

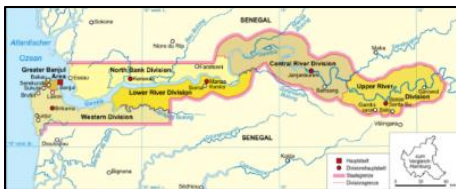
Dear Sisters and Associates -- Today, on this seventeenth week (May 8) of our 2023 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayers the 6 Sisters and 10 Associates serving in **Gambia** as well as all the people in that nation.

The Sisters belong to the Anney Congregation who began their West African mission in 1960 in Senegal - expanding to other West African countries in 2004. Today, in Gambia (also called 'The Gambia'), the Sisters are involved in health care, AIDS programs, women's promotion, education and parish work, and serve both in English and 'Wolof' (a language of Senegal, Mauritania and the Gambia).



[This article](#) (see photo) was written by Sr. Marie Pitié and describes the visit of Sisters to the Senegambia region in 2021. Sister Marie's article ends with these beautiful words: "... We celebrate the past in the present but with a view to the future.... Let everyone be committed and re-invent themselves without fear because, by the grace of God, our roots are very strong."

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Country Background: As one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in West Africa, the Republic of Gambia is entirely surrounded by Senegal except for its western coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. Historically, Arab traders provided the first written accounts of the area in the 9th and 10th centuries, and between the 14th and 18th centuries the region was disputed by the colonial powers of Portugal, Britain and France. During the transatlantic slave trade, as many as 3million people may have been taken from the region. With a current population of 2.6million (2023) – 57percent of whom live in urban and peri-urban centers -- Gambia's economy is dominated by farming, fishing and tourism. Despite significant poverty reduction gains realized during the early 2000s, today the country ranks as one of the poorest in the world (with an average income of just over \$400 USD). Environmentally, drought and deforestation have led to significant soil erosion and desertification in the country. (Sources: Anney Congregation website, International Centre website, The Gambia Poverty and Gender Assessment 2022 report, Wikipedia, World Bank, Worldometer)

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