

Mother Angelica's Early Years (1923 – 1944)

April 20, 1923

Rita Antoinette Rizzo, the future Mother Angelica, is born in southeast Canton, Ohio, a ghetto ruled by the Sicilian-based Black Hand. Her parents are John Rizzo, an abusive husband and unemployed tailor who wanted to remain childless, and the mentally fragile Mae Gianfrancesco Rizzo.

November 1928

John Rizzo leaves his family, forcing little Rita and her mother to live with her grandparents, Anthony and Mary Gianfrancesco. Because there are only two bedrooms and her four brothers also live in the house, mother and daughter occupy a renovated attic. Anthony runs a family-oriented saloon, a center of immigrant activity from which Rita learns about prostitutes, the mob, holy Italian women and ethnic diversity.

Late 1920s

Although her parents aren't religious, Mae joins St. Anthony's church, where she organizes Italian festivals. In 1927, Rita gets on stage for the first time, doing an impersonation of Al Jolson singing "Danny Boy."

March 10, 1929

Father Joseph Riccardi, pastor of St. Anthony's church, is gunned down for moving St. Anthony's church away from the dealers (who buried drugs on school grounds) to a better part of southeast Canton. This is a big blow to Rita and Mae.

October 1929.

After Rita's experience of the Great Depression, she will never deposit her money in a bank.

Sept. 24, 1930

John Rizzo returns to his family, but Mae files for divorce citing "extreme cruelty." One of Rita's cousins later says that Rita "never had a childhood."

March 10, 1931

Mae is awarded custody of Rita. John rarely makes child-support payments, leaving mother and daughter to suffer from poverty and the stigma of divorce.

1933 to 1937

Mae opens a dry-cleaning business, and disagreements with her brothers force mother and daughter to move to a series of rat-infested one-bedroom apartments, from which they both work and live. When Rita has disagreements with her mother, she sometimes lives with family friends or Victoria Addams, a woman her father is dating.

1933

Her home life and the cruelty of the nuns at St. Anthony's compel Mae to send Rita to public school. Although a priest later persuades Mae to re-enroll her child, another incident of cruelty and Mae's treatment by a missionary during confession – because of the stigma of the divorce – result in Mother and child leaving the Church for a decade.

1934

Poverty and depression push Mae over the edge. Because her mother is always crying and threatening suicide, 11-year-old Rita becomes the parent, delivering dry cleaning to customers in a car and collecting payments.

1934

Rita's first miraculous experience: In running to catch a bus, Rita misses a car speeding toward her. When she sees it, she freezes. Rita feels two hands pick her up and put her on the median in the center of the street. The bus driver says he has never seen anyone jump so high before.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

1937

Rita, 14, returns, with her mother, to live with her grandparents. She attends McKinley High School, where teachers conspire to help the unhappy teen.

Summer 1939

Rita becomes a majorette. But Rita's childhood leaves her distrustful of outsiders. She never makes friends and never dates. Her mother, in the midst of her first nervous breakdown, goes to live with her sister Rose in Philadelphia. Rita goes to classes and makes money teaching baton-twirling and working at a factory making liturgical candles, but she is miserable and in deep pain.

December 1940

Rita's physical troubles, which will eventually be diagnosed as ptosis of the stomach (or "dropped stomach"), begin. The illness makes her hands shake, her left arm go numb and her stomach spasm, which make it hard to sleep or eat.

1942

The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor in December 1941, and Rita soon lands a job as secretary to the vice president of advertising at Timken Roller Bearing Company. She writes and edits copy, organizes layouts for ad campaigns, and learns how to operate machinery.

1942

After a visit with Mystic Rhonda Wise, Rita receives a miraculous healing from her recurring stomach ailment. The experience changes her life. She realizes that God loves her personally – and she begins to love Him back.

Fall 1943

After completing the Way of the Cross at St. Anthony's, facing a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, Rita suddenly realizes she has a vocation, which she needs to keep a secret from her mentally unstable mother. Rita seeks out Rhonda Wise's spiritual director, Msgr. Habig, and begins to visit Wise more frequently. Wise gives her a list of communities to contact, but Rita's grades are so poor, she has a hard time finding a community that will accept her.

August 15, 1944

Rita Rizzo enters the convent in Cleveland, Ohio and becomes Sister Mary Angelica of the Annunciation, a Franciscan Nun of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The order later changes its name to Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration.

