

**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 LePuy, France in 1650. This includes over 7,000 members 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 and associates of 16 communities of Sisters of St. Joseph, including autonomous congregations, the Carondelet congregation which has 4 provinces as well as vice provinces in Hawaii and Japan, and Peru, and 2 communities which are provinces of French congregations. Carondelet Center, the general leadership team, is also represented in the Leadership Assembly.

There are over 7,000 members in the communities as well as 2800 lay Associates who relate to them and lay staff who participate in the mission of the communities. We relate to the Canadian, French, and Italian Federations. Throughout the world, there are over 13,500 Sisters of Saint Joseph in over 50 countries.

## PURPOSE AND VISION

The purpose of the U.S. Federation is:

- To support in all Sisters of Saint Joseph a continual striving to incarnate CSSJ charism within the mission of Jesus in the church of today and of the future.
- To integrate a continuing exploration of CSSJ charism by an approach that looks toward its living expression as well as its historical roots.
- To collaborate in programs which facilitate the understanding and interpretation of the CSSJ charism as it affects the life and ministry of the members.
- To provide the members with a sense of belonging to a movement greater than one's own congregation.
- To serve as a means of linking leaders and members of CSSJ congregations through the direction of a Governing Board.

Together we discover new ways to deepen and expand the CSSJ mission and the power of the charism exploring new ways of being and acting "more as one."

## 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 that region of France. Today, those who are attracted to this 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, a heroic woman, Jeanne Fontbonne, who narrowly escaped the guillotine herself, refounded 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 things.

## FEDERATION ORGANIZATION

The Federation is governed by the Leadership Assembly which is composed of the Leadership Teams of all the Congregations.

There are four Regions of the Federation:

- The Atlantic Coast (Boston, Brentwood, Philadelphia, Springfield, St. Augustine, West Hartford, and Winslow)
- The Lakes (Albany, Baden, Buffalo, Erie, Rochester, St. Paul, and Watertown)
- The Heartland (Carondelet Center, Cleveland, Concordia, La Grange, Medaille, Nazareth, Tipton, St. Louis, Wheeling, and Wichita)
- The Pacific Rim (Hawaii, Los Angeles, and Orange)

Much of the work of the Federation is carried on by Committees which are established by the Leadership Assembly/Council to promote the goals and purposes of the Federation.

Committees

- Initial Formation
- Ongoing Formation
- Federation Event
- Research

**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
- Federation South
- Latin American Ministers

## CONTACTS

- Mary Louise Mitchell, SSJ, Co-chair, Rochester, NY
- Jane DeLisle, CSJ, Co-chair, Orange, CA
- Kathleen McCluskey, CSJ, Executive Director, Boston