

# The Ethics of Algorithmic Authority

## Can AI Preserve Doctrinal Integrity in Catholic Teaching?

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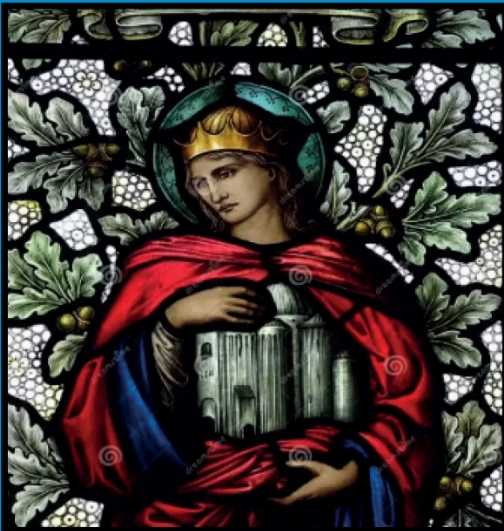
September 2, 2025



DICASTERY FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH  
DICASTERY FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION

# *Antiqua et Nova*

## Note on the Relationship between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence



CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF INDIA

"Kairos Moment" for the Church  
(moral decision - not just a "tech trend")

"This is not just about machines. It is a new challenge to human dignity."

— Pope Leo XIV

Vatican's Rome Call for AI Ethics  
- RAI Principles (Transparency,  
Privacy, Security)

AI Development requires leaders  
formed in virtue (Caritas in  
Veritate 2009)

Will CST (Catholic Social Teaching) shape AI Development, or the other way around?

# What is "algorithmic authority"

**Algorithmic authority** is the perceived legitimacy and trust granted to answers, decisions, or guidance produced by artificial intelligence systems, often without human oversight, especially when these outputs appear confident, fluent, or aligned with institutional language.

## † Catholic framing (with theological resonance):

In a faith context, *algorithmic authority* refers to the growing tendency of the faithful to treat AI-generated responses—especially those that mimic ecclesial tone or theological phrasing—as functionally authoritative, even when such responses lack grounding or sacramental discernment.

# Solace Focus Group - Problem in Practice #1

- ▼ Some see AI as a way to have "spirituality without judgement"

It offers answers which "sound Catholic" but without a "human in the loop"

This raises fundamental questions about the nature of pastoral care and relational ministry



Vimeo



**Solace\_AI\_ A Path to Judgment-Free Spirituality**

# Accountability Lapses - Problem in Practice #2

Scriptures in Barron's St John Sermon

What scriptures are explicitly referenced in Bishop Robert Barron's sermon "Birth of St John the Baptist" delivered on June 24, 2001?

Bishop Robert Barron's sermon on the **Birth of St. John the Baptist** (June 24, 2001) likely draws from key scriptural passages associated with John the Baptist's role in salvation history. While the exact transcript of this specific sermon is not widely available, we can infer the primary scriptures he would have referenced based on the liturgical readings for the **solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist** (celebrated June 24) and Barron's typical theological emphases.

**Likely Explicitly Referenced Scriptures:**

1. **Isaiah 49:1-6** (First Reading for the feast)
  - "The Lord called me from birth... I will make you a light to the nations."
  - Barron often highlights John the Baptist as the "forerunner" fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.
2. **Psalms 139:1-3, 13-15** (Responsorial Psalm)
  - "You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb."

Message DeepSeek

DeepThink (R1) Search

AI-generated, for reference only

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF WORD ON FIRE (LEARN MORE)

Birth of St. John the Baptist

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON | JUNE 24, 2001

CYCLE C | BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

TOPICS: Eucharist, Jesus Christ, Real Presence

BIBLE REFERENCES: Isaiah 55:11, Mark 5:41, Mark 4:35-41

er Sermons SEE ALL

The AI (intelligently) "infers" scripture, but gets it wrong

⚠ Who is accountable when AI misstates Church teaching? Or an AI agent runs amok?

