

Streaming Internet video a new way to spread the Gospel

By FRANZ KLEIN
Staff Writer

LA CROSSE – First there was YouTube. Then there was GodTube. Now there's CatholicTube.

Streaming video is all the rage on the Internet, and some people are starting to realize how valuable a tool this technology can be in reaching out to young Catholics.

"1,600 years later, St. Augustine would have done his 'Confessions' in video and streamed it on the Internet," Travis Boudreaux, the tech-savvy Louisiana Catholic who founded CatholicTube.com several months ago, told *The Catholic Times*.

A Catholic Web watcher

On his CatholicTube blog, Boudreaux posts daily some of the best Catholic videos and podcasts uploaded to major sites like YouTube.com and GodTube.com, as well as smaller Catholic operations such as LoveToBeCatholic.com and SQPN.com.

A veteran Web watcher, Boudreaux believes that video is the future of the Internet. "There will always be room for audio and the written word, but video provides a dynamic that's not there otherwise," he said. "Imagine if you could see St. Augustine's emotion. There's so much that's lost without voice inflection and hand gestures."

In the beginning ...

YouTube.com was created in 2005 and has been owned by Google, Inc., since October of last year. According to Alexa.com's statistical analysis, YouTube is currently the third-most frequented Web site on the Internet.

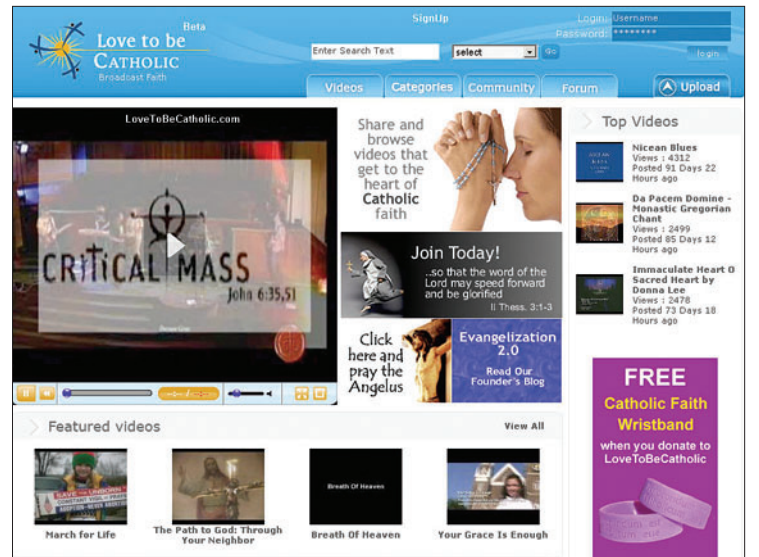
On YouTube, users can upload, view and share music videos and television clips, as well as video content of their own creation. More than 65 million videos have been uploaded to date. While no pornographic or nude videos are permitted, YouTube relies on its community of viewers to identify and flag such

uploads.

A quick search of YouTube's contents for "Christian" will return a staggering 329,000-plus videos, while a search for "Catholic" will yield 21,000-plus results.

Several bishops use the site, including Philadelphia's Cardinal Justin Rigali, who posted a series of reflections, and Toronto's Archbishop Thomas Collins, whose monthly *Lectio Divina* meditations have been watched by thousands of viewers.

But nearly half of the videos on the first page of search results for "Christianity" portray the faith in a negative light. And while a search for "Catholic" will yield an inspiring video by "KaterinaMarie" called "Why I am Catholic," and a clip of a Mass narrated by Bishop Fulton Sheen in 1941 among its initial results, there's also a video parodying the Church sex abuse scandals, as well as lots of others that are anti-Catholic or contain salacious material.



This is the top of the homepage of LoveToBeCatholic.com, a Catholic video-sharing site established by Thomas Hall last year. Similar to the wildly popular YouTube.com and Christian spin-off GodTube.com, LoveToBeCatholic provides a forum for Catholics to use advances in technology to share their faith – but without the salacious videos of YouTube and the purported anti-Catholicism of GodTube.

Providing a Christian forum

"That's why we believe biblical topics need to be discussed in a forum that is respectful of the Word," GodTube.com co-founder and chief executive officer Chris Wyatt said in a *Catholic Times* interview.

With its first version launched last January, GodTube's quick growth has been phenomenal. The site, which recently added an alternative to the secular networking site Facebook.com, already contains more than 48,000 videos. Wyatt said the site logged more than 10 million visitors by the end of 2007.

"We knew it would be big, but we didn't know how big 'big' was," Wyatt said. "We are the largest Christian site on the Internet at this point. Jesus used a sailboat – the most technologically advanced form of transportation – to deliver His message in a few instances. We're doing the same thing. The message isn't changing; the way the message is carried is changing."

But accusations of anti-Catholicism have plagued GodTube, as some users have posted videos that try to discredit the Church's teaching on the priesthood, the sacraments, the papacy and other things.

Wyatt, a Baptist, said anti-Catholicism would not be tolerated. "We don't stand for that," he said, although he admitted that there were some anti-Catholic videos up until a recent string of articles brought them to the company's attention.

Even with these videos removed, more staid clips claiming to discredit elements of Catholic teaching remain on the site, including a John MacArthur lecture series on "The Pope and the Papacy."

More troublingly, a thread at the Catholic Answers Forum (Catholic.com) claims that the GodTube version of the same

"Why I am Catholic" video found on YouTube had comments that added scriptural weight to Catholicism deleted.

