

Dear Sisters and Associates -- Today, on this forty-first week (October 23) of our 2023 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayers the Sisters serving in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** as well as the people of that Persian Gulf nation.

The Sisters belong to the **Chambéry Congregation** and are members of a Catholic community in the UAE which is active in education and parish work. As of 2017, Sisters Archana, Pushpika and Hazel served in the St. Mary's Parish and the Catholic High School in Dubai (one of the seven Emirates that comprise the UAE). As described in a CS Journal article about the Sisters' work in the Emirate of Dubai: "...most of the Catholics are expats, guest workers from other countries, with a large Indian cohort among them. These Catholics belong to one of the twelve parishes there, eight in the UAE, four in Oman. While there are now about 100 priests and 80 sisters serving the Catholics in the parishes and in the nine Catholic schools in the UAE, the laity are an important component of the vitality of the Church..."



Country Background: The United Arab

Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven emirates founded in 1971-2 and located in the southeast Arabian Peninsula. The UAE is comprised of Abu Dhabi (the capital), Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al

Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain. Politically, each emirate is governed by an emir who together form the Federal Supreme Council which elects the President and Vice-President from among their members. Of the 9.5million (2023) population of the UAE, only 1.5 million are Emirati citizens with many expatriates

primarily from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines and, to a lesser degree, from Europe, Australia, North America, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. As the most well-known of the emirates, Dubai's total population is estimated to be just under 3.6million (2023) with an economy based primarily on revenues from trade, tourism, aviation, real estate and financial services. While the national constitution designates Islam as the official religion, it also guarantees freedom of worship. As such, at least 45 churches and several Catholic schools now serve these expat communities. While the UAE is named by the World Economic Forum as the most competitive economy in the Arab world, Human Rights Watch has noted several concerns in its [2022 report](#), including: a lack of freedom of expression, detainee abuse, abysmal prison conditions, unlawful attacks and detainee abuse abroad, poor treatment of migrant workers, women's rights, as well as sexual orientation and gender issues. (Sources: CSJ Journal, Human Rights Watch, International Centre website, Wikipedia, Worldometer)



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 7850 Sisters, 5700 Associates, 34 Agrégées in 43 countries, listening to the heart of the world.