Mother Angelica's Early Religious Life (1946 – 1978)

Oct. 1, 1946

Sister Mary Angelica's brash personality and poor health make convent life difficult. In addition to pneumonia and a tonsillectomy, Sister begins to suffer with water on both knees, which makes kneeling, a requirement at the time, extremely painful. Fortunately, a retired business owner donates his home and estate to the contemplative order. Although nuns normally cannot transfer to their hometowns and must be fully professed to become a member of a new foundation, the abbess tells Sister Mary Angelica she feels the five stories of steps are causing her knee problems so she has decided to send her to the Sancta Clara Monastery in Canton, Ohio.

Oct. 2, 1946

Sister Mary Angelica awakens to find that both knees are normal. This convinces the order that the young postulant has a vocation. In two months, she makes her first profession of vows.

October 1951

The new convent and Eucharistic shrine are barely standing. Sister Angelica begins to distinguish herself by getting the boys from her old neighborhood to donate labor, acting as a general contractor, and doing construction work herself.

Jan. 2, 1953

Sister Angelica takes her final solemn vows.

August 12, 1953

The Canton abbess, Mother Veronica, departs to found a new monastery in Washington, D.C. This gives Mother Angelica the idea to form a new monastery down south that would recruit black sisters to the contemplative life.

Late 1953

Mother is cleaning the floors with an electric scrubber when she falls, the beginning of three years of back pain. Failed remedies will include a body cast, leg and neck traction, and a back brace.

November 1953

Sister Angelica stands in for the novice mistress, who is going on an eight-day retreat. Sister alters the novice mistress' harsh routine, stressing God's love and teaching that the saints "didn't break the rules; they simply rose above them." When the novice mistress returns, the abbess allows Sister Angelica to provide discreet spiritual guidance to some of the nuns.

July 31, 1956

In the face of a risky operation to repair her back injury, Sister Angelica promises God she will start a monastery in the South if He permits her to walk again after surgery. Although the spinal surgery is a medical failure, Sister Angelica can move both legs when she wakes.

Late 1956

Even as the U.S. Supreme Court affirms a ban on segregation in public schools, Sister Angelica has a desire to build a cloistered community of black nuns who will "ceaselessly make reparation for all the insults and persecution the Negro race suffers and implore God's blessings and graces upon a people dear to the Heart of God." She enlists the support of the new abbess of Sancta Clara, Mother Veronica.

Jan. 8, 1957

After several false starts, Sister decides to write the bishop of Mobile-Birmingham. Unfortunately, a senior nun at the monastery announces her desire to start a new monastery in St. Cloud, Minn. Because the community only has the resources for one monastery, the abbess decides that each nun will write a letter of introduction to the bishop of their choice. She mails the letters on Jan. 8, 1957. Whichever nun receives a positive response first will proceed with her foundation.

Jan. 12, 1957

Archbishop Toolen of Mobile-Birmingham responds first, but Sister's joy is short-lived.

Feb. 28, 1957

Bishop Emmet Walsh of Youngstown tells the abbess of the Canton community that he doesn't feel her monastery is not strong enough to withstand the departure of the six nuns required by Church law to establish a new foundation.

March 7, 1957

The abbess writes to Bishop Walsh pleading Sister Angelica's cause. Sister Angelica follows up on March 25, 1957. The bishop's response is sympathetic enough to allow preparations to continue, but he does not grant Angelica definite approval. Angelica continues acting as a general contractor at the convent.

April 27, 1959

After the cold winter of 1958 sends spasms through Angelica's back and left leg, Sister is sent to the Cleveland Clinic for observation and physical therapy.

Aug. 7, 1959

Sister Angelica writes Bishop Walsh sharing her plans, income and expense sheets, and makes a plea to go to the hot climate of Birmingham to prevent complete disability of her left limb.

November 1959

Bishop Walsh approves the concept and begins studying the waivers from Church law that will be needed. At 37, Sister Angelica isn't old enough to become the abbess of a new monastery without an official dispensation.

1960

In 1960, Sister Angelica officially becomes known as Mother Angelica.

Feb. 3, 1961

Rome grants Mother permission for an Alabama Foundation. To honor her promise to God, and with all the right approvals in place, Mother Angelica leaves her Ohio convent to found Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Irondale, Alabama, which has a Catholic population of 2 percent. On their way down to Birmingham, the nuns spend the night at a motel where, for the first time, Mother Angelica sees a television set. The nuns are housed by the Sisters of the Holy Trinity in Birmingham as they search for land.

May 1961

The former mayor of Birmingham takes Mother to see 10 acres of mountainside in Irondale. Mother sees a small two-bedroom house in foreclosure adjoining the property. She places a contract on 15 acres, the house next door and another three-and-a-half acres "so no one [could] build too close to us."

July 24, 1961

Archbishop Toolen breaks ground on Our Lady of the Angels Monastery.

September 1961

The monastery site is vandalized every Saturday.

