

This week we are invited to listen to the heart of the world and pray for the 22 Sisters of St. Joseph from the Congregations of Aosta, Lyon, and Springfield who minister in **Burkina Faso**, for the 40 Associate Companions, and for the people of that nation.

In 1957, many religious congregations responded to the encyclical of Pius XII "Fidei donum" by sending missionaries throughout Africa. Today, the Sisters minister in retreat centres, a hostel for girls, schools, a social centre with clinic, an educational & nutrition centre, at an orphanage and serve in pastoral work (Source: CSJ UN/NGO). The Sisters of the Aosta Congregation began their mission in Burkina Faso in 2008 at the invitation of Monsignor Basile Tapsoba (Bishop of Koudougou) to manage the UNITAS Center which is located 80 km from the capital City of Ouagadougou. You can [read here](#) about the Sisters and local communities bringing fresh water to families (see photo) in the outskirts of Koudougou near the Center Saint Joseph as well as read about the 2019 Feast of St. Joseph in Burkina Faso.



As explained on the [Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon website](#): In 1959, the Sisters of St Joseph of Bourg-en-Bresse sent four Sisters to Tougan in the Diocese of Nouna, in (Upper Volta) Burkina Faso, and the Sisters of St Joseph of Rodez sent Sisters to Tiassale in the Diocese of Yopougon in Ivory Coast. From 1985, the Sisters of Bourg, Rodez and Lyon worked more closely and even set up inter-congregational communities, and in 1996, Bourg joined Lyon and the following year, Rodez joined the Institute. In 1999, the West African Region is established and the Sisters of Lyon Congregation had ministries in Dedougou, Ouagadougou, Zaba. In 2009, they celebrated fifty years in Burkina Faso, with confidence that the seed, thrown into the ground so long ago, will continue to bear fruit. The Sisters of the Springfield Congregation joined with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rutland which also included ministry in Africa. (Photo left: Rita Bujold, Lyon regional of West Africa, with baby, Gabriel, in her home in Dedougou, Burkina Faso. With permission from the International Centre website.)



Country Background: Located in West Africa, and formerly called the Republic of Upper Volta (1958-1984), the country was renamed Burkina Faso in 1984, with the citizens known as *Burkinabé*. (source: Wikipedia). It is a landlocked country of approximately 274,200 square kms, and is surrounded by six countries (see map) with a population just under 19million. Burkina Faso, which means "land of honest men", has significant reserves of gold, but the country has faced domestic and external concerns over the state of its economy and human rights, and has suffered from recurring droughts and military coups. A [2021 Human Rights Watch report](#) noted that "the human rights, security, and humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso was precarious amid ongoing violence and atrocities by Islamist armed groups, state security forces, and pro-government militias engaged in counterterrorism operations".



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 7850 Sisters, 5700 Associates, 34 Agrégées in 44 countries, listening to the heart of the world.