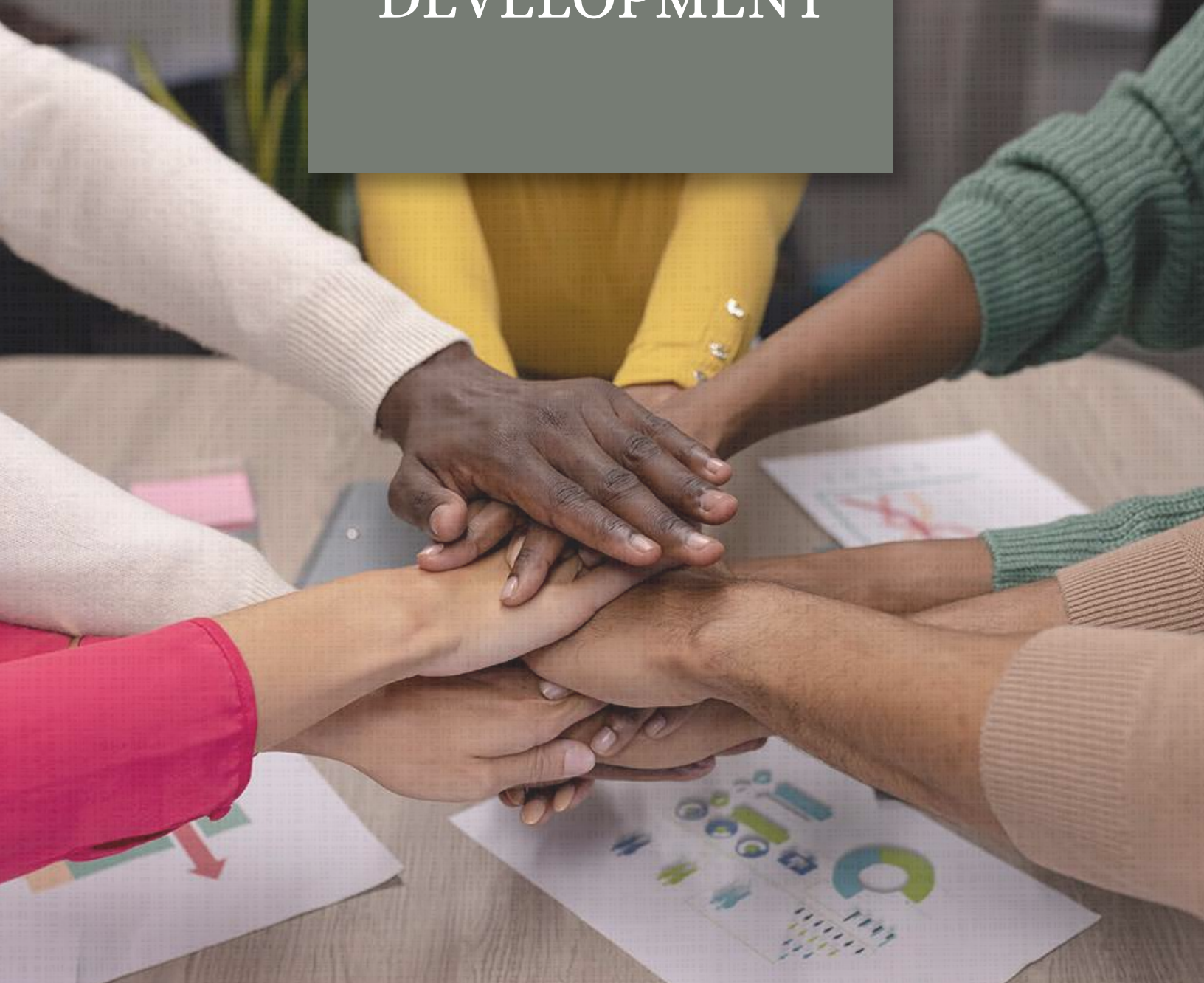




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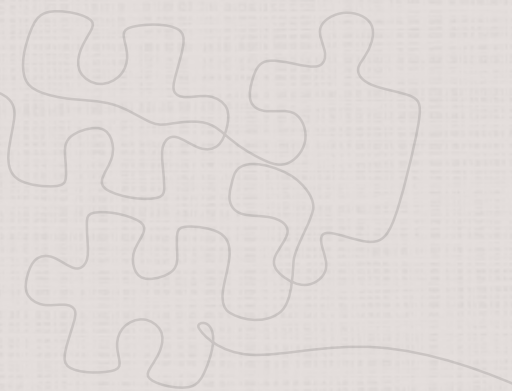
Message
May 1, 2026

DIGNIFIED WORK FOR GENUINE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Can work be a source of joy, pride, and fulfillment?

Yes, this is entirely possible, provided that a work environment is created that respects the dignity of workers. This dignity obviously requires a decent wage and adequate working conditions. It also—and above all—requires the opportunity for individuals to give their best in a professional environment that recognizes and values their skills, intelligence, and autonomy.



