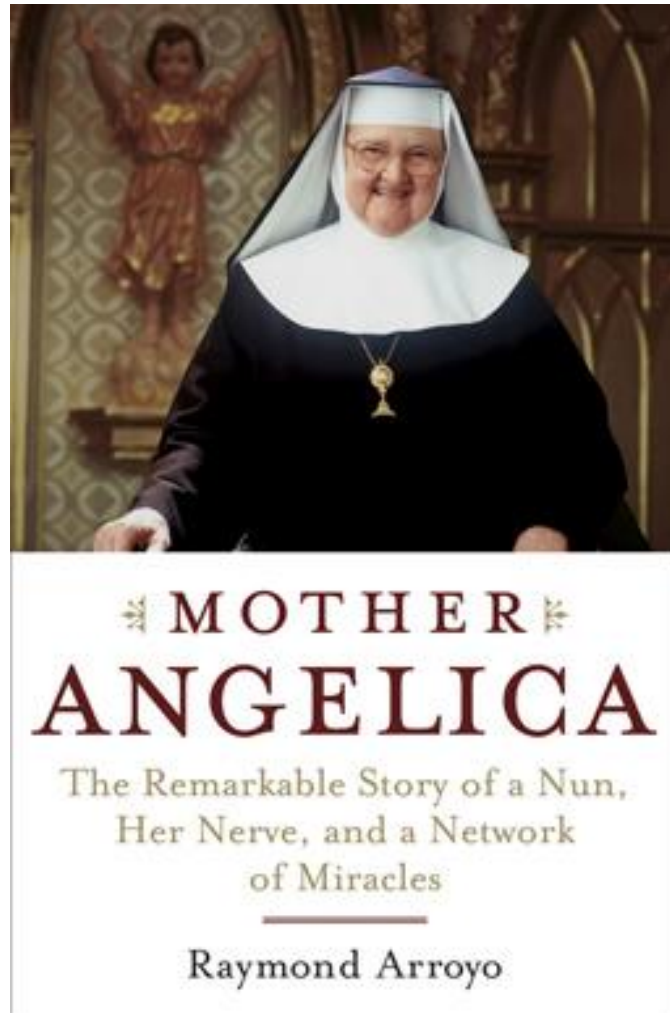


A Summary of Mother Angelica by Raymond Arroyo



***Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles* by Raymond Arroyo**

New York: Doubleday, 2005

ISBN: 0-385-51092-6

Summary by Dr. Laura J. Itle, written exclusively for the Goldhead Group, Ltd.

[You can purchase the full text on Amazon.com](#)

About the Author

Many Catholics are familiar with Raymond Arroyo, host and creator of the EWTN news magazine, “The World Over Live.” A graduate of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, Mr. Arroyo’s background in journalism includes work with the Associated Press and as a political correspondent on Capitol Hill. He has also studied theater, acting and directing in both London and New York.

On “The World Over Live”, Mr. Arroyo has conducted multiple interviews, notably the first live interview with Mel Gibson to discuss “The Passion of the Christ”, and even more notably the only English language interview with Pope Benedict XVI, then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Current projects include the development of a mystery series and a musical. Mr. Arroyo is married and has three children.

General Overview

“Remember us between your gas and electric bills.”

Chronicling the life of Mother Angelica from her birth in 1923 to present day, **Mother Angelica: The Remarkable Story of a Nun, Her Nerve, and a Network of Miracles** explores the events leading up to the founding of the Eternal Word Television Network and the challenges faced by the network’s founder.

The book begins with the birth of Rita Rizzo to an emotionally volatile mother and a disinterested father. Her childhood was one of confusion, isolation, and physical and emotional pain. Following the miraculous healing of her body, Rita devoted herself to Jesus. This book encompasses Mother Angelica’s discovery of her vocation, her experiences in the contemplative life, and her dedication to Our Lord. Her story encompasses the founding of a television network, a radio network, and a monastery.

Chapter One: *One Miserable Life*

“Sometimes I used to wonder if there was a God, and if there was such a person I couldn’t figure out why He wouldn’t let me have a family, like the other kids.”

