

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

During the **THIRD** 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 **NICARAGUA**.



Nicaragua is the largest country in the Central American isthmus, bordered by Honduras to the north, the Caribbean to the east, Costa Rica to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Managua is the country's capital and largest city and is also the third-largest city in Central America. The multi-ethnic population of six million includes people of indigenous, European, African, and Asian heritage. The main language is Spanish. Native tribes on the Mosquito Coast speak their own languages and English.

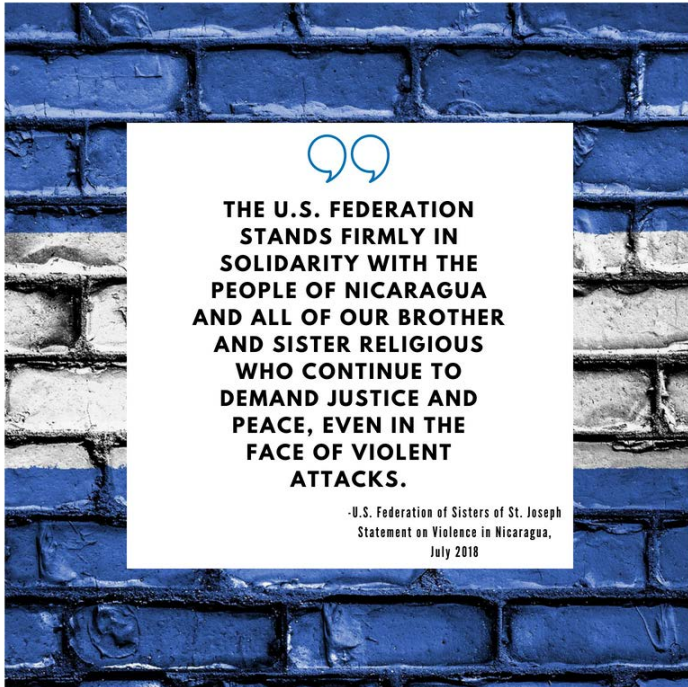
Originally inhabited by various indigenous cultures since ancient times, the Spanish Empire conquered the region in the 16th century. Nicaragua gained independence from Spain in 1821. The Mosquito Coast followed a different historical path, with the English colonizing it in the 17th century and later coming under the British rule, as well as some minor Spanish interludes in the 19th century. It became an autonomous territory of Nicaragua in 1860 and the northernmost part of it was later transferred to Honduras in 1960. Since its independence, Nicaragua has undergone periods of political unrest, dictatorship, and fiscal crisis, leading to the Nicaraguan Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s and the Contra War of the 1980s. Nicaragua is a representative democratic republic.

The mixture of cultural traditions has generated substantial diversity in folklore, cuisine, music, and literature, particularly the latter given the literary contributions of Nicaraguan poets and writers, such as Rubén Darío. Known as the "land of lakes and volcanoes", Nicaragua is also home to the second-largest rainforest of the Americas. The country has set a goal of 90% renewable energy by the year 2020. The biological diversity, warm tropical climate and active volcanoes make Nicaragua an increasingly popular tourist destination. (Map and flag from google; information from Wikipedia)

**In April 2018**, demonstrations opposed a decree increasing taxes and reducing benefits in the country's pension system. Local independent press organizations had documented at least 19 dead and over 100 missing in the ensuing conflict. Protestors explained that while the initial issue was about the pension reform, the uprisings that spread across the country reflected many grievances about the government's time in office, and that the fight is for President Ortega and his Vice President wife to step down. April 24, 2018 marked the day of the greatest march in opposition of the Sandinista party. On **May 2, 2018**, university-student leaders publicly announced that they give the government seven days to set a date and time for a dialogue that was promised to the people due to the recent events of repression. The students also scheduled another march on that same day for a peaceful protest. As of May 2018,

estimates of the death toll were as high as 63, many of them student protesters, and the wounded totaled more than 400. Following a working visit from **May 17 to 21**, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights adopted precautionary measures aimed at protecting members of the student movement and their families after testimonies indicated the majority of them had suffered acts of violence and death threats for their participation. In the last week of May, thousands who accuse Mr. Ortega and his wife of acting like dictators joined in resuming anti-government rallies after attempted peace talks have remained unresolved.

## *Sisters of St. Joseph in Nicaragua*



Two sisters presently serve in Nicaragua from the Congregation of St. Joseph, and the Carondelet Congregation. Their ministries involve neighbourhood work, natural medicine and missionary work.

In **July, 2018** the US Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph issued a statement condemning the violence occurring in Nicaragua.

(Social media text and graphic from the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph.)

## *Canadian Sisters who have served in Nicaragua*

Congregation of the Sisters of **St. Joseph of Toronto** - **Sr. Patricia Connaughton** served in Nicaragua for 7 years with people in refugee camps.



In late **October 1998, Hurricane Mitch** struck Central America, leaving more than 11,000 people dead, destroying hundreds of thousands of homes and causing more than \$5 billion in damages. It was the deadliest hurricane to hit the Western Hemisphere in more than 200 years. Three of our Sisters from the CSJ in Canada – London site, helped with disaster relief efforts.



In December 1998, **Sr. Marie Celine Janisse** volunteered for 3 months, and **Sr. Janet Zadorsky** for one month. **Sr. Teresa Ryan** made four visits between 1999 and 2004, ranging from six weeks, to one month, to 2 months, staying with Sr. Diana Fanguay CSJ from Baton Rouge USA. Our Canadian Sisters chose to help in the resettlement area a few miles outside of Nicaragua capital Managua (Nueva Vida). Teresa's ministry was to accompany and do basic teaching with special needs children in their own homes, with a parent present.

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

