



The Eighth Annual
John Cardinal Foley Lecture on Social Communications
by **DR. BRETT ROBINSON**

LIVESTREAMED @Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook
February 1, 2021

INTRODUCTION

by **Rev. Thomas F. Dailey, O.S.F.S.**

Good evening and welcome to the annual John Cardinal Foley Lecture on The Church and Social Communications.

This year, as you can see, we happen to be talking about social communications by way of social communications! By now, we have all experienced how Zoom, Vimeo, Facebook Live, and similar technologies have become key elements of our communications landscape. Our lecture this evening addresses that ecology in which the Church also lives and works and, hopefully, will thrive.

This is the eighth lecture in a series honoring the memory of CARDINAL JOHN FOLEY, who died in 2011. For those of you did not know him, Cardinal Foley was a priest of the Philadelphia archdiocese. An alumnus of and faculty member here at Saint Charles Seminary, he directed archdiocesan communications for more than twenty years as a writer and editor at *The Catholic Standard & Times* newspaper. In 1984 he was called to the Vatican to lead communications efforts for the universal Church as president of what was then the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

During his twenty-three years in that role, Cardinal Foley shepherded the work of Church communications in the new digital age, all the while emphasizing the primacy of the person. He once stated at an international congress about the power of technology that “It is necessary to be able to discern between human and artificial, between reality and fiction, between sensitivity and automatism, without these spheres being confused, to give life to an environment in which learning is guided by truth and the person finds space and stimulation to know and continue to seek” (12/6/01).

That “space” for seeking, knowing, and becoming who we are as Church is the focus of tonight’s lecture. Our speaker is uniquely positioned to guide us in that realm, as he is currently directing a national program on “Church Communications Ecology” at the University of Notre Dame. He works in South Bend as the Director of Communications and Catholic Media Studies at the McGrath Institute for Church Life. He also offers national commentary on social communications via Catholic News Service (published locally on CatholicPhilly.com). In his book entitled *Appletopia: Media Technology and the Religious Imagination of Steve Jobs*, he reminds us that “Man and technology are two actors involved in a timeless story about the response of the creator to the created” (p. 16).

Tonight, he tells us more about how that timeless story plays out in our current media environment. Grateful for his work and his presence with us online, let me welcome, and now turn the screen over to, the 2021 Cardinal Foley Lecturer on the Church & Social Communications ... **DR. BRETT ROBINSON**

