

Dear Sisters and Associates/Companions -- Today, on this twenty-first week (June 3) of our 2024 Global Coordinating Group calendar, we are invited *to listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayers the Sisters and Associates serving in **Honduras** as well as all of the people in that Mesoamerican nation.

The Lyon Congregation began its Honduran mission in 1996 in the community of Manto in the province of Olancho. By 2010 they had expanded their work to the suburb of Cosmul (close to San Pedro Sula) and in nearby El Progreso. By 2012, the Sisters were also present in two colleges as well as involved in healthcare and alternative medicine in the Mission Ad Gentes. In 2017, the Congregation formed its Mexico-Honduras Province and opened their house in Temascalapa (Mexico). As noted on the [Lyon Congregation's website](#): “The reality of violence and



insecurity lived in the area where we are present has affected the life of our people and our very presence, inviting us to accompany the victims and the families of missing persons and the caravans of migrants who pass through the countries where we are to join the United States...” In Honduras, the Lyon Congregation supports the Saint Joseph Family (see photo) – a group of Associates, partners and collaborators who formed in 2017. As the Lyon Congregation shares: “The reflection and journey that we are making with a group of lay people, whom we have named Family Saint-Joseph, has led us to recognize the call to live our charism in a broader way and has pushed us to broaden our sense of belonging. through different ways of living the charism: as Associates, collaborators or simply as people who want to live it ...”.



Country Background: Prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of modern-day Honduras was inhabited by two culturally distinct peoples: the Maya civilization and the Nahuatl. For the next three centuries, it was considered a Spanish colony - until 1821 when Honduras

became an independent republic. With that said, throughout its colonial/post-colonial past, Honduras has often endured social strife and political instability. Today, with a population of 10.7 million (2024), it is considered one of the poorest countries in Latin America - with almost half of the population living in poverty. Despite its rich natural resources -- including minerals, coffee, tropical fruit and sugarcane as well as a growing international textile industry -- Honduras remains primarily an agricultural economy which makes it especially vulnerable to climatic changes and weather disasters such as hurricanes and flooding. In addition to several devastating weather events, the last decade has also seen a notable increase in gang violence, the illicit drug trade, and general overall insecurity in the country. In fact, a 2022 Human Rights Watch report noted that “violent organized crime continues to disrupt Honduran society and push many people to leave the country”, adding that journalists, environmental activists, human rights defenders, members of the LGBTQ community, and people living with disabilities are among the groups often violently targeted. This recent [UNHCR report](#) explains the conditions in Honduras and other Central American countries that are compelling citizens to flee. (Sources: Human Rights Watch, International Centre website, Lyon Congregation website, UNHCR, Wikipedia, World Bank, Worldometer)



United in prayer, the Global Joseph Family, 7850 Sisters, 5700 Associates, 34 Agrégées in 45 countries, listening to the heart of the world.