November 22, 1961

Concerned about cost overruns, Archbishop Toolen orders Mother to stop building until she can get the necessary funds. Mother informs the crew, but the electrician says: "Sister, for you to owe me money is like having money in the bank. I'm going to finish the job." The rest of the crew agrees. Mother gets a \$25,000 loan from Sancta Clara to pay them. To contain costs, Mother Angelica and another nun pitch in and Mother scales back the size of the monastery – a move she realizes, in later years, is providential.

Feb. 21, 1962

Mother Angelica answers a pounding at the monastery door during a driving rainstorm and five shots ring out. Two weeks later, the incident is repeated. Media attention makes the monastery well-known.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

May 8, 1962

Mother officially leaves Sancta Clara with the nuns who will populate the new monastery. Two days later, they arrive in Birmingham. For the next 10 days, they host an open house.

May 20, 1962

The monastery is dedicated. The tours end, and the convent is closed to the public. The sisters sell St. Peter's Fishing Lures, rosaries and charcoal sketches to support themselves, but financial problems endure.

August 1962

Mother Angelica records her first talk, entitled "God's Love for You."

Sept. 1963

Mother feels "pushed" to record her second talk, "The Presence of God." Mother also seeks to change the name of her community from Franciscan Nuns of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the Poor Clares of the Holy Eucharist.

October 1965

Mother undergoes surgery for a diseased gallbladder with 50 stones.

Oct. 28, 1965

The Second Vatican Council Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life is promulgated and calls for religious to modify the way they live, work and pray. "Obsolete practices" are suppressed and habits modified.

1967

Mother resumes her speaking activities, although they are initially restricted to her parlor.

September 1967

Mother has her first television interview with a local affiliate to explain the changes underway in her monastery.

Dec. 5, 1967

The sisters discontinue the sale of fishing lures so they can roast and sell peanuts. They ask God to help them find work that could be part of the mission of the Church.

March 22, 1969

The Pope's diplomatic delegate to the U.S., Archbishop Luigi Raimondi, visits the monastery. He promises to secure formal permission for Mother to continue her parlor talks as a "missionary activity," an exceptional waiver for a cloistered nun.

1971

With the encouragement of Bishop Joseph Vath of Birmingham, Mother accepts invitations to speak outside the cloister to select Catholic groups. By mid-1971, the talks are being taped and sold.

November 1971

Mother begins recording a 10-minute radio program for WBRC.

1972

The nuns purchase secondhand tape-recording equipment and a dubbing machine to mass-produce Mother's talks.

August 1972

Mother sees the need for a book on prayer. Her first book, "Journey into Prayer," is published.

December 1972

Mother authors three more books: "In the Shadow of His Light," "In His Sandals," and "The Father's Splendor."

EWTN Detailed Timeline

October 1975

When Mother's publisher refuses to publish her latest book, "To Leave and Yet to Stay," the nuns suspect the problem is its content. They face a choice: abandon the book ministry or do the printing themselves. Mother purchases a printing press, a cutter, and a stapler and the nuns begin producing mini-books.

June 1977

The Catholic Family Missionary Alliance is born. Its mission is to teach and recruit missionaries who will distribute Mother Angelica's books, tapes and a five-step plan of renewal to every interested parish in the U.S.

March 1978

Mother visits a Baptist-run television station atop a Chicago skyscraper and famously declares: "Lord, I gotta have one of these."

EWTN History (1978 – 2009)

1978

March 1978

Mother Angelica is traveling the country speaking and calling people to holiness. In March 1978, during a seven-day visit to Chicago, Mother visits a Baptist-run television station. When Mother sees how many people can be reached by the cameras, video equipment and a few people operating out of a tiny television studio, she walks out and famously exclaims: "Lord, I gotta have one of these!" During that trip, Mother gives a talk attended by Bill Steltemeier, a senior partner at a Nashville law firm, an association that will later become vital to the future Network.

May to August 1978

Mother Angelica produces her first television show, "Our Hermitage," at a local television studio. She asks a close friend to hand-deliver the tape to the Christian Broadcast Network (CBN). They request 60 episodes. To cover the cost, Mother returns to the speaking circuit.

Oct. 16, 1978

Pope John Paul II is elected. At this point, Mother has no idea how closely her mission and message will intertwine with the new Pope's. This Pope, who will travel the globe, will have a television network broadcasting his every trip to the world.

November 1978

When Mother Angelica learns that the station where she is filming her second series plans to air a blasphemous movie, she tells the station manager she will pull out if he goes through with his plans. He says her television work will come to an end without his facilities. Mother says she needs only God and will build her own studio. He says she can't do it. She says, "You just watch me!" Armed with \$200 – and 12 cloistered nuns with no television experience – Mother asks the construction crew building her monastery to make the garage 10 feet longer and 12 feet wider to accommodate a television studio.

