Faith and AI Postdoctoral Fellowship

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Faith and AI Postdoctoral Fellowship

Notre Dame, IN, United States

Provost

Company Description
Founded in 1842, the University of Notre Dame is a leading American research university that offers a distinctive voice in higher education. As a Catholic institution with a strong tradition of faith and intellectual inquiry, Notre Dame is committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service to the common good.

Located in Notre Dame, Indiana, the University is home to a vibrant campus community of students, faculty, and staff who are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment and advancing the University's mission to be a force for good in the world. With world-class facilities, renowned academic programs, and a deep commitment to innovation and ethical leadership, Notre Dame provides a dynamic and rewarding workplace for those who seek to make a meaningful impact.

Job Description
The Institute for Ethics and the Common Good (ECG), the administrative home of the Ethics Initiative (EI) and the Global Catholic Research Initiative (GCRI) invite applications for a co-sponsored postdoctoral fellowship. We are seeking a postdoc to join a vibrant, interdisciplinary cohort dedicated to advancing research on faith-based ethical approaches to powerful AI, with a particular focus on the Catholic Church's teachings and pastoral applications related to human formation and flourishing in eras of significant technological innovation and change.

We welcome proposals from scholars working on substantial research projects related to this theme. Applicants from all academic disciplines are encouraged to apply, including-but not limited to-theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, and history. The program is open to U.S. and international postdoctoral researchers.

Postdoctoral fellows receive $80,000 each year in salary, $1,000 each year in dedicated research funds, and Notre Dame benefits.

Fellows will also participate in a vibrant interdisciplinary community and take part in regular seminars and collaborative events, both with ECG and with the GCRI.

Applications are due by Monday, May 18, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. (ET). Apply Now

Background

How do communities of faith, and their leaders, draw upon the Church's teachings-including recent and past encyclicals, pastoral applications, and the Catholic Social Tradition-to respond to the fast paced, significantly emerging influence of artificial intelligence to ensure that human dignity remains central to human flourishing and the common good?

Throughout the 20th century, religious and faith-based communities were instrumental in many of the era's most significant moral and social movements-from the promotion of human rights to advocacy for nuclear disarmament and leadership in the Civil Rights Movement. These examples illustrate the enduring capacity of faith traditions to provide moral clarity and shape the direction of public life.

Yet in the face of today's rapid advances in artificial intelligence, faith traditions have remained largely silent. Ethical conversations surrounding AI are currently dominated by secular perspectives from philosophy, law, and computer science, while the rich moral resources of religious traditions have yet to offer sustained or cohesive engagement.

This call invites proposals for research projects that aim to break that silence. We welcome substantial, interdisciplinary projects that explore the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence through a global lens and the lens of Church encyclicals and teachings, including Antiqua et Nova and the highly anticipated encyclical on faith and AI from Pope Leo XIV.

Applicants might consider questions such as:

- How do the ethical teachings of Catholicism guide reflection on the design, use, or governance of AI?
- How could concepts such as dignity, embodiment, love, transcendence, and agency (DELTA) challenge or enrich dominant narratives about AI?
- How are faith communities in a global context currently engaging with AI in their practices, ministries, or institutional life?
- How could religious understandings of creation, stewardship, or human purpose shape critiques of AI development, techno-utopianism, or transhumanism?
- How might Catholic approaches to moral formation and character development inform the design of AI systems intended to make or support ethical decisions?

These questions are intended as examples-we encourage applicants to pursue other lines of inquiry that align with the overarching theme of the Church's teaching on innovation, formation, human dignity, and the common good as it relates to technology and AI.

Our aim is to foster rigorous, creative, and faith-informed perspectives that can meaningfully engage the ethical challenges and possibilities presented by artificial intelligence.

Qualifications

This postdoctoral fellowship is co-sponsored by the Ethics Initiative and the Global Catholic Research Initiative. The fellowship is open to scholars who are conducting a serious research project related to faith and AI within a global Catholic tradition.

Applicants from all academic disciplines are encouraged to apply, including-but not limited to-theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, and history.

This is a one-year postdoctoral fellowship, with the possibility of renewal for a second year. Fellows are expected to be in residence at Notre Dame for the full fellowship period (July 2026 through June 2027 in the first instance).

