



Sisters of Saint Joseph U.S. FEDERATION

United in Mission – Loving God and Neighbor

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The Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is a dynamic union of all the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at Le Puy, France in 1650. This includes 3,740 Sisters, 2,609 Associates, and 34 Agrégées of 16 Congregations throughout the United States.

Together we strive to embody a vision of all people united in one earth community of love, unity, and reconciliation. We do this through collaborative programs, interaction, prayer, and ministry. In our conflicted 21st century world, the Sisters of Saint Joseph seek to bring our traditions and vision to life in a way that will speak to our contemporary society and be a positive influence for change.

MEMBERS: The U.S. Federation is a membership organization composed of the vowed members, associates, agrégées, St. Joseph Worker community, and partners in mission of 16 communities of Sisters of St. Joseph. This includes autonomous congregations, the Carondelet congregation which has 4 provinces as well as the vice province of Peru, and 2 communities which are provinces of French congregations. Carondelet Center, the general leadership team for the Carondelet congregations, is also represented in the Leadership Assembly.

MISSION: The US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph embraces the Gospel Charism of unifying love for the healing and transformation of the world.

VALUES: The US Federation is grounded in the following values:

- Love of God and neighbor without distinction, from whom we do not separate ourselves
- Prayer, contemplation, and discernment that lead to courageous action
- Responsiveness to the needs of the world and oneness with creation
- Unity forged through respect, appreciation of diversity, and collaboration

VISION: As members of the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, we respond to the movement of the Spirit to keep the flame of the charism alive. We embrace an all-inclusive and self-emptying love that nurtures unity among ourselves and the “dear neighbor” without distinction. Imbued with our rich heritage and attentive to the evolving needs of the world, we proclaim the Gospel message of unifying love thereby becoming a transforming and healing presence in the world. With the vision, “that all may be one, (John 17:21)” members of the Federation deepen mutually sustaining and life-giving relationships.

Expanding our membership is a key piece of the U.S. Federation’s bold new dream. The Leadership Assembly unanimously agreed to open Federation membership to all those associated with our member congregations, including agrégées, associates, partners in mission, St. Joseph Workers, and among those who shared the charism and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Previously they could join in some Federation programs, projects, and committees. Now, the possibility to choose official membership will allow them to find new responsibilities, roles, and ways of participating in our mission. We are forming a working group to create an implementation plan for these membership changes.

HISTORY: The Sisters of Saint Joseph were among the first Catholic communities to be founded for the ordinary woman. They were not wealthy or educated and worked to support themselves especially by making lace, a common trade in the region of France where they began. Today, those who are attracted to this vision still live among the people and offer their lives in love and service. We carry on the heritage of our founders, six French women who joined a Jesuit priest in 1650 to begin a community without cloister or habit and devoted to the needs of the ordinary people. They shared a profound desire for union with God and the

“dear neighbor”.

The community grew. Then, caught in the political turmoil of the French Revolution, the congregation was disbanded. Some of the Sisters were martyred at the guillotine and others returned to their homes or went into hiding. After the revolution ended, Jeanne Fontbonne, a heroic woman who narrowly escaped the guillotine herself, re-founded the Sisters of St. Joseph at Lyon, France. In 1836, she sent three sisters to Carondelet, Missouri. From there, they spread across the United States beginning new foundations and now are members of the organization known as The United States Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

MINISTRIES: The basic desire of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is to reflect a “profound love of God and Neighbor without distinction.” Our mission is to love and work so that all may be one. By trying to build relational communities wherever we live and serve, we keep this mission alive.

Today, Sisters of Saint Joseph can be found in soup kitchens, shelters, universities, schools, hospitals, courtrooms, prisons, retreat centers, offices, nursing homes, laboratories, studios, and hospices. We are educators, lawyers, doctors, nurses, family therapists, social workers, patient advocates, spiritual directors, parish ministers, theologians, psychologists, physical therapists, administrators, artists, authors, musicians, poets, and a myriad of other ministries.

FEDERATION ORGANIZATION

The Leadership Assembly: The Federation is governed by the Leadership Assembly which is composed of the Leadership Teams of all the Congregations. This group meets annually in November for direction setting and corporate responsibilities.

