News



Attendees listen during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026, in Baltimore. (AP/KT Kanazawich)

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U.S. Catholic bishops are calling for guardrails on artificial intelligence as the Catholic Church seeks to protect humanity while technology advances.

They are following Pope Leo's lead, who has said that AI is humanity's biggest challenge today. His first encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity), called for robust AI regulation.

Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California, emphasized the unique role the U.S. church is well-positioned to play when he addressed his colleagues at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual fall gathering Wednesday. From his Silicon Valley diocese, Cantú chairs the conference's new AI task force focused on preserving human dignity.

"The Church possesses something that Silicon Valley cannot engineer: over 2,000 years of wisdom on the human person, on truth, and on the common good," Cantú said.

The bishops have been meeting with tech company executives and political leaders to discuss AI, much of which is developed in the U.S. Cantú told the gathering in Baltimore that the task force will help lobby lawmakers for "clear guardrails on the development and use of AI." The group "will continue monitoring labor impacts and advocating for workers."

Bishops are particularly concerned about young people's use of AI. The task force hopes to become a clearinghouse on best practices and AI literacy.

"The Church's contribution is to insist that every human being possesses inherent dignity that no algorithm can measure and no market can price," Cantú said.

The bishops also approved updates to their investing guidelines, which are used by other Catholic institutions and investors. The guidelines say the conference "will not invest in companies that design, develop or manufacture AI technologies that fail to safeguard the dignity of the human person."

As part of its AI investment updates, the USCCB said it will encourage companies to protect children from online exploitation and offer "support for workers displaced by automation."

As company executives sound the alarm about AI's destructive potential and debate the need to develop morally good models, they are increasingly seeking input from religious leaders.

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Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, the president of the USCCB, said during a news conference Tuesday that artificial intelligence is "a faint reflection of human intelligence, which is created by God. We're created in God's image and likeness; it's ours to guide and correct."

Charles Camosy, a bioethics professor at the Catholic University of America, is one of three academic consultants for the bishops' AI task force.

"I mostly bring a set of concerns related to healthcare and especially keeping human beings in the center of healthcare relationships, even as we use so-called artificial intelligence to improve outcomes," Camosy said in an email.

More than one in seven patients in the U.S. are treated each day at Catholic hospitals, according to the Catholic Health Association.

"If they're asking what do bishops know about technology, they're right in saying we don't know much," Cantú said in a recent video produced by the conference. "But we're learning quickly."

This story appears in the **USCCB Fall Assembly 2026** feature series. View the full series.