The future Mother Angelica, Rita Antoinette Rizzo, was born in Canton, Ohio, on April 20, 1923. She was the first, and only, child of John and Mae Rizzo. Life in an ethnic Italian neighbor, tainted with Mafioso influences, was difficult for young Rita. While her father had been charming during his courtship of her mother, he proved to be lacking in the skills needed to be a good husband. He never wanted to be a father.

John Rizzo moved in and out of the family home, leaving for 2 years in 1928. In the absence of her husband, Mae Rizzo was forced to return with her only child to the home of her parents, Mary and Anthony Gianfrancesco. Mae Rizzo opened a dry cleaning shop to support her daughter and began attending church regularly at the neighborhood parish, St. Anthony’s. Her mother’s involvement in the parish provided Rita with many opportunities and protection during

mob violence in the late 1920's. While it appeared that the Church would be a stabilizing influence in the midst of strife, St. Anthony's parish priest was assassinated.

In 1930, John Rizzo returned to visit his family. Though Mae Rizzo still had feelings for her husband, she filed a petition for divorce in 1930. The court awarded Mae custody of Rita in 1931, though the divorce took a heavy toll on Mae Rizzo. She was prone to fits of crying and depression. Mae and Rita Rizzo lived in a series of run-down apartments as Mae struggled to provide stability for her child. A child of divorce, Rita felt isolated from the other students at her Catholic school, a feeling seemingly reinforced by her interactions with the religious sisters and her classmates.

Distressed by her mother's depression, her father's dating practices, and poverty, Rita was a loner in school, though she presented a façade of cheerfulness as a drum majorette in high school. With her mother's emotional state becoming progressively worse, Rita returned to live with her grandparents.

Chapter Two: *The Gift of Pain*

"You can see God's providence, because He let me see what I was capable of. And I knew I had to change, but I didn't know how."

At age seventeen, Rita was beginning to be plagued with medical problems. Constant nausea and fatigue did not disrupt Rita's work as a baton instructor and factory worker. Work, however, did disrupt Rita's school work. After failing three subjects her junior year, Rita had to take a staggering course load her senior year to graduate from high school. Her attitude contributed to outbursts in her grandparent's home, including an incident in which she stabbed her uncle. During her senior year, her health continued to waver, even as her mother went to Philadelphia for a second time to battle her chronic emotional problems.

Mae Rizzo returned to Canton and soon found employment as a bookkeeper for the Canton Waterworks. Rita's stomach problems continued to worsen, and she was finally diagnosed with "dropped stomach." The only remedy was to wear a modified corset which helped maintain stomach position. This provided only temporary relief, until one day, in 1942, the pain was secondary to the shock of seeing a lemon-size mass on her abdomen.

Chapter Three: *The Healing and the Call*

"When the Lord came in and healed me through the Little Flower, I had a whole different attitude. I knew there was a God...All I wanted to do after my healing was give myself to Jesus."

In the midst of her daughter's suffering, Mae Rizzo sat with a friend on a bus in Canton in 1943. The woman suggested that Mae Rizzo take Rita to meet Rhoda Wise, a purported mystic and stigmatic living in the area. In the story of Rhoda Wise's miraculous healing through the intercession of St. Therese of Liseux, Mae found hope that Rita could be healed. Rita wasn't sure, but went to visit Mrs. Wise to please her mother.

Mrs. Wise counseled Rita to pray a novena to St. Therese. At the end of the novena, Rita was healed. From this moment, Rita ceased to be a lukewarm Catholic. She learned about cultivating holiness from Rhoda Wise and began daily devotional practices. Through these devotional practices, Rita discovered she had a vocation to the religious life. She confided in Rhoda Wise and Mrs. Wise's spiritual director. She began to investigate religious orders, concealing her vocation from her family.

Secretly visiting the Josephite Sisters, an active order in Buffalo, New York, Rita was more committed to her vocation. Her spiritual director, and the Josephite Sisters, felt that Rita might be better suited to a contemplative order. Her spiritual director arranged for a visit to a cloistered Franciscan monastery. After her visit, Rita knew that God wanted her at St. Paul's Shrine in Cleveland, OH. Unable to tell her mother of her vocation, Rita left her grandparents home on August 15th, 1944. She would not return.