1979

The Catholic Family Missionary Alliance begins collecting donations for a production van that will film Mother's speaking engagements and her studio productions at the monastery even as Mother begins soliciting donations and purchasing equipment for the television studio.

1980

September 1980

Mother Angelica, who is hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt, now orders a \$350,000 satellite dish and more than \$700,000 in satellite transmission equipment. A wealthy benefactor gives her the \$250,000 letter of credit she needs to apply for a Federal Communications Commission License to broadcast. Operating expenses will exceed \$1.5 million a year – yet Mother presses on.

The Theology of Risk

"You want to do something for the Lord ... do it. Whatever you feel needs to be done, even though you're shaking in your boots, you're scared to death – take the first step forward. The grace comes with that one step and you get the grace as you step. Being afraid is not a problem; it's doing nothing when you're afraid."

1981

January 27, 1981

EWTN receives an FCC license and becomes the first Catholic satellite television station in the United States.

March 8, 1981

Just before the first satellite dish arrives, Sr. Regina has a vision in which she sees a black sky, a white satellite dish, and a flame emerging from the center. She hears God say, "No one will be able to extinguish this flame. This is my network, and it will glorify my Son." The dish arrives a few weeks later. A photograph

EWTN Detailed Timeline

taken while it was installed reproduces Sr. Regina's vision. Professional photographers cannot account for the red flame.

Early 1981

The board of Eternal Word Television Network is formed. It will be a civil corporation run by the laity. As chairman, Mother would have absolute veto power over any board action.

May 22, 1981

Cardinal Silvio Oddi, visiting from Rome, blesses EWTN facilities.

June 26, 1981

Mother Angelica receives papers from Rome granting her permission to carry out her television work after receiving verbal approval on May 25, 1981.

Aug. 15, 1981

Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), the first Roman Catholic satellite cable network, begins transmitting four hours a day to 60,000 homes. The network will exist solely on viewer contributions. There will be no advertising, no fundraisers, and no toll-free donation lines. Mother tells a cable magazine in 1981: "I feel in my heart that if I am more concerned with their [viewers'] souls and their happiness, and their family life ... I think they will be inspired by God to give without me asking." The Network is also offered to cable operators free of charge.

1982

Early 1982

EWTN signs a contract with Wold Communications in Los Angeles to access the Westar IV satellite. The agreement stipulates that no pornographic material can follow or precede EWTN's nightly feed.

March 1982

Mother is broke. Unless \$350,000 could be located quickly, the bank is going to take control of the Network. Telegrams are sent out to big donors and prayers renewed. By the end of the month, the needed money trickles in.

June 14, 1982

Mother signs a providential deal with RCA's Satcom IIIIR, the cable industry's number one satellite, breaching the contract with Wold which, in turn, has breached its agreement by airing pornography in close proximity to EWTN's four-hour programming block. The move makes EWTN available to every cable system in the country, with a potential audience of 20 million households. Mother feels sure this is where God wants the Network to be.

August 1982

It is a classic Catch-22. The Network needs a more expensive satellite to build an audience, but the donor base isn't expanding sufficiently to support the exorbitant overhead. Donations are so scant that Deacon Bill Steltemeier takes out a \$66,000 personal loan to pay part of the monthly transponder bill.

November 12, 1982

Mother Angelica presents Pope John Paul II with a model of EWTN's first satellite dish. "I have heard about you," the Pope said. "You do good work." A photo of that meeting and the Pope's words is of great help to the fledgling network.

Early December 1982

Deacon Bill Steltemeier takes out a \$132,000 loan against his savings to pay a delinquent transponder bill. Harry John of the De Rance Foundation loans Mother \$130,000 interest-free from his personal reserve. This drama plays out every 30 days for years to come.

1983

June 1, 1983

Bill Steltemeir meets with Wold lawyers who demand \$1.4 million for breach of contract. Mother and another nun decide to skip the meeting and pray. Wold settles for \$250,000 over a two-and-a-half year period.

August 15, 1983

“Mother Angelica Live” debuts on EWTN’s second anniversary and Mother decides to do live show pilots on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. Thanks to her rising profile, the guest roster for the shows includes Pat Boone, Chuck Colson, Betty Hutton, and others. By late 1983, 95 cable systems in 31 states are carrying EWTN.

Sept. 7, 1983

Mother Angelica and the nuns make a recording in Nashville, Tennessee.

