

Dear Sisters and Associates -- Today, on this eighteenth week (May 15) of our 2023 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayers the one Sister who served, until recently, in **Greece** as well as the people in that nation.

As described on the Lyon Congregation website, ‘the laws of secularization in France at the beginning of the last century, as well as requests from different countries, led to the departure of Sisters to various countries, including Greece’. This [2009 article](#) by Sr. Catherine Maidiotou CSJ/Lyon describes how the “Sisters of Saint Joseph arrived on the island of Samos on March 19,



1901, [but] because there were no Catholic priests available, the community left the island for Corfu in 1971. We are Greeks of the Latin rite and live out our charism of unity in a largely orthodox milieu where we make contacts through teaching French, catechesis, accompanying adolescents, CARITAS, choir work, and visiting the sick, the aged and prisoners.” The article shared the work (at that time) of Sr.

Marie-Reine who, at 88 years of age, devoted her energies to visiting prisoners. Recently, the one remaining Lyon Sister who served in Greece has returned to France.



Country Background: Greece (historically known as Hellas) is located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa and includes nine geographic regions. Spanning from the 8th century BC, Greece is known as a cradle of civilization and the birthplace of democracy, western philosophy, the Olympic Games, western literature and drama, historiography, political science, and major scientific and mathematical principles. In fact, the Greek word ‘charism’ means ‘extraordinary graces given to an individual for the good of others’. The modern nation state of Greece

emerged in 1830 following a nine years-long war of independence (which ended 400 years of Ottoman rule). Today, Greece’s population of 10.3 million (2023) is experiences several challenges in the aftermath of the 2007 financial crisis which resulted in impoverishment and loss of both income and property as well as the longest recorded recession of any advanced mixed economy. In addition to the economic challenges, this [2022 Human Rights Watch report](#) cited various human rights concerns, including: the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers, attacks on civil society, racism and intolerance, women’s rights, and freedom of media. (Sources: Human Rights Watch, International Centre website, Lyon Congregation Website, Wikipedia, World Bank, Worldometer)



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