Chapter Four: *Bride of Christ*

"To be espoused to the King of Kings is an honor that even the angels cannot understand."

Telling her mother of her vocation in a registered letter, Rita entered the Franciscan community at St. Paul's Shrine of Perpetual Adoration in Cleveland, OH. As a postulant of the Franciscan Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament, Rita would spend six months discerning whether she truly was called to the cloistered life. Sister Rita struggled to conform to religious life—she was habitually late for prayer and often disturbed the elder sisters

Mother Agnes began to prepare Sister Rita for the life of a nun through a series of mortifications. While many would have broken under these trials, Sister Rita was not broken and learned to temper her volatile personality. Life in the monastery did wreak havoc on her physical health. These health problems would threaten her vocation.

During this time, Mae's resistance to her daughter's vocation evaporated. Encouraged by this, Sister Rita longed to make her vows and become a permanent member of the order. Mother Agnes requested the intervention of the bishop's emissary to give Sister Rita six more months at the convent. Despite the physical toll, Sister Rita's added six months in the postulancy convinced the solemnly professed sisters to accept Sister Rita into the order. On November 8th, 1945, Sister Rita became Sister Mary Angelica of the Annunciation. However, her temporary vows did not improve her physical health. Soon, she was sent to a new foundation in Canton. Here, a final decision about her suitability to the cloistered life would be made.

Chapter Five: *Sancta Clara*

"It was a cross of learning to live with one another... a cross of learning to love."

The new foundation, Sancta Clara, would be at the O'Dea estate in Canton. The sisters worked to fashion a temporary chapel and to prepare the estate as a monastery. In Canton, Sister Mary Angelica's physical pains subsided, and the date for her next profession was set. After her next profession on January 2nd, 1947, Sister Angelica settled into the monastic life.

At times, the walls of Sancta Clara seemed small. Like all people in small spaces, the sisters bickered. However, new postulants continued to arrive, even when a construction project to add much needed space to the convent were stalled. Three of the postulants, Sisters Mary Joseph, Mary Raphael, and Mary Michael would become life-long confidants of Sister Angelica.

Tension in the convent continued, however, including problems with a specific nun. From her dealings with Sister Mary of the Cross, Sister Angelica learned that saints love everyone, even those who are difficult. At the hands of Mother Clare, she learned even more the importance of the virtue of humility. In time, she was ready to make her final profession on January 2, 1953. Her goal had been attained.

Life as a solemnly professed nun began with a fall that would leave Sister Angelica with constant back pain. Additionally, Mother Veronica, Sister Angelica's friend had left to form a new community. This left the novices in charge of Mother Mary Immaculate, a harsh mistress. However, during an eight day retreat by Mary Immaculate, Sister Angelica was left in charge of the novices. Sister Angelica helped the novices understand the beauty that awaited them at the end of the novitiate. She also began mothering the novices and providing love and support in the wake of Mary Immaculate reproofs.

Chapter Six: *Providence in Pain*

“Since our Lord seemed to show His Will by permitting me to walk again...I took this as an indication that as He had fulfilled His part, I must fulfill mine.”

Despite her physical problems, Sister Angelica thrived in the community. She worked as the community economist, supervised the continuing renovations, and welcomed back Mother Mary Veronica. Following her friend's return, Sister Angelica went to the hospital to undergo back surgery. The prognosis was not good, but Sister Angelica promised the Lord if He would heal her once again, she would build a monastery in the South. The surgery was a failure; while she could move her legs, Sister Angelica could not walk.

With the help of her sisters, Sister Angelica re-learned to walk and turned her attention towards keeping her promise to the Lord. While Archbishop Toolen of Mobile invited the sisters to his diocese, securing the permission of the local bishop proved more difficult. Because of Sister Angelica's persuasiveness, the local bishop did not outright reject the sisters' request.

