CATHOLIC FAITH & AI

Resources for technology, pastoral practice, and lived discipleship

Digital Echoes of the Gospel: AI and Evangelization

Formation Guide

Pauline
MEDIA STUDIES

Digital Echoes of the Gospel: AI & Evangelization

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CORE INSIGHTS

The heart of the Catholic Church is proclamation of the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, the Son of God become incarnate to offer humanity salvation through his passion, death, and resurrection. It is her very life's blood to communicate this message. "She exists in order to evangelize," as Pope Paul VI put it in his document on evangelization, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (no. 14). Jesus is the first and greatest evangelizer (EN, no. 7), and we, as members of his body, evangelize through our witness of a life united to Christ. But we are also called to communicate the saving message of Christ to those who do not know him or who have fallen away from the practice of their faith.

How do we do that? In a digital culture, communication utilizes the fastest and most wide-spread means to reach out to others. So, why not use these means to proclaim Christ?

An Italian priest from Northern Italy founded the Pauline religious family

n the early 1900s to use every means of communications technology and human invention for the Gospel. Blessed James Alberione believed that these were gifts of God to use for the Church's mission of evangelization, which is to proclaim Christ to those who do not know him or have encountered him in a personal way. The Second Vatican Council affirmed this vision in its document on social communications, *Inter Mirifica*. It says,

> **"The Church recognizes that these media, if properly utilized, can be of great service to mankind, since they greatly contribute to men's entertainment and instruction as well as to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God" (no. 2).**

This thought was affirmed by Pope Paul VI's when he referred to media as "a modern and effective version of the pulpit" (EN, no. 45).

Pope John Paul II called James Alberione the "apostle of the new

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evangelization," and he became known as the "media apostle." Alberione wrote,

> **"When these means of progress serve evangelization, a consecration takes place, and they are elevated to the fullest dignity…. The one who works in them rises to the dignity of an apostle" (UPS I, 316).**

AI and Evangelization

The Church's mission to proclaim Christ re-mains unchanged, but the methods and means evolve. This includes the latest technological developments in artificial intelligence. When guided by a Catholic moral vision, AI can amplify the Gospel's reach, helping form hearts and minds for Christ in our digital culture.

The Catholic Church has been a leading player in helping tech developers and world leaders consider the human and ethical issues of AI and in using these means for the Gospel. Since 2020, the Church has brought developers, investors, government leaders, theo-logians, and educators together to consider ways to keep the dignity of human beings at the forefront of scientific advancements. At the same time, it seeks to support AI use for evangelization by encouraging Cath-olic developers to create platforms

that present the kerygma, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the Good News of the Gospel, in innova-tive ways for people immersed in digital environments. The Church believes the question is not only whether we use the new tech-nologies to evangelize or how to use them, but rather, "how to become an evangelizing presence on the digital continent" (*Directory for Catechesis*, no. 371).

Critical Engagement

Being digital evangelizers requires an aware-ness of the power of AI and the needs of humanity today. *Antiqua et Nova* acknowledges that

> **"As society drifts away from a connection with the trans-cendent, some are tempted to turn to AI in search of meaning or fulfillment— longings that can only be truly satisfied in communion with God" (no. 104).**

It warns that substituting something created by human beings for God, the Creator, leads to idolatry. Right ordering of these technologies toward God and wholistic human development in-volves careful discernment and critical thinking. In comments he's made since be-coming pope, Leo XIV encourages consideration of the entirety of human well-being in the use of AI. He emphasizes that it is another tool for

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> ## "The real question is... how to become an evangelizing presence on the digital continent."
> DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS, NO. 371

learning, creating, and advancing human understanding, but it cannot replace the gift of human intellect and reason.

Preaching the Gospel

While the church cautions the world about the ethical implications of AI and what it means to be human when facing rapid machine advancements, she also encourages opportunities to use these means for evangelization. Some Catholic AI developers are creating LLMs (Large Language Models) that learn from a select set of data, specifically Catholic Church teachings. "Catholic versions" of ChatGPT such as Magisterium.ai and other apps, provide more reliable information since they are trained on the Scriptures, documents of the Church, and other key theological works. Answers to prompts also include footnotes with citations to the documents from which it drew a response, providing sound theological source materials.

Will we be left behind if we do not begin to use AI in some way?

Perhaps not everyone finds the need to launch into the latest tech trend, however, the Church herself must be present in the culture to be able to evangelize it from within. She is the ethical voice to assure the dignity of the human being is upheld in every socio-technological advancement. And if Christ can be proclaimed using these tools, then Saint Paul would say, "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).