A Catholic solution

Thomas Hall, founder of LoveToBeCatholic.com, believes he has come up with a better solution.

"About a month ago, I typed 'Catholic' in on YouTube, and six of the first 10 responses were anti-Catholic propaganda," Hall told *The Catholic Times*. "I felt Catholics needed an equal voice and a safe environment to learn about their faith and to evangelize."

Some time earlier, Hall had made a commitment at his Chicago parish to use his talents to spread the Gospel. With a background including Web work with Fortune 500 companies, Hall, who just moved with his family to Minneapolis, naturally turned to the Internet.

He launched LoveToBeCatholic.com in beta form at the end of October. Like YouTube and GodTube, LoveToBeCatholic is a Web platform for people to post videos. But unlike them, LoveToBeCatholic is specifically Catholic, and Hall works to ensure that nothing anti-Catholic gets posted.

Hall says the online Catholic community has embraced his site. "In the first month I went from zero to 3,000 visitors per day," he said. "I've had to upgrade the servers twice, and I'll have to do that again this year. But that's a really nice problem to have."

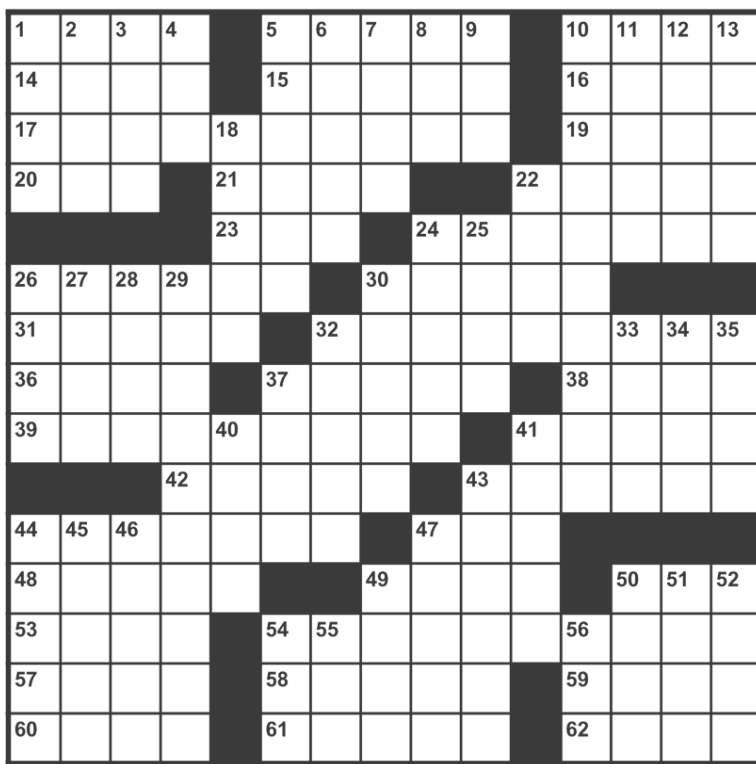
Videos range from priests' sermons, to humorous skits and church events. Some of Hall's favorites are vocation videos that show young religious in habits engaged in sports or other activities with youth. "You can't capture that in text or audio," he said.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

See answers on page 2

ACROSS

- 1 Jesus' name for the Father
- 5 Take off the board
- 10 Shed the feathers
- 14 Sly look
- 15 Pope St. Pius X's surname
- 16 "Rubaiyat" name
- 17 Leader of the Maccabees
- 19 Back of the neck
- 20 Holy ones (abbr.)
- 21 Large African lake
- 22 Wednesday markers
- 23 NT book
- 24 Humans
- 26 Member of a religious order
- 30 Shaker partner
- 31 Well-known
- 32 Capital of Israel
- 36 Southwestern Indians
- 37 Distinguished lady
- 38 Short letter
- 39 ___ font
- 41 Tree starter
- 42 Celestial being
- 43 Smelled
- 44 Captivates
- 47 Fastener
- 48 Number of biblical sorrows of Mary
- 49 Wise Men
- 50 Peter cut this off the soldier of the high priest
- 53 Asian prince
- 54 What Goliath was
- 57 Formerly
- 58 Compare
- 59 Jars
- 60 Furrows
- 61 Bizet work
- 62 Red vegetable



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DOWN

- 1 Charity
- 2 "They shall ___ their swords into plowshares..." (Is 2:4)
- 3 Wagers
- 4 "Our Father who ___"
- 5 She saved the Jews
- 6 She saved Joshua's spies
- 7 Dry
- 8 RR stop
- 9 Greek goddess of the dawn
- 10 Receptacle in which the host is held
- 11 Archdiocese in Nebraska
- 12 Carnation site
- 13 Long lock of hair
- 18 Pained
- 22 God of war
- 24 Good
- 25 Egg cell
- 26 Rebuff
- 27 Very small quantity
- 28 Pace
- 29 The New and the Old
- 30 Miraculous, for one
- 32 Brother of John
- 33 "We ___ for the resurrection of the dead..."
- 34 Raison d'___
- 35 Set right
- 37 Title for a priest (abbr.)
- 40 A party to
- 41 Sponsorship
- 43 Salve ___
- 44 Gravel ridge
- 45 First prime minister of India
- 46 Sailors' call
- 47 More wan
- 49 Sound amplifier
- 50 Land of Sts. Brendan and Brigid
- 51 St. ___ du Beupre
- 52 ___ in peace
- 54 Mideast group
- 55 Haunch
- 56 Clumsy boat