

Dear Sisters and Associates/Companions -- Today, on this eleventh week (March 25) 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 ministering in **Congo Brazzaville** as well as all the people in that Central African nation.

The Sisters belong to the Anney Congregation and established their mission in the Congo in 2012 which now forms part of their region of Senegambie/Congo. In the Congo-Brazzaville specifically, the Sisters are present in a small community called “Yaka Yaka” - located about 30 kilometres



southeast of the capital Brazzaville and (in 2015) with a total population of 170. In this [2021 article](#), Sr. Anne Rutter shared that a donation from ‘Misean Cara’ -- a faith-based organization that receives funding from the Irish government’s foreign aid budget -- provided support to six projects, including a new clinic in Yaka Yaka. (see photo). Looking to the future together, in August (2023) the first [Pan-African meeting](#) of Sisters of St. Joseph took place in the Ivory Coast – with 20 participants from seven congregations. The theme of the gathering was “the Face of the Little Design today, and the challenges for the future of Africa”.



**Country Background:** There are two neighbouring African nations with the name ‘Congo’ - The Democratic Republic of the Congo (with Kinshasa as its capital) and the Republic of the Congo also called Congo-Brazzaville (after its capital city name). Both countries gained independence in 1960 and have French as their official language; however, Congo-Brazzaville was colonized by France while the DRC was colonized by Belgium. Each country uses different national currencies.

The population of the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville currently sits at 6.18million (2024), and was historically dominated by Bantu-speaking tribes going back at least 3,000 years. While a former part of the French colony of Equatorial Africa, the Republic of the Congo was established in 1958 and gained independence from France in 1960. The sovereign state has had multi-party elections since 1992, although a democratically elected government was overthrown during the 1997 Republic of the Congo Civil War. Though rich in oil reserves, Amnesty International and other groups have warned about corruption and decades of political instability which have resulted in high levels of poverty and a climate in which many (media, non-governmental organizations, religious groups) prefer to self-censor in order to avoid reprisal. Last October, the nation hosted leaders from Brazil, Indonesia, the Republic of Congo and dozens of other countries at the ‘[Three Basins Summit in Brazzaville](#)’ with the goal of working together to protect their jungles from deforestation and destruction. (Sources: Amnesty International, AP News Service, Anney Congregation website, CSJ International Centre website, UNCHA, Wikipedia, Worldometer)



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