FOR REFLECTION & CONVERSATION

Digital Evangelization

- What does it mean to "evangelize" in a world where algorithms often shape what people see and believe?

- How can I be an evangelizing presence in this digital environment of AI?

Discerned engagement of technology

- How might we ensure that Christ remains at the center of every technological innovation we en-gage with?

- In what ways can I model discernment and wisdom in the use of AI in my ministry?

Human dignity in Evangelization

- What opportunities do I see for AI to enhance rather than replace authentic human connection in our outreach programs?

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TO THINK ABOUT

"This work [Catholic AI development] cannot be confined to research labs or investment portfolios. It must be a profoundly ecclesial endeavor. Whether designing algorithms for Catholic education, tools for compassionate healthcare, or creative platforms that tell the Christian story with truth and beauty, each participant contributes to a shared mission: to place technology at the service of evangelization and the integral development of every person."
> —Pope Leo XIV, Message to participants in the "Builders AI Forum 2025,"
> Nov. 7, 2025.

"The machine, the microphone, the screen are our pulpit. The printing plant, the production and broadcasting studios are like our church. The temptations are many, but we adopt St Paul's motto: 'I do everything for the sake of the Gospel.'"
> —Blessed James Alberione, (CISP 932)

"The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love."
> —Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the*
> *Gospel*), no. 120, Nov 24, 2013.

PASTORAL TOOLBOX

- **Evangelization Resources.** Generate AI-assisted parish or school content that shares Gospel reflections, prayers, or faith resources with those who are not Catholic or away from the faith.

- **Christ-centered materials.** Support parishioners in designing faith-based media projects using AI tools, such as short videos, posters, or prayer guides that invite people to encounter Christ in the Church. Consider sharing such efforts through the parish's social media accounts.

- **Multilingual Outreach.** Use AI tools for translation of homilies or other evangelization materials for various language groups. Consider posting the translation on the parish website.

- **AI Evangelization Tools.** Encourage engagement with Catholic AI apps for understanding the faith such as Magisterium.ai and Truthly that draw on Scripture and the Church's teachings or the Grace app for personalized prayer suggestions. Introduce these tools by highlighting them in the parish bulletin and on the parish website.

- **Pray the Media.** Pray before engaging with any AI tool to assure that Christ is at the center of any evangelization project.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Technology is a means, not the mission. We are called to guide people to encounter Jesus and become faith-filled disciples even in digital spaces. We want to use AI to enhance our Catholic identity by being ethical and discerning users, while bringing a spirit of prayer to our media experiences.
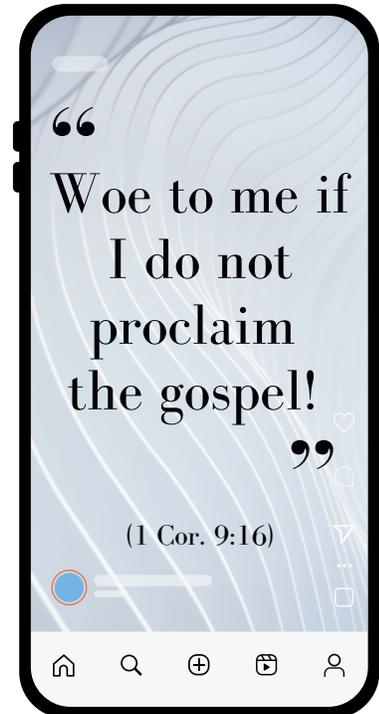
Prayer for the Right Use of AI

Heavenly Father, Creator of all things, in this age of wondrous technology, we humbly come before you seeking your guidance and grace, as we contemplate the marvels of Artificial Intelligence and discern its use for communicating the Gospel.

Grant us the wisdom to use this power responsibly and never forget the unrepeatable gift of our humanity. Guide all those responsible for advancing AI technologies. May they be driven by a desire for the good of humanity and never use it to exploit or harm others.

Help us, Lord, to discern our use of AI as a tool for evangelization to reach out to those on the spiritual margins, especially those who are far away from your loving embrace. We ask all this through Christ our Master and Teacher. Amen.

(Access the extended version of this prayer at:
https://pauline.org/media-prayers/prayer-for-the-right-use-of-ai/)

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Woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!
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(1 Cor. 9:16)

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*), Dec 8, 1975.

Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Aetatis Novae* (*On Social Communications on the Twentieth Anniversary of Communio et Progressio*), Feb 22, 1992.

Leo XIV, Message to the participants in the Builders AI Forum, Nov 3, 2026.

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