In the meantime, Sister Angelica took control of another building project at Sancta Clara—a grotto dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. She also conducted a smaller scale project—constructing a model of the proposed monastery in Birmingham. In 1959, after three years of waiting, Sister Angelica once again appealed to the local ordinary. This time Bishop Walsh was persuaded. With the paper work started, Sister Angelica, now Mother Angelica, began raising money by selling fishing lures nationwide. With the profits from the fishing-lure business, a contribution from Sancta Clara, and some benefactors, the financing was secure. And then, so was the permission from Rome.

Chapter Seven: *The Foundation*

“God is good. He made us wait a little while, but He gave us more than we ever expected and that’s just like Him.”

With four sisters, Mother Angelica took her first plane ride—to Birmingham. The trip was a comedy of errors, resulting in a night in a motel for the five religious. That night, Mother Angelica saw a television for the first time. Finally arriving in Birmingham, Mothers Angelica and Veronica were greeted by Archbishop Toolen and began their pursuit for land in the Birmingham area. It was a difficult search, which forced Mother Angelica into speaking engagements as the hunt continued.

Finally, after months, Mother Angelica found the perfect fifteen acres and purchased it for thirteen thousand dollars, the precise amount raised by the fishing-lure business. With Sister Joseph and Mother Angelica as construction supervisors, and the donations of the Birmingham community, work on the monastery began. By late 1961, the project was over budget and needed a loan. The archbishop did not approve. When Mother Angelica went to release the workers, they would not leave. They finished the job, but Mother Angelica still did not have a way to pay the workers—she made the decision to only finish half the monastery. That half monastery was built in a region of turmoil.

Chapter Eight: A Family Monastery

“The entire project was planned so that complete concentration would be just on the Blessed Sacrament.”

Someone began harassing the sisters, going so far as to shoot at the sisters little farmhouse adjacent to the monastery. Despite harassment, Mother Angelica moved forward. The entire group that would move into the Birmingham monastery left Sancta Clara in 1962 for the last time—two days later, the group would complete the long drive to their new home. There were eighteen Spartan cells, a workroom, a refectory, a courtyard, and, most importantly, an elaborate chapel, with a public and private side. After an open house, the sisters were locked into the monastery on May 20th, 1962. The first postulant was Mother Angelica’s own mother, Mae Francis.

Potential decisions were discussed with the sisters, before Mother Angelica would take her thoughts to the Lord in prayer. Once she had made the final choice, the sisters would pray for a successful outcome. The new monastery labored under a heavy debt, a worry that constantly plagued Mother Angelica. In an attempt to raise money, Mother Angelica recorded her first talk to be sold.

At the same time, the Church was experiencing Vatican II. Mother Angelica participated in that renewal, somewhat unawares, requesting permission to pray the office in English, modify the traditional habit, and change the name of the order to the Poor Clares of the Holy Eucharist. Mother Angelica also wrote articles urging the wider reform of contemplative orders and even attended a meeting of religious superiors. As part of the reforms, the grille was removed, the habits were updated to skirts and jackets, and Mother Angelica gave her first television interview.

Chapter Nine: *The Spirit Moves*

“We use the talents we possess to the best of our ability and leave the results to God.”

While the reforms of Vatican II had swept the nation, one thing about the monastery had not changed. The Tabernacle had not moved from its prominent position at the front of the chapel. But, other things *were* changing. Mother Angelica became acquainted with the Charismatic movement. After being prayed over by Father DeGrandis, Mother Angelica received the gift of tongues. This gift inspired Mother Angelica to spend more time with the Word.

Mother Angelica continued giving talks outside the cloister and reluctantly began a Scripture study for women at the monastery. As her taped talks gained popularity, Mother Angelica began recording a 10-minute program to air on the radio on Sunday mornings. The peanut equipment was slowly replaced with a second-hand tape recording machine and a dubbing machine. At the same time, Mother Angelica authored a short book, *Journey into Prayer*. The sisters published the book and left free copies throughout Birmingham. Mother Angelica kept writing. God, and a wonderful benefactor, provided the money to buy a printing press to expand the book ministry. It was during this time that Mother Angelica’s speaking engagements and book ministry led her to Chicago and a Baptist run television station.