# Addressing the Accountability Dilemma: Key Pillars



Theological Oversight

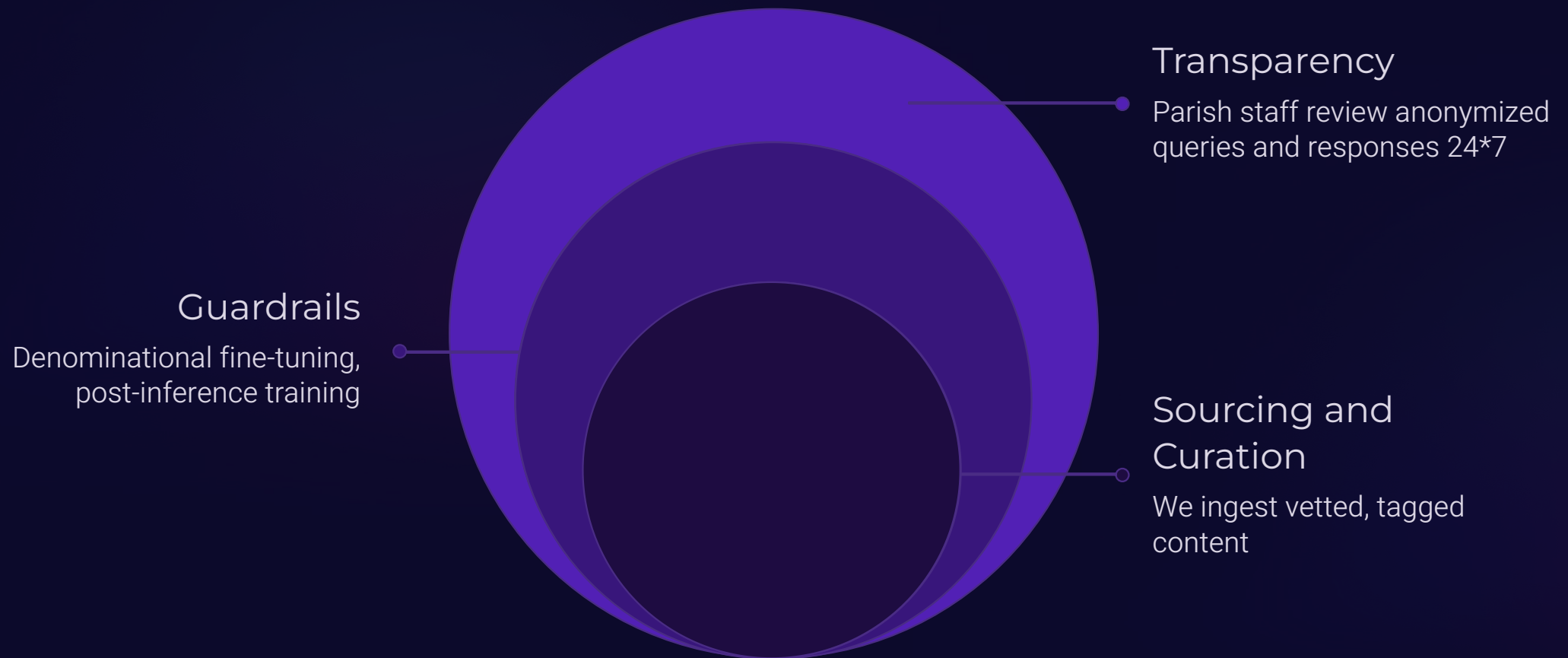
Operational Transparency

Model Layer Guardrails

Test, Disclose & Escalate

# Guardrails, not guesses:

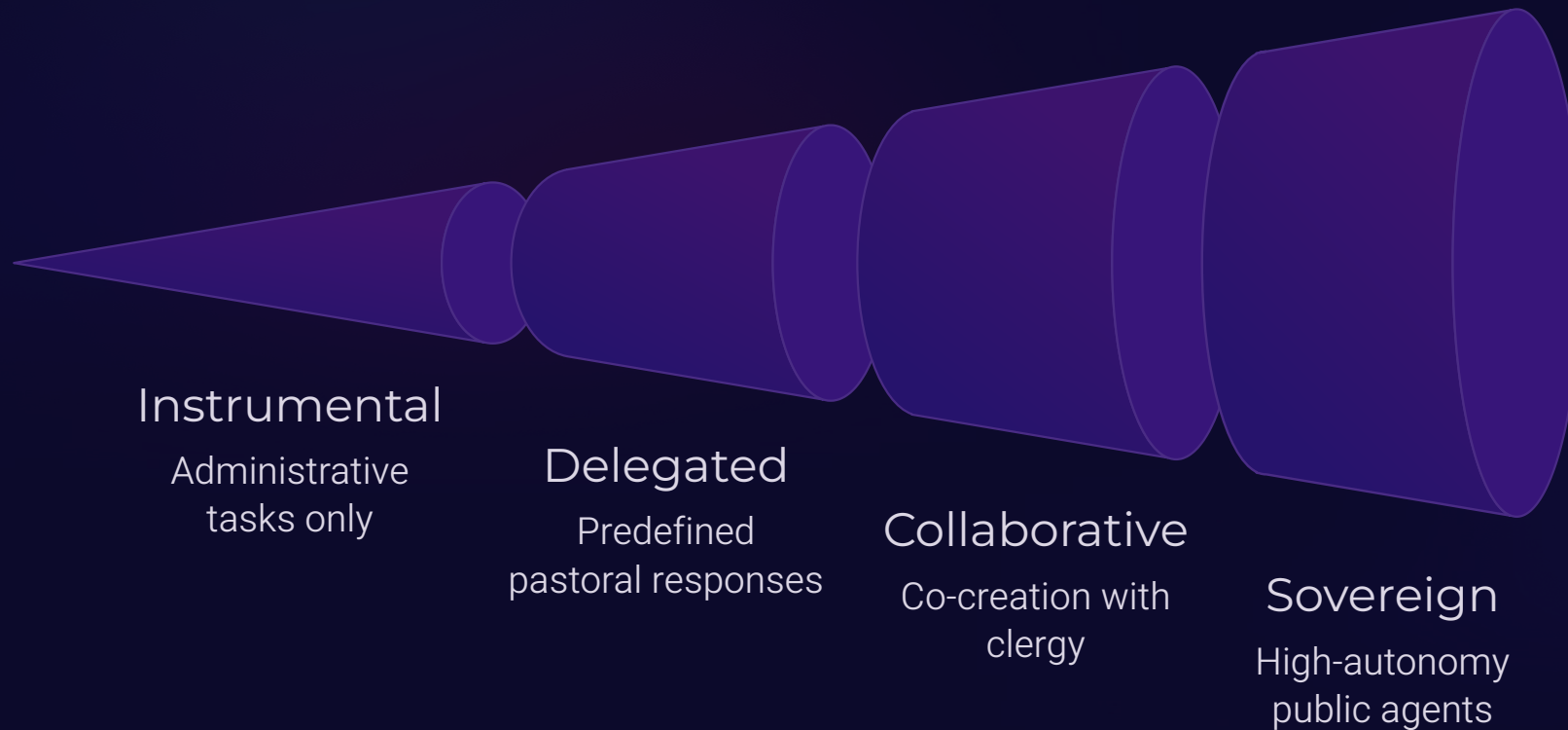
## How Solace trains Catholic-aligned AI



 Doctrinal fidelity isn't a feature—it's a foundation. Solace builds with sacred texts and pastoral guardrails baked in.

