



## FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER – 1<sup>ST</sup> May 2026

We commemorate every Feast of St Joseph the Worker with CFSM's annual Labour Day formation session.

### **SEE**

Following opening prayer, the session started with group discussion on how members' or their children's working reality affects their family. Members reflected on their current reality as working parents or grandparents with care responsibilities. Some shared how they felt squeezed by grandparenting duties, while others expressed concern that their children's long working hours deprived the grandchildren of time with their parents. Members also recognised a generational gap in the understanding of work & career, and that older views should not be enforced on the next generation. Young people see work as transactional and a limited part of their lives, so they 'job-hop' and have new means of livelihood.

A brief overview of the Church's response to labour issues and concerns followed. For example, the movement for '8 hours work—8 hours rest—8 hours self-development' so that workers have enough time for self-development, solidarity and community, finds a Christian basis in the Catholic Social Teaching that economy and industry must develop 'each man and the *whole* man'.

This historical overview also connected to today's reality: where the 8-hour work day seems to be as much a 'dream' as it was 200 years ago. The Industrial Revolution engendered new conflicts between capital and labour, which the Church faced. Today, technological innovations of remote work have already blurred the boundaries of working life and increasingly pressured workers. AI portends another paradigm shift.

Members were invited to broaden their perspective, to consider those facing a more difficult situation due the nature of their work (such as gig / platform and migrant workers); and to identify common causes & consequences as with their own family's reality.

### **JUDGE**

Relevant principles of Catholic Social Teaching were discussed, with reference to the Holy Father's Catechesis on St Joseph:

- Dignity of Labour as being based on the dignity of the human person;
- Labour as a means of co-Creation and of bringing about the Kingdom;
- Labour as formation for Christians to live their spirituality concretely.

This inherent meaning and dignity of Labour can be contrasted with the degradation and exploitation of many labourers, as well as the plague of under-employment or the insecurity of casual work.

Our Christian reflection closed with Matthew 2:13—21, which describes the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt as migrants and refugees. Participants were invited to examine their thoughts, assumptions, beliefs and actions in light of Christ-consciousness and the teaching of the Church.

### **ACT**

Members discussed, “What concrete step can I commit to, individually or with my base group?” They shared experiences of how they had, as Christian Workers, stood up for solidarity with colleagues in the workplace, even when it came at a personal cost. One member had taken the lead to speak up for her colleagues to request fair increment given their long service, but was later laid off. Another shared how he strove for a fair distribution of overtime among teammates, which in turn led to a discussion of why a living wage was needed, so that overtime need not be a necessity that workers must compete for. The session then closed with lunch and fellowship.