Chapter Ten: *Doing the Ridiculous*

“I only need God! I’ll buy my own cameras and build my own studio.”

Upon seeing Channel 38’s studios, Mother Angelica knew that television was a way to reach the people. Also, during the trip to Chicago, she would meet Bill Steltemeier. Their lives would be intertwined in the years to come. Mother Angelica’s first foray into television was the production of a series of tapes, *Our Hermitage*. The programs were simply Mother Angelica’s scripture studies—only with the potential to reach far more people. 60 episodes were ordered by the Christian Broadcast Network to be filmed at a local CBS affiliate. At the same time in 1978, Pope Paul VI died. The cardinals gathered to elect the new pontiff. In a few months, the process would be repeated when Pope John Paul I died. The sisters were able to gather around the television to see the first images of Pope John Paul II.

Things began to change when the local CBS affiliate agreed to show *The Word*, a blasphemous film. Mother Angelica refused to make any more programs at the affiliate and threatened to build her own studio. Uncertain what to do, she returned home to the monastery. The sisters elected to build a studio. Eternal Word Television Network had begun. Several months and \$400,000 in debt, Mother Angelica was filming programs and touring the nation raising funds. But, the studio had started.

After stockpiling a large number of programs with no distribution mechanism, Mother Angelica decided to use satellite. The next months were spent securing a license from the FCC, drafting bylaws for the new television network, securing money to purchase the satellite, and preparing to defeat some staggering odds.

Chapter Eleven: *Cathedral in the Sky: The Eternal Word Television Network*

“This is the most unlikely thing for a religious order, but God likes to do big things with little things.”

In 1981, Mother Angelica received an FCC license in record time; now, all that was needed was a large influx of funds. While the sisters prayed for financial help, the board of EWTN was comprised—with the caveat that the abbess and vicar of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery retain permanent positions. Father John Hardon was asked to review the orthodoxy of the network’s contents. This would lead to a crisis for Mother Angelica and the fledgling network.

Intentional or not, Hardon alerted Rome to Mother Angelica’s travels of across the country to raise money for the monastery and the new network. Rome was concerned, and Mother Angelica was informed that she could only leave the cloister to visit the studio. Ultimately, she was given the option to leave the monastery or give up the travels that were vital to the community and the network. Mother could not do either—she sought help from Rome. That help came from Cardinal Oddi, who visited the monastery and subsequently obtained permission from Mother Angelica to travel outside the monastery and studio.

At 6:00PM on August 15th, 1981, EWTN’s first broadcast began. Mother Angelica and Ginny Dominick, along with the crew of twenty, continued to cultivate the network. It was quickly realized the cable industry needed to change. Along with Td Turner and HBO, Mother Angelica pushed cable operators to invest in receivers to pull signals from the sky. The financial troubles continued, as Mother paid a large amount to keep the network running and to insure that no inappropriate content aired immediately before or after EWTN. Worse, Sister Mary David, Mother Angelica’s mother, was failing.

Chapter Twelve: *Death and Dark Night*

“Remember to keep us between your gas and electric bill. This network is brought to you by you.”

God chose to call Sister David home on August 22nd, 1982, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Mother Angelica, and the sisters of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery. With little time to grieve as the financial burden of the network was growing and with the official launch of CTNA, Mother Angelica was forced to become the voice for Catholic orthodoxy in America. She made a personal pilgrimage to Rome to present EWTN to the Pope and offer it to his service. As CTNA floundered, tensions between the bishops’ conference and Mother Angelica continued to mount. Both networks struggled for solvency.

Mother Angelica was also forced to terminate a satellite contract because the provider was showing pornography right before EWTN programming. This led to a court settlement and additional financial debt for the network. But, EWTN went on, with the introduction of Mother Angelica live in the fall of 1983. Mother was forced to begin appealing on air for funds. The money had run out.