# Solace Framework: AI Agents → Spiritual Autonomy

Tools can accompany but not absolve



# Solace Prototyping: Agents of Evangelization

What if the first call to faith came from CST-trained AI?

Pastoral Use Cases (eg  
RCIA guides)



Inspired by CST and  
aligned with episcopal  
structures

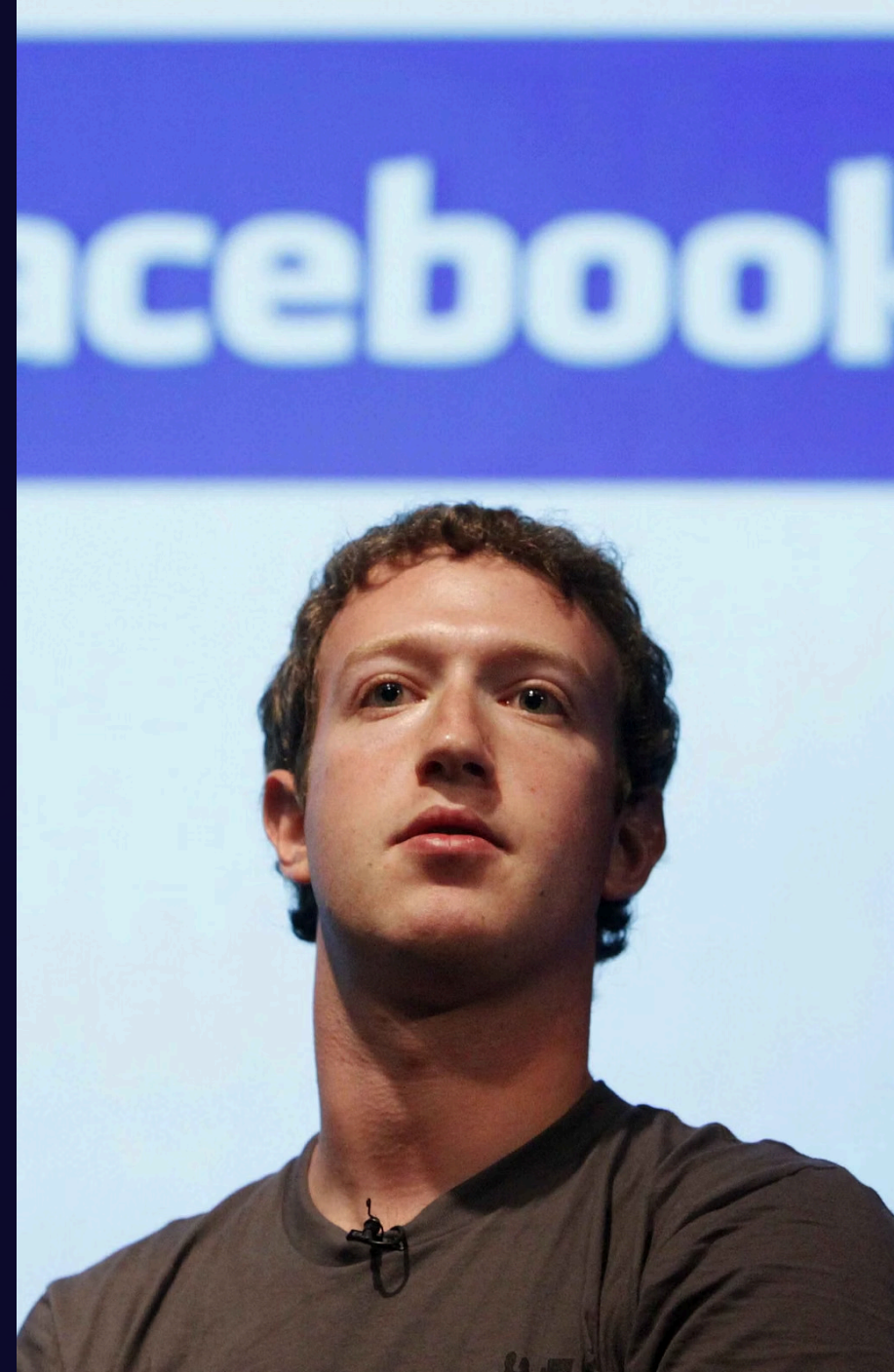
Agents are labelled,  
supervised, and  
escalation-enabled

