

Cardinal Rigali's Lenten reflections a hit on YouTube

PHILADELPHIA - Who's that you're seeing on YouTube?

Yes, it is really Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia.

The cardinal is providing video reflections for each Sunday of Lent, as well as for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter on the free, video-sharing Web site, which allows users to upload, view and share video clips.

Once on the site, www.youtube.com, visitors can easily find the reflections by typing "Cardinal Rigali" into the search area.

"YouTube is a place where people communicate a multiplicity of things, and certainly, from the viewpoint of the church, we have a desire to communicate Christ," Cardinal Rigali said recently. "We have the message in the Gospel - the uplifting message of Jesus, a wonderful message of hope ... of love ... of faith."

The cardinal said he hopes his contribution will be of help to people who are reflecting on God and Christ, and on the meaning of life and love.

Through the years, the church has shown tremendous commitment to social communications, the cardinal said. "Communicating the uplifting message of Christ is just a blessing," he added.

Clearly, Cardinal Rigali is a hit on the video site, where contributions may be rated, and the number of times they have been viewed are also made public.

According to the archdiocesan Office for Communications, on Ash Wednesday, the day the Cardinal's first Lenten reflections were posted, his video was one of the top-linked videos in the category "People and Blogs."

By the afternoon of March 12, the cardinal's first posting had received almost 17,000 views.

Here is a sampling of the responses to the cardinal's reflections posted on YouTube:

“Cardinal Rigali – you are the man. Thanks for keeping it real.”

“Another amazing message! ... The messages are helping me to reflect during the holy season of Lent. I ask you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to pray that I may go the extra mile during this season and really help bring a bit more light to people who are still in darkness.”

“What a beautiful meditation on the importance of truly listening to God in our times of prayer, lest they become episodes of fruitless, one-way babble. Thank you, Cardinal Rigali!”

“I think this is s-o-o-o cool.”

“Cardinal Rigali, thanks for doing this. I set up a YouTube account just to be able to post a response.”

“Keep ‘em coming, Cardinal Rigali. ... proud to be Catholic.”

“This is super. It makes me feel good to know that our church is reaching out to God’s children through modern technology.”

“Excellent idea to make use of ‘YouTube’ to console, comfort and encourage Christians and others to see the whole point of living a Christian life.”

“I, too, thank God for this to be on YouTube. May the Lord bless all who see Cardinal Rigali’s messages and the cardinal as well, but also those who run YouTube for letting this be on the site!”

“With increased attacks on human life, the pope is urging us all to speak up for the truth. We all need dedicated people like Justin Cardinal Rigali to deepen our faith.”

“Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Justin Cardinal Rigali went to the spiritual desert, where the people are. ‘This man eats and drinks with sinners’ – such was said of our Lord Jesus. Praise God that the Word has reached the tube! The love of God, the peace of Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all.”

The communications office has received e-mails from Italy, Spain and Australia, among other points around the globe, from people commending the cardinal’s debut

on YouTube.

The cardinal's Lenten reflections are also available in streaming video on the archdiocesan Web site at www.archdiocese-phl.org through the "Living Lent" area.