Mother Angelica suffered personally for many months—the death of her mother, the lack of money for her mission, and a spiritual night. In time, God took care of the financial woes and eased Mother Angelica’s spiritual woes, and EWTN (and Mother Angelica!) pressed on.

Chapter Thirteen: *The Abbess of the Airwaves*

“God has designed that men be priests, and we can’t afford to deny God his sovereign rights.”

People tuned into and donated to EWTN because of the force of Mother Angelica’s personality as well as the content. Her live program was a success because of her overwhelming honesty and spirituality, and the Catholic and cable community recognized her achievements. EWTN was able to build a new studio facility in 1985, with the capability to produce 50% of its one air content. The programming took on an even more decidedly Catholic tone, with the introduction of several new shows including the live Rosary. Like any network, there were on-screen gaffs and off-screen personnel issues, but these were quickly pushed aside when the decision to begin broadcasting 24 hours a day in 1987. And what better way than to begin broadcasting 24 hours a day, than a papal visit to the United States. In the mean time, Mother helped found two active orders, the Sister Servants of the Eternal Word and the Order of the Eternal Word.

CTNA and EWTN agreed to co-broadcast the papal visit, with Mother Angelica and Father Bob Bonnot (CTNA) as co-anchors. The first day of coverage brought a broadcast of American bishops openly challenging the Holy Father on priestly celibacy. Mother Angelica decided to offer the orthodox, and accurate, position at every point. The successful coverage of the papal visit exacerbated tensions between CTNA and EWTN. This tension led Mother Angelica to refuse to co-broadcast the annual bishops meetings. Continuing into spring of 1988, the final showdown between CTNA would occur on June 24th, 1988—ultimately, the bishops would sign a 2-year pact with EWTN, giving Mother Angelica her long-awaited imprimatur. It was time for EWTN to expand. This time, it would be radio.

Chapter Fourteen: *A Witness to the Nations: WEWN*

“I came to the conclusion that I’m not a good foundress. I’m sure I’m at fault all the way somewhere...I don’t know.”

Feeling that God was calling her to expand into shortwave radio, Mother Angelica headed to Rome with Bill Steltemeier. With a donation from a Dutch businessman, Mother Angelica’s plan to broadcast Catholic programming into Russia and the Eastern Bloc was well underway. Authorizations to build a shortwave antenna in Italy were frustrated by the Italian government, so Mother Angelica began a parallel project in the United States. She began praying for funding, while removing herself from the network to work on the shortwave project and renovations to the monastery. WEWN launched on December 28th, 1992.

At this time (1992), Fr. Michael McDonagh left the Order of the Eternal Word to form a different order. Six priests remained to continue the work and revitalize it; the Servant Sisters of the Word also split from the Our Lady of the Angels. Mother Angelica called an end to the days when the cloistered sisters mingled freely with pilgrims. A new wall was being put up around

the monastery. It was a return to Orthodoxy—Latin mass would be celebrated and there was a return to more traditional music

Chapter Fifteen: *The Defender of the Faith*

“I am so tired of you, liberal Church in America.”

The “new,” inclusive language Catechism was being promoted in the United States, and Mother Angelica was not pleased. In a meeting with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Mother Angelica spoke about her concerns with the inclusive language. She was also graced with an illness that once again reminded her of the gift of suffering. In 1993, the Pope came to Denver for World Youth Day. The opening ceremonies, the Way of the Cross with a woman portraying Jesus, enraged Mother Angelica. Its message was a clear dissent from Church teachings against the ordination of women. Mother Angelica chastised liberal Catholics the next time she was on air. The USCCB was swiftly angered and rebuked Mother Angelica publicly. The sisters reverted to a traditional habit, and Mother interjected a tone of seriousness into her live show, urging obedience to Rome in all matters. The bishops were not pleased and forbid many priests from appearing on air; this would not be the end of the network's trouble with the Episcopate.

Chapter Sixteen: *Hammer of the Heretics*

“I’m seventy-four years old. I’m not about to deny Our Lord when I’m so close to judgment.”

