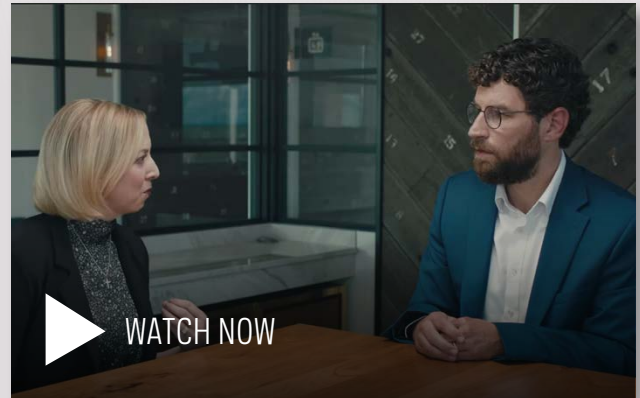


# Crisis Leadership in Uncertain Times

AMANDA McKENDREE, PH.D. & BRETT ROBINSON, PH.D.

The Church is not new to crisis but the ways in which Church leaders communicate during a crisis are constantly changing. New communication technologies and a shifting cultural landscape present new challenges for pastors and leaders who are charged with the spiritual care and welfare of the Catholic faithful. In this session, Dr. Brett Robinson from the McGrath Institute for Church Life speaks with Dr. Amanda McKendree from Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business about the core tenets of crisis communication and how they can be used to guide pastors in the art of crisis leadership.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Christ did not come as a conquering hero but as a humble servant. How is His “responsive witness” approach different from an “image repair” approach?
2. Christ prepared His apostles for what was to come. What are the top three risks facing your parish community today? Rank them according to potential severity.
3. Jesus chose 12 apostles to accompany Him through crisis. Who would you assign to your crisis response team and why?
4. The Gospel writers adopted different styles that reflected the attitudes and expectations of their particular audience. Who are three stakeholder groups/audiences in your community that could be affected by the risks identified above and who from your crisis response team would be able to communicate with that audience most effectively?



## SPIRITUAL CONTEMPLATION

Matthew 13:1-9

“On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: 'A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear.'”

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## RESOURCES

- [BOOK] [Predictable Surprises: The Disasters You Should Have Seen Coming, and How to Prevent Them](#) by Max H. Bazerman and Michael D. Watkins
- [BOOK] [Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding](#) by W. Timothy Coombs
- [BOOK] [Monitoring the Complexities: Nuclear Power and Public Opinion](#) by Vilma Luoma-aho and Marita Vos
- [BOOK] [Managing Crises Before They Happen: What Every Executive and Manager Needs to Know about Crisis Management](#) by Ian I. Mitroff and Gus Anagnos
- [BOOK] [Narratives of Crisis: Telling Stories of Ruin and Renewal](#) by Matthew W. Seeger and Timothy L. Sellnow
- [BOOK] [Effective Crisis Management Through Established Stakeholder Relationships](#) by Robert R. Ulmer
- [ARTICLE] [Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity](#) by Robert R. Ulmer, Matthew W. Seeger, and Timothy L. Sellnow
- [ARTICLE] [From ‘Wicked Crisis’ to Responsive Witness: Jean-Luc Marion and the American Roman Catholic Sexual-Abuse Scandal](#) by Craig T. Maier and Jonathan R. Crist
- [ARTICLE] [The Patron Saint of Media Studies](#) by Brett Robinson



### Amanda McKendree, Ph.D.

*Dr. Amanda McKendree teaches business communication, strategic communication, and corporate communication at the University of Notre Dame, where she is an Associate Teaching Professor of Management in the Fanning Center for Business Communication. She also holds the Arthur F. and Mary J. O'Neil Directorship at the Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication in the Mendoza College of Business. Professor McKendree's research examines crisis communication, conflict communication, and the influence of rhetoric on organizational identity. She is published in the SAGE Encyclopedia of Identity, Business Communication Quarterly, Teaching Ideas for the Basic Communication Course, Journal of the Association for Communication Administration, and Review of Communication. She is a coauthor of Conflict Between Persons: The Origins of Leadership (Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2nd ed., 2018).*



### Brett Robinson, Ph.D.

*Dr. Brett Robinson is Director of Communications and Catholic Media Studies at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame. In his role, he oversees outreach efforts for the Institute while conducting research at the intersection of religion, technology, and culture. Robinson studied marketing and English at the University of Notre Dame and received his Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Georgia. He has taught media studies courses at Duquesne University, the University of Georgia, Saint Vincent College and Notre Dame. Robinson is the author of Appletopia: Media Technology and the Religious Imagination of Steve Jobs and his essays and commentary on technology and culture have been featured in Wired Magazine, CNN, the LA Times and Catholic News Service.*