Candidates should have completed **all Ph.D. requirements by June 1, 2026** and be within five years of earning their degree.

We welcome applications from scholars who are based outside the U.S.

Postdocs receive $80,000 each year in salary, $1,000 each year in dedicated research funds, and Notre Dame benefits.

They will be joined by a cohort of faculty fellows, graduate fellows, other postdocs, and program chairs from Notre Dame who are pursuing their own ethics-based research projects and collaborate during weekly research seminars and other EI/ECG and GCRI events.

Throughout the year, ECG will organize robust programming to further explore faith-based approaches to powerful AI and cultivate collaboration, such as work-in-progress seminars, conferences, research workshops, guest lectures, and social events.

The GCRI will also organize regular programming that explores how Catholics, Catholic institutions, and the intellectual, social, artistic, and cultural expressions of Catholic life have circulated-and continue to circulate-across regions, nations, and cultures, shaping and being shaped by the local contexts in which they take root.

The postdoctoral fellow is expected to reside in the South Bend area and to remain in residence at the University of Notre Dame during the period of the fellowship (July 2026 - June 2027), except for vacation periods, holidays, and University breaks.

The fellow is expected to be free of their regular commitments so they may devote themselves full time to the work outlined in their research proposal and participate fully in the community of scholars at the EI/ECG and GCRI.

This is a co-sponsored position between the two Initiatives. The fellow will serve as a bridge between EI/ECG and GCRI on questions related to AI and the Catholic intellectual tradition, spending approximately three days per week with ECG and two days per week with GCRI.

In addition to pursuing a substantial research project on the Catholic Church's teaching on AI from a global perspective, the fellow will:

- Serve as a liaison between EI/ECG and GCRI on the shared research theme
- Provide administrative leadership for a major conference in Rome focused on Pope Leo XIV's forthcoming encyclical on AI, incorporating the DELTA framework as appropriate. (More information about this framework can be found here.)
- Develop and/or curate DELTA-framed curricular resources for faith communities
- Participate in weekly ECG seminars and present research twice during the academic year
- Attend ECG retreats, special events, and engage regularly with fellows and leaders
- Serve as an ambassador for GCRI and contribute to its postdoctoral community

Applications

Applications for the postdoctoral fellowship must be submitted through Interfolio and should include the following:

- Cover letter
- Curriculum vitae (no more than four pages, single-spaced)
- Proposal abstract (no more than 400 words)
- Fellowship research proposal (no more than six pages double-spaced; research proposals may include a works-cited or bibliography page, which does not count toward the six-page limit). In the research proposal, applicants should provide an explanation of the project they intend to pursue, including:
    - How the proposed research connects with Catholic teachings-e.g., recent and past encyclicals, pastoral applications, and/or the Catholic Social Tradition-on emerging technology and AI
    - Preliminary objectives for the research to be conducted (i.e., whether the research might result in a book, journal article, art work, etc.)
    - The proposed work plan (including what research or work has already been accomplished, what will be done during the fellowship period, the methodology to be employed, and the organization of the scholarly project, book, or other work)
    - Public-engagement proposal (no more than two pages, double-spaced). In the public-engagement proposal, applicants should explain how they plan to engage a public audience with their proposed research project (e.g., through a newspaper op-ed, public discussion, podcast episode, etc.). We are especially interested in fellowship applicants with demonstrated capacity to engage the public on themes around the Church and/or emerging technology.
- Two letters of reference. The letters should address the strength of the applicant's proposed research project, its fit with the research theme of faith-based ethical approaches to AI, and the applicant's collaborative potential and collegiality.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their potential for research impact, fit with the theme, and fit with the missions of the ECG and GCRI.

Finalists may be asked to be available for a brief Zoom conversation with committee members during the final stage of the selection process.

Applications are due by Monday, May 18, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. (ET).

If you have questions about our postdoctoral fellowships, please contact Kristian Olsen at kolsen1@nd.edu.

Apply Now.

Additional Information
The University of Notre Dame seeks to attract, develop, and retain the highest quality faculty, staff and administration. The University is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or age in employment. Moreover, Notre Dame prohibits discrimination against veterans or disabled qualified individuals, and complies with 41 CFR 60-741.5(a) and 41 CFR 60-300.5(a). We strongly encourage applications from candidates attracted to a university with a Catholic identity.

To apply, visit
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