In 1993, Mother Angelica was taking EWTN global, and CTNA was officially disbanding. Once EWTN was global, Mother set about her next mission—building a new monastery. The relentless prayers for donations began and were answered—a message from the Divine Child inspired Mother to build her Divine Spouse the most beautiful chapel imaginable. This chapel would become a battleground between Mother and the episcopate. A feud with Cardinal Mahony began when Mother questioned Mahony’s teachings about the Eucharist. Cardinal Mahony was stung and demanded a formal retraction of Mother’s statements. On November 18th, 1997, Mother apologized and proceeded to critique the Cardinal’s pastoral letter on the Eucharist., explaining carefully the teachings of the Church on the Eucharist. Mother felt that the feud had ended.

Cardinal Mahony, the appointed leader of the Catholic left, demanded that Mother Angelica issue another retraction, this time apologizing to her viewers for misrepresenting the Cardinal's teaching and noting that she had no authority to criticize a bishop. Mother Angelica would not read the Cardinal’s statement, deeming it to be a denial of our Eucharistic Lord. Mahony would not let this matter rest and took it as an opportunity to threaten the network and Mother Angelica’s ability to receive the Sacrament she was trying to defend.

Chapter Seventeen: *Miracles and Chastisements*

“I will not be made a pawn or tool in the hands of American liberals who have done such great harm to so many people.”

In 1998, at age seventy-five, Mother battled asthma, her constant leg and back problems, and Cardinal Mahony. Our Lord brought an end to Mother's physical sufferings so that she could continue to defend the Eucharist. Ultimately, Rome would decide not to interfere, but Mahony would not relent. He launched an investigation as to who controlled EWTN. But, Mother Angelica was focused on the short wave radio project in the United States and raising the grandest chapel to Our Lord that the monastery money could fund. But, looming over the sisters as they moved into their new cloister, was the question—"Who owned EWTN?"

Chapter Eighteen: The Last Things

"What bothers me is we're satisfied with the very least for God, but only the best for us."

Bishop Foley of Birmingham decided in 1999 to clarify the relationship between Mother Angelica, the monastery, EWTN, and himself. This assertion came when he refused permission for the consecratory Mass in the chapel to be performed *ad orientem*. When Mother pushed for a reversal, the bishop pushed back. He passed a law outlawing the *ad orientem* posture in the diocese of Birmingham. Even though the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith repealed the law, the battle lines were drawn. The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament was consecrated on December 19th, 1999. The sisters settled into a more traditional contemplative life. Mother Angelica would lose her friend Sister Raphael in early 2000

The ultimate battle would be a probe into the life of the Our Lady of the Angels Monastery. The official Vatican visitator, Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez, would address three questions—who owned EWTN, was Our Lady of the Angels Monastery within its rights to deed property to EWTN, and was Mother Angelica truly an abbess. During the course of the investigation, the archbishop found not irregularities, but concluded that Mother should have sought permission from Rome before beginning the network. However, the archbishop would recommend that the Congregation retroactively forgive the monastery. He also cautioned Mother not to give up her position at EWTN. The sisters, however, felt that it was a continued attempt to take the network over. Mother Angelica called for an overhaul of EWTN's bylaws. Mother Angelica officially resigned from EWTN.

The episcopate staged on last attempt to gain control of the network. Mother Angelica, armed with a historical perspective, battled to the end. In a last meeting, attempting to postpone a vote on Mother's resignation, there were hours of filibustering. Eventually, with only the two bishops on the board dissenting, EWTN severed all ties to Our Lady of the Angels Monastery. EWTN was now independent.

Chapter Nineteen: Purification

"Listen"

In the first half of 2001, it became apparent that age and illness was catching up with Mother Angelica. She suffered a series of bihemispheric strokes. Mother Angelic returned to her live program. This would not last long, as Mother suffered a broken arm and a bad reaction to a blood transfusion. Health problems continued until December 24th, 2001, when Mother suffered

another severe stroke that would require brain surgery. The surgery was successful, and she returned to the monastery in January 2002 to devote herself to prayer. Mother has struggled in the intervening time with a speech impediment and seizures, but she has not lost her belief that suffering purifies us. She continues to pass on that message.