The Leadership Council is the elected leadership team of the Federation. It is made up of 10 members plus the Executive Director and the Treasurer. This group meets several times a year to forward the purpose and direction of the Federation, plan the annual meeting, and carry on business. Co-chairs provide leadership and relate between meetings with the Executive Director.

- Joan Gallagher, CSJ, Brentwood, NY — Leadership Council Co-chair
- Eileen McCann, CSJ, Carondelet-Albany — Leadership Council Co-chair
- Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ, Erie
- Michele Beiter, SSJ, Buffalo
- Kathy Carr, SSJ, St. Augustine
- Charlene Diorka, SSJ, Philadelphia
- Marie Hogan, CSJ, Congregation of St. Joseph
- Ann Letourneau, CSJ, Congregation of St. Joseph
- Cecilia Magladry, CSJ, Orange
- Mary Ann Mayer, SSJ, Rochester
- Mary Elizabeth Nelsen, CSJ, Orange
- Miriam D Ukeritis, CSJ, Carondelet
- Joan Lescinski, CSJ, Carondelet-St. Louis, Treasurer
- Patty Johnson, CSJ, Carondelet-St. Louis, Executive Director

The Finance Committee serves the Leadership Assembly in the management of the operating budget and investments. It meets 4-6 times annually with the treasurer to monitor finances, oversee investments, develop budgets, prepare finance reports for the Leadership Assembly.

The Regions are now a part of the formal governance structure. Business and information can flow between the regions, the Leadership Council, Executive Director, etc. Currently there are four regions:

- The Atlantic Coast (Boston, Brentwood, Philadelphia, Springfield, St. Augustine, West Hartford, and Winslow)
- The Lakes (Albany, Baden, Buffalo, Erie, Rochester, and Watertown)
- Heartland (Carondelet Center, Concordia, Congregation of St. Joseph, St. Louis, and St. Paul)
- The Pacific Rim (Los Angeles and Orange)

Committees and Programs: Much of the work of the Federation is carried on by Committees which are established by the Leadership Assembly and Council to promote the goals and purposes of the Federation. Membership includes sisters, associates, staff colleagues, and the meetings are hosted by congregations/provinces around the country. Some committees plan and run programs; others carry out specific tasks for us all.

- **Federation Novitiate - Canonical Novitiate Program:** is staffed by Barbara Staropoli (Rochester) and Michelle Leshar (Philadelphia). This program is currently housed in Rochester, New York.
- **Life-Long Formation Committee:** created to assist the life-long formation needs of member Congregations in these three life stages – Initial Formation, the Federation Novitiate, and Ongoing Formation.

Interest Groups are self-initiated and sustained. They link persons from the various communities around similar interests, ministries, etc. Current interest groups include:

- Treasurers
- Development Personnel
- Communications Personnel
- Justice and Peace Personnel
- Vocation/Formation
- St. Joseph Workers
- Associate Directors
- Artists

International Centre: This is collaboration among the worldwide federations and congregations of St. Joseph. The International Centre is a center for promotion of the charism and mission, international in focus and experience, located in LePuy, France.

Sisters of St. Joseph at the United Nations: The Congregations of St. Joseph NGO at the U.N. embraces 10,749 members worldwide, found in 49 countries on six continents. Belonging to 30 independent congregations, the Sisters of St. Joseph work together and support one another through 4 national federations (Canada, France, Italy, and the U.S.) and 4 international congregations (Annecy, Chambéry, Lyon, Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart) as well as the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In order to accomplish this, the Congregations of St. Joseph have had an official presence as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the U.N. since 1979. In 1999, we were granted General Consultative Status with Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which has given us the opportunity to express our views and make statements during official U.N. conferences and meetings on topics that we deem significant.

FEDERATION CENTRAL STAFF:

- Executive Director: Patty Johnson, CSJ, Carondelet-St. Louis
- Assistant Director: Kristen Whitney Daniels
- Administrative Assistant: Joe Favazza
- Treasurer: Joan Lescinski, CSJ, Carondelet-St. Louis

CONTACTS

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