children, social work, schools, visiting families, Basic Christian Communities.

From CSJournal, September-October, 2017

“Loving and Serving with Jesus” was the motto chosen for the profession of perpetual vows of Sister Sandra Vel Eleutherius, the first Sister of St. Joseph to profess vows in African lands, in Mocimboa da Praia, Mozambique on July 30, 2017. A beautiful celebration in African style, fully imbued with the spirit of unity of our Congregation, marked the occasion. Sister Sandra went to Mozambique for a missionary experience before her final vows and chose to continue in this mission. Sandra is a teacher with a degree in the Portuguese language. In Mozambique, she works in various ministries: youth, catechesis, formation of leaders, and she is also studying theology. To describe the celebration is to picture a great witness of sharing, commitment and energy, a community with four sisters that has expanded to involve Benedictine monks and parish communities. It was an ecumenical celebration that featured the collaboration of several Muslims, a celebration of unity, where love and respect dictated the rules. The key words that could define this celebration are unity and presence. Unity is created through respect for and acceptance of differences. The dream of Father Médaille, a total double union in a divided world, could be seen in Christians and Muslims participating in the same preparation, with the same sensitivity. It was an ecumenical celebration not just for the day, with the presence of Muslims, but more, an ecumenical achievement, each giving what they could, just by being present. The unity between the various religious congregations in the Diocese was expressed by sharing presence and commitment. Unity with the family and friends of Sister Sandra, who came from Brazil, showed that in fact, distance does not exist when you love. The Church of Brazil was represented and showed its unity by the presence of Sister Fatima, representing the Conference of Religious of Brazil (CRB). And the whole Congregation was present, in unity with Sister Sandra through the participation of some Sisters from Brazil. And what is Presence? The perpetual vows of Sister Sandra became a landmark in our historical presence here, which began in 2003 with the first group of Sisters and a dream that carried no certainties, no security, but which was full of hope and courage and especially of the desire to be Sisters with these people.

From CSJournal, January-February 2014

In July, 2013, the Sisters of Saint Joseph completed 10 years of presence in Mozambique, a land full of charm, natural beauty and mysteries seen between the lines of traditional teachings. The people are determined to keep their culture and their knowledge handed down from generation to generation. However, and without alternative, little by little, their country is opening its doors to the new values of the globalized world and interacting with all the new aspects of modernity. With much enthusiasm and joy, the Sisters of Saint Joseph tell of the first steps of their living together, sharing, dialogue and gaining knowledge in Mocimboa, the venue for their presence and mission. The joy of being a presence and making a difference among the people has maintained and still ensures the continuity of the mission. In the people’s welcome, on every face, young adult, adolescent or child, shines a smile, a visible sign of hope, going beyond the marks of suffering and neglect caused by exploitation and the domination of colonial powers over so many years. Even among the natives, those who have better living conditions exploit their African brothers with bad working conditions, exchanging cheap labor for food, housing and clothing. Hence, the catchphrase, “He who has, is in charge, and the rest obey ...” People are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers and live in undignified conditions without access to healthy food and water. Faced with this reality, we, Sisters of Saint Joseph, seek to be a presence in all sectors of society and the Church. And so in the middle of this world of adversity, we walk with the Gospel values of sharing, solidarity and loving life above any economic interest. As in so many places, in Mocimboa da

Praia children and women are excluded from the social, psychological and economic spheres. They greatly deserve our attention and dedication, through projects like construction of school and cisterns, human formation and orientation. To give them self-esteem, we work with socialization, motor development and creative skills, with children from three to five years. In some villages where the community is willing to keep the water cleaner and be engaged in voluntary work, cisterns are built to collect rainwater. This project, “water, source of life,” is life-saving for women facing lack of water. We refer sick people and vulnerable children, as necessary, to the competent bodies which can help with solutions. In silence, step by step, and with many challenges, the mission is going on. In the post-war period, with active humanitarian aid, people became accustomed to receiving everything for free. It’s a big challenge to work in the deconstruction of dependence and low self-esteem. With hard work, patience and determination, there are already small advances, a result of the policy and posture adopted by missionary Congregations and even by the government, in working to promote citizenship and self-esteem by offering people the means to “learn how to fish.” It’s not easy to maintain this focus, because it is slow work to change paradigms. Whoever comes to understand the process and embrace the cause, finds his freedom in leaving dependency. Today, it’s been 10 years and the challenges are already different, but not any less. We are happy to be a part of this suffering beautiful history realized through the inspiration and grace of the Holy Spirit.

Canadian Sisters of St. Joseph who served in Mozambique

In 2007, Sister **Frances Baker, CSJ** in Canada – Peterborough, worked in health care in Mozambique.



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