The Christian View of Work

The integral development of the person depends, in particular, on each individual's ability to exercise control over their professional environment. By participating in every stage of the creative and manufacturing process, artisans can contemplate their work with satisfaction, as God did on the seventh day of Creation¹, and thus bring His creative work on Earth to completion².

Since the Industrial Revolution, the loss of meaning and value in work has increased with the implementation of its "scientific management." Workers feel less that they are completing God's work, given their isolation within dehumanizing assembly lines³, including in sectors such as healthcare⁴.

¹ Genesis, 1:31.

² Saint John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens. Encyclical Letter on Human Work*, Sept. 14, 1981, n° 25.

³ See Françoise Terrel-Salmon, "[When Rome Speaks of Work]", *Revue Projet*, Oct. 5, 2011.

⁴ See Dani Tardif, *[Becoming Lean: When Management Transforms Healthcare]*, Montreal, Écosociété, 2025.

Work and Well-being

Work and the quality of life of workers are closely intertwined. It is essential to improve the conditions of those who produce the goods and services we all benefit from. This requires paying close attention to the wages they receive, as well as to occupational health and safety issues. More broadly, we must focus on the individual and collective fulfillment of workers by eliminating violence, intimidation, and discrimination in the workplace, whether in the private or public sector. This also means creating a professional environment that gives meaning to the work performed by both blue-collar and white-collar workers, striving to reduce the sense of dehumanization these individuals might feel while carrying out their duties.

In practical terms, this means giving workers a sense of control that comes from having a real say in their working conditions. The goal is to enable them to reach their full potential and experience a sense of accomplishment, much like the artisans of old. This is precisely what workers in the education and healthcare sectors were calling for during their recent collective bargaining negotiations with the Quebec government. Among their demands was a rejection of productivity-driven management methods that prevent them from practicing teaching or providing care on a human scale—practices that require taking all the time necessary to educate, care for, and support others, leaving no one behind. Leaving no one behind requires reforms to prevent workers from finding themselves at the mercy of employers who might attempt

to deprive them of their fundamental rights to maximize profits. In this regard, we must support organizations that work to defend these rights, particularly in the agricultural and domestic sectors, which employ many temporary migrants.

Leaving no one behind also means striving to humanize the most alienating jobs, which require the endless repetition of the same tasks: this ranges from industrial work on an assembly line to “click farms” in the tech industry—companies that aim to make various social media posts “go viral.”



Having the courage to work differently

Since the Industrial Revolution, the Church has supported social movements calling for the humanization of work so that the dignity of every person is respected. This has involved, in particular, participating in labor struggles and promoting cooperative models of business management. This social dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ remains relevant today, in the context of the Digital Revolution, which now takes the form of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence threatens a large number of jobs and seems to strip human work of its meaning, even as it promises to accelerate and facilitate it.

Faced with a planet of limited resources and an increasingly frantic pace of life, we must have the courage to learn to work and produce differently. As Pope Francis noted ten years ago in the encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015), we must be attentive to the ecological thresholds and rhythms of our fragile planet, as well as to the needs of the men and women who carry on God's creative work here. In the aftermath of this Jubilee Year centered on the theme of

hope, we must be mindful of the ecological and human costs of the destructive logic that seeks to produce ever more, at the expense of human dignity and the safeguarding of our Common Home. Since the Sabbath was made for human beings⁵, perhaps we need to slow down the frantic and even dangerous pace of our industrialized societies, or even consider a form of healthy degrowth.

Fortunately, there are options! Many companies and public services have established joint committees or collaborative governance structures. These processes enable employers and workers to create a workplace environment that prioritizes people's well-being and cares for the health of the planet. Quebec can also take pride in its large number of cooperatives and social economy enterprises, which are equally committed to the physical, mental, and environmental well-being of their employees, as well as to the resilience of the ecosystems that sustain them.

⁵ *Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew, 2:27.*

Perhaps it would be wise to draw inspiration from the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples. Their relationship to work and natural resources is guided by bonds of solidarity, reciprocity, and interdependence with “Mother Earth”, as well as with the “next seven generations.” This implies a completely different way of consuming, producing, and interacting with the forest, animals, waters, and the nourishing soil⁶.

On May 1st, Labor Day and the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, let’s learn to work differently and become informed and discerning consumers. Let’s prioritize supporting local businesses that offer decent and rewarding working conditions. In this way, we will help make work more humane and truly respect every individual.



This message was prepared by the Church and Society Council of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Quebec. We would like to pay special tribute to the work of reflection and writing carried out by Mr. Frédéric Barriault (1972-2026), a historian who had been a member of the Council since 2019.

⁶ See Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, *Listening to Indigenous Voices: A Dialogue Guide on Justice and Right Relationships*, Montreal, Novalis, 2019.