Oct. 17, 1983

Money dries up again and Mother asks viewers to donate money for the first time. Mother isn’t sure if she is going to continue the live program, but a phone call from a young boy who is saved from suicide convinces her otherwise.

Dec. 7, 1983

Mother Angelica tells an EWTN carpenter to tie white rags on all the trees that need to be cut down where she envisions building a new studio. People begin to ask questions, including some visiting bishops. Mother Angelica says she wants the Lord to look down and see she needs a larger studio. One bishop asks if it is working, and she replies, “It doesn't hurt to remind Him.” A friend come by and asks about the rags and then donates \$50,000 to start the building.

1984

July 14, 1984

Out of money, Mother spends six nights begging on the air. Seven employees and six nuns man the phones. A crisis is averted.

November 7, 1984

The Grace Foundation calls in a \$650,000 loan with interest.

November 9, 1984

A retired lawyer and his wife agree to advance Mother \$700,000 to pay off the loan. Says Mother: “These are the kinds of things, honey, that prove God’s Providence. We never know where the next penny’s coming from. That’s what I’m trying to get through people’s heads: This is an act of God.”

1984

In the midst of all this, Mother’s reputation and popularity are growing. “Mother Angelica Live” is the only religious program nominated for an Award for Cable Excellence from the cable industry. In December, she wins a Gabriel Personal Achievement Award from Catholic broadcasters and communicators and Dick Clark and Ed McMahon give her a Golden Bloop Award.

1985

Early 1985

EWTN is carried on more than 220 cable systems and can be seen in nearly 2 million homes making it the fastest-growing cable network in the country.

April 14, 1985

The Network dedicates a brand new 6,500 square-foot studio. The new studio means that EWTN can now generate up to 50 percent of its own programming.

June 19, 1985

Cardinal Silvio Oddi tells Mother that Pope John Paul II told him that “EWTN is the key to restoring the Roman Catholic Church in America.” True or not, it influences Mother’s thinking, inspiring her to use the network to buttress “the Catholicism of the simple, the poor, and the elderly.”

Oct. 1985

Morley Safer of CBS' “60 Minutes” airs a profile of Mother Angelica and EWTN.

December 1985

Viewer donations in 1985 exceed expenditures by more than \$1.5 million. Although EWTN carries a debt of \$3.2 million, growth is not hampered. In less than one year, EWTN expands programming from four to six hours.

1986

October 1986

EWTN loses its satellite and transponder lease for 1987. Competitors are only interested in 24-hour cable networks. EWTN either has to pursue a six-hour deal on a secondary satellite or expand programming to 24 hours a day on Galaxy III, a new satellite, which few cable systems would consider. Whatever choice she makes, the network will lose all its affiliates and have to start from zero. Employees tell Mother to go for it. Mother takes the leap to 24-hour programming.

Mother signs with Galaxy III. Shortly thereafter, a lineup of cable networks buys out the satellite providing reception dishes to the nation’s 7,000 cable systems. Overnight, it becomes the most popular satellite in cable television.

During the preparations for the 24-hour launch, the Vatican announces a 10-day papal visit to America in the fall of 1987. “[T]he best marketing tool a Catholic network could have comes to town,” says an executive.

1987

May 1987

Mother births a pair of active religious orders to protect EWTN’s mission in perpetuity and to continue her fervent devotion to the Eucharist. They are the Order of the Eternal Word, a community of priests and brothers, and the Sister Servants of the Eternal Word, an active extension of Mother’s contemplative order, headed by Sister Gabriel Long.

Sept. 1987

EWTN airs complete and unedited live coverage of a papal visit to the U.S., a feat no other U.S. broadcaster has attempted to do.

Sept. 1, 1987

As EWTN programming expands to 24-hours-a-day, the Network reaches 10 million subscribers.

September 1987

The network creates new series and airs documentaries and specials to fill this quantum increase in transmission time. This leads to a new emphasis on live programming, including Pope John Paul II's visit to the United States, after which EWTN picks up 12 new cable affiliates. EWTN now reaches more than 20 million homes.

As the Network begins to cover papal visits and Church events, EWTN develops an on-going commitment to cover the Vatican. EWTN begins to cover the installation of bishops and their national meetings, the Pope’s extensive global travels, beatifications and canonizations, funerals of princes of the Church and saints in the making such as Mother Teresa, as well as other holy day events from major shrines.

1988

Mother’s religious orders are thriving with nine members of the Order of the Eternal Word, six Sister Servants, and 15 contemplative Poor Clares.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

Aug. 2, 1988

EWTN takes delivery of its first traveling production vehicle, Gabriel I. With \$600,000 worth of equipment aboard, EWTN can broadcast live events from anywhere in the country.