Rooted in fidelity,  
transparency and  
formation

# The Big Question

If AI is already  
mediating matters  
of faith, who's  
controlling its  
voice?

- ② Will formation be shepherded, or crowd-sourced? Will the Church respond late - or lead now?



# Thank You

## Form the Algorithm—Before It Forms the Faithful.

Solace is building ethically governed Catholic AI agents

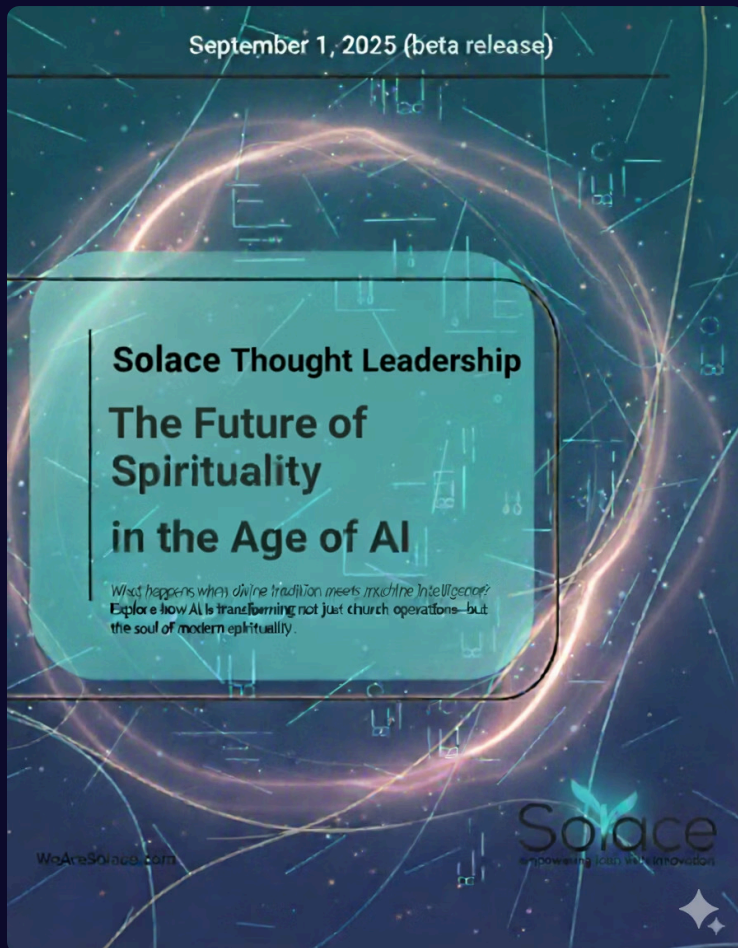
We invite bishops, scholars, and fellow builders into that formation



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# Invitation + Preview:

## Solace Thought Leadership drops September 2025!



We are now scheduling VIP briefings with a Catholic lens for bishops, theologians, and institutional leaders:

What might Catholic oversight of AI look like

Where agents can responsibly extend your mission

How to equip your parishes, schools and communities today

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