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CFSM Singapore
2 Highland Road, #03-12
Singapore 549102

Website: <http://www.cfsm.org.sg>
Contact email: cfsmsg@gmail.com

Japan ACO and CFSM Singapore Meeting

(ACO are initials for the French name "Action catholique ouvriere". Japan ACO is basically a catholic movement for workers and affiliated to the World Movement of Christian Workers [WMCW].)

Two members from the Japan ACO came to Singapore on 6 July 2023 to meet the executive committee of the Christian Family and Social Movement (CFSM) of Singapore. They were in Singapore from 6 July 2023 to 9 July 2023. They are Mr. Tomeo Koresawa (Representative of the ACO Standing Committee) and Miss Kazuko Ariyoshi (in charge of the International Department, ACO Standing Committee).

On Friday, 7 July 2023, the Japanese delegation met some of the executive committee members of the CFSM at Catholic Centre at Waterloo Street. After introducing each other, the Japanese delegation explained to the Singapore side the activities and the needs of Japan ACO. One particular highlight that they mentioned was that they are helping Vietnamese migrants who come to Japan to work there. Often these migrants are exploited by the brokers in Vietnam and the companies in Japan where they work. Also due to the aging population in Japan, they need young workers in Japan and they are usually the migrants. Japan ACO works with Church organizations to help these migrants. Japan ACO is also against nuclear proliferation. In addition, they help female migrants who are facing pregnancy and childbirth issues.

In the afternoon of 7 July 2023, CFSM Singapore introduced its activities and its needs. We highlighted our theme, "Form the Person, Form the Base Group, Build the Kingdom of God". We also discussed about the extension to new groups and parishes and the five national events CFSM holds for all members and their families each year. CFSM also mentioned that they work with other Catholic organizations. We further highlighted

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our publications to the Japanese delegation. Most importantly, CFMS emphasized the use of the Review of Life methodology. We also told them our concerns:

- a. Aging members – Many of the members also have full-time jobs and they have to juggle their time;
- b. Getting more chaplains – and
- c. Forming our members in line with CFMS theme, getting new members and to promote the GOOD NEWS of Christ.

The meeting continued after dinner. CFMS presented the newspapers reports on migrant workers in Singapore. These hardships faced by the migrant workers were similar to those faced by the migrant workers in Japan, although there are also significant differences.

On Saturday 8 July 2023, the Japan delegation met Father Dominique Deme, the chaplain for CFMS Singapore at the MEP House at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church. Father Hayashi, the international chaplain for the Japan ACO also came online and joined the meeting. He is assisted by Father Okura in Japan. Japan ACO is also trying hard to get new priests to be chaplains for Japan ACO. Father Dominique said he invited seminarians to join in the base group meetings as well as participate in the national events. Both delegations said that there can be a possible outreach to Korea and Taiwan chaplains. CFMS agreed with Japan ACO that Father Hayashi can be the liaison with Taiwan chaplains

In the evening, the report of the WMCW IV Congress and General Assembly was discussed and shared among the participants. After much discussion and brainstorming, Japan ACO and CFMS Singapore agreed that they will jointly reach out to promote the GOOD NEWS of Christ and the gospels.

On Sunday 9 July 2023, Mr. Tomeo Koresawa and Miss Kazuko Ariyoshi visited Sam Dorai, the former regional representative for East Asia at the hospital where he is hospitalized. Later in the evening, they had a dinner at Gardens By The Bay. They went to the airport for their flight home after spending some time at the Gardens By The Bay.

The Japan ACO and CFMS Singapore meeting over the three days ended with warmth and with the conviction to journey with Christ in his mission for Justice, Peace and Love.

Report by Gabriel Sebastian



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