Aug. 15, 1988

EWTN begins providing live Masses of Holy Days from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. This programming is made possible by a grant from the Knights of Columbus.

September 1988

EWTN acquires uplink truck to beam on-location programs back to Birmingham via satellite, sending the signal to the satellite for live coverage.

Fall 1988

In prayer, Mother hears the call to begin a shortwave radio network.

1989

January 28, 1989

Mother Angelica, Bill Steltemeier and two nuns arrive in Rome armed with only Mother's inspiration for a shortwave radio network.

Jan. 31, 1989

Seeking a blessing on the new shortwave radio venture, Mother Angelica, Deacon Bill and Sisters Michael and Regina attend the Pope's private Mass. He sees her at the end of the receiving line and says, "Mother Angelica, you are a strong woman." She tells His Holiness of her plans to beam radio broadcasts into Russia and the Eastern Bloc countries. He is ecstatic.

A little over a month later, Mother attends the Pope's Wednesday General Audience. When the Holy Father passes near where she is standing with her Sisters, he stops, holds her face in his hands and says, twice: "*Mother Angelica, La Grande Chief!*"

Feb. 1, 1989

Mother meets with Dutch Catholic millionaire and philanthropist Piet Derksen who wires \$2 million to EWTN for the establishment of WEWN, the world's largest privately-owned international short wave radio station.

To minister to the growing Hispanic Catholic community, EWTN allocates three significant blocks of time to Hispanic programming.

April 1989

EWTN purchases a villa an hour north of Rome to house the radio equipment, visiting clergy, members of the Order of the Eternal Word studying for the priesthood, and a cloister for the Sisters. Derksen commits more money and Aid to the Church in Need donates \$600,000 of equipment and \$400,000 in funds, but Mother has no license or permission to build.

September 1989

Mother begins work on a parallel shortwave project based in the U.S. She calls New Orleans Real Estate Developer Joseph Canizaro and asks him what she can pray for to get him to give her \$1 million. He tells her if he sells the Crown Plaza Hotel for enough money, he'll give her a million dollars.

1990

Canizaro's hotel does not sell, but he tells her that thanks to her he received a court settlement with an oil company over a plot of polluted land which netted him \$35 million versus the expected \$15 million.

Feb. 15, 1990

Canizaro and Archbishop Phillip Hannan of New Orleans hand-deliver a million-dollar check to Mother. It is the financial beginning of the U.S. shortwave network.

Feb. 22, 1990

Mother leaves a mall and an unknown assailant thrusts her to the sidewalk shattering her wrist. She never gains full mobility of that wrist.

May 1990

In scouting for a parcel of land, Mother has a vision of St. Michael and decides to buy a rocky parcel of land which others felt was completely unsuitable for her U.S. shortwave radio station. Only one year earlier, Mother had felt St. Michael's sword touch her shoulder and she heard the words, "I will ever be at your side, and we will fight together." Mother purchases the land in mid-June.

EWTN provides live coverage of the Papal visit to Mexico, an event of special interest to the Network's Hispanic viewers.

November 1990

EWTN, with the help of the Military Archdiocese, produces the American bishops' messages of encouragement to the U.S. troops and their families during the Gulf War, which air on EWTN and in Saudi Arabia.

1991

February 1991

EWTN begins broadcasting live daily Masses during Lent from Our Lady of the Angels Monastery, initially as encouragement for the families of soldiers serving in the Gulf War. With the conclusion of Lent, viewers let EWTN know that they would like the Daily Mass to continue. EWTN purchases unobtrusive, state-of-the-art robotic cameras for the Monastery to preserve the sense of the sacred.

Aug. 15, 1991

EWTN celebrates its 10th Anniversary and now reaches 22 million homes.

1992

Dec. 28, 1992

Mother launches WEWN (Eternal Word Network), the world's largest privately owned shortwave radio facility to a potential worldwide listening audience of 600 million.

Dec. 31, 1992

More than 6 million new homes are added during the year; increasing EWTN's reach to 31 million homes.

1993

April-May 1993

Severe asthma, coughing and congestion lead Mother to begin a two-week hospital stay on May 5. During the hospital stay, the severity of Mother's cough shatters a vertebra in her spine, damaging a nerve to her right leg and causing her excruciating pain. She now wears a new back and leg brace and can only walk with crutches.

June 1993

With the anticipation of the new "Catechism of the Catholic Church," a production crew travels to Vienna for interviews with the Editor, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. EWTN then launches "Pillars of Faith," a live, call-in program explaining the new *Catechism*.

August 1993

EWTN provides live coverage of World Youth Day '93 from Denver, Colorado to 32 million homes. WYD coverage marks the debut of a new producer, Michael Warsaw, who will one day become EWTN's President and CEO. Coverage marks a turning point for EWTN, which picks up more than 200 new cable affiliates, reaching 2 million new households in the U.S. and 2 million more abroad.

December 24, 1993

Mother and her nuns return to their traditional habits. In her next television show, Mother tells her audience that the nuns are wearing the old habit as a witness to the Lord, to each other and to obedience to the Church. She hopes to influence other sisters to do the same.

1994

In addition to adopting the traditional habit, Mother institutes previously abandoned cloister practices such as the stating of faults, strict silence, prostration during the Consecration at Mass, and more. Mother herself begins to spend three hours a day in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

1995

June 7, 1995

EWTN announces that the Intelsat satellite will carry EWTN to 42 countries in Europe, Africa, and Central and South America.

Aug. 15, 1995

EWTN launches its first international satellite service for Latin America. EWTN now reaches 40 million homes.

Mother begins search for land to build a new monastery to protect the sisters from what she believes is the coming chastisement and to keep the sisters from the “noise” surrounding EWTN.

Oct. 4 - 8, 1995

EWTN provides unprecedented live coverage of Papal Visit '95 in both English and Spanish, on television, radio and the Internet as the Holy Father visits the United Nations, New York, New Jersey, and Baltimore. Television coverage of this event can be seen in more than 20 countries and territories representing over 100 million homes.

October 12, 1995

Mother sees a 200-acre piece of property in Hanceville, Alabama, one hour north of Birmingham. Three days later, she makes an offer. To keep hotels and restaurants away from the property, she will eventually acquire 403 acres. Mother wants a 13th Century monastery which can grow its own food, and raise its own livestock. She privately refers to this project as a “farm” with a “small farm chapel.”

October 1995

At the request of the Vatican, EWTN airs coverage of the “Celebration of the Family” from St. Peter's Square.

Dec. 22, 1995

Mother Angelica expands the Network's commitment to a large Hispanic audience with the addition of SAP – second audio programming – to EWTN's programming.

1996

Jan. 25, 1996

EWTN acquires the Catholic Resource Network (CRNET), a Catholic online service with the largest collection of Catholic documents on the web, to expand EWTN's media apostolate. EWTN's site will include news, Church documents, apologetics, program schedules, and more.

Feb. 27, 1996

EWTN launches a worldwide AM/FM radio service

May 1, 1996

Mother and two others visit the Vatican, where the Pope's personal secretary places them at the end of the Papal receiving line. Pope John Paul II says for all to hear: “Mother Angelica, strong woman, courageous woman, charismatic woman.” She hands him a portfolio, which shows the Network's current and future plans for international expansion. He playfully keeps asking where else EWTN will broadcast until Mother runs out of geography. He goes to leave, but returns, placing one hand on her head. Tracing the cross on

EWTN Detailed Timeline

her forehead with the other hand, he says: “Mother Angelica, weak in body, strong in spirit. Charismatic woman, charismatic woman.”
EWTN is added to the Dish Network.

June 14, 1996

EWTN launches a 24-hour Spanish language network on the most popular satellite in Latin America (PanAmSat) and now reaches Latin America and Spain.

June 20, 1996

Mother receives a miraculous message while in Bogotá, Colombia from the Divine Child Jesus, Who tells her: “*Build Me a Temple, and I will help those who help you.*” Mother later reads an inscription on St. Peter’s in Rome that refers to the Church as “this temple.” She realizes the Christ Child wants an elaborate temple built. This command radically changes Mother’s plans, made six months earlier, to build a small farm chapel for Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Hanceville.

Sept. 4, 1996

“The World Over” debuts with Raymond Arroyo. The host and his guests examine current news from a Catholic perspective and take viewers’ calls, emails, and faxes.

Late September 1996

“EWTN Religious Catalogue” program debuts.

Dec. 8, 1996

EWTN launches in the Pacific Rim, reaching Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and the Philippines. Reception by viewers and television operators is overwhelming

1997

EWTN completes a Technical Operations Center, which consists of broadcast video servers, digital tape archive and broadcast automation.

Jan. 9, 1997

“Life on the Rock” debuts with host Jeff Cavins. The host and his guests discuss being a young Christian today and take viewers’ calls, emails, and faxes.

Jan. 15, 1997

EWTN launches its compressed digital satellite services on the Galaxy VI satellite.

April 11, 1997

EWTN announces the Internet broadcast of an AM/FM radio signal.

May 1, 1997

EWTN announces preparations for the Great Jubilee 2000.

May 12, 1997

EWTN also becomes the world’s first broadcaster to use the Hewlett-Packard video file server. This makes it possible to simultaneously transmit seven independent feeds of distinct programming to clients around the globe.

Sept. 5, 1997

“The Journey Home” debuts with Marcus Grodi. The host and his guests discuss their personal conversion stories and how a specific Church teaching or experience influenced their decision to return to or be in communion with the Catholic Church. Grodi and his guests answer viewers’ calls, emails, and faxes.

September 1997

EWTN provides a live 35-hour salute to Mother Teresa and establishes an “In Memoriam” site on the Internet.

Oct. 4-5, 1997

EWTN provides live coverage of the Second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families Oct. 4-5, 1997 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

1998

Jan. 21-25, 1998

EWTN provides live coverage of Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in both English and Spanish.

Jan. 28, 1998

While praying the rosary with Paola Albertini, an Italian mystic, Mother Angelica removes the braces from her legs and begins to walk. Three physicians independently examine her and find the healing is real.

Sept. 2, 1998

With only 14 Catholic frequencies in the U.S., Mother Angelica uses her live show to inspire the laity to establish even more Catholic AM/FM stations in their own communities. A businessman responds, and his station goes on the air in 1999. Today, EWTN boasts more than 80 independent AM/FM Catholic radio affiliates. Most remain viable due to the free programming EWTN offers.

Sept. 3, 1998

EWTN is granted a satellite radio service license by the Radio Authority of the United Kingdom, allowing EWTN to transmit its radio programming via satellite to the British Isles.

Sept. 7, 1998

"Nuestra Fe en Vivo," EWTN's first live show in Spanish, debuts with Host Pepe Alonso.

Nov. 24, 1998

EWTN announces the launch of radio service on ASTRA in Europe.

Dec. 8, 1998

EWTN launches satellite television service to Africa and its direct-to-home satellite radio service for Europe on the Astra 1C satellite.

1999

Jan. 21, 1999

EWTN launches "EWTN Live" over the Internet.

May 1-2, 1999

EWTN airs live carriage and special programming in honor of the Beatification of Padre Pio.

June 14, 1999

EWTN expands the availability of EWTN's Spanish television and radio services into the U.S. market. EWTN; La Red Global Católica, the 24-hour Spanish cable network; and Radio Católica Mundial, EWTN's Spanish radio network, are made available for carriage via cable systems and AM/FM radio stations. The Network feeds are also made available over the Internet.

July 1999

EWTN moves its domestic playout from the tape-based Master Control facility to the digital file servers in the Technical Operations Center.

Oct. 15, 1999

EWTN is granted a satellite television license by the Independent Television Commission of Great Britain allowing EWTN to deliver its programming directly to homes in Europe.

Dec. 19, 1999

The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Hanceville, Alabama, is consecrated during a live broadcast.

Dec. 24, 1999

EWTN provides live coverage of Pope John Paul II opening the door to the Jubilee of the Year 2000. EWTN begins a 13-month tribute of special programming in honor of the Great Jubilee Year 2000.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

2000

EWTN announces programming dedicated to the Jubilee Year.

Feb. 14, 2000

Mother receives a large white satin box with the Papal insignia and no note. She later receives a phone call telling her that it contains a gift from the Holy Father, "In appreciation for the work being done by EWTN around the world" and for the sisters' dedication to the Eucharist. Mother opens the box on live television the next night and discovers a monstrance that had been given to the Pope by people of Nowa Huta during his 1999 pilgrimage to Poland. Says Mother: "Somebody, somewhere has to say, 'You're doing a good job. Just keep on.' And that's what I think this says to all of us." A high-ranking Vatican official tells Raymond Arroyo, the gift was a "sign of the Pope's solidarity with Mother Angelica."

March 20 -26, 2000

EWTN airs special live coverage in both English and Spanish of the Pope's historic trip to the Holy Land.

April 2000

EWTN acquires new DVCPRO field cameras and equipment for expanded field production.

April 20, 2000

EWTN launches its direct-to-home satellite service on the HotBird 4 European satellite.

April 30, 2000

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonization of Blessed Sister Faustina from Rome, Italy.

May 8, 2000

EWTN airs live coverage of the Solemn Funeral Mass of John Cardinal O'Connor from St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

EWTN airs live coverage from Fátima, Portugal of the beatification of Jacinta & Francisco Marta.

July 3, 2000

Mother has a near-death experience, which she shares with her audience on July 11. "In my heart, I really feel I died and came back," she said. "I have no more fear of death... Nothing matters but God, and how we are to express that love to the world."

2001

EWTN covers Pope John Paul II as he entrusts the Third Millennium to Mary, Mother of God.

May 4-9, 2001

EWTN covers the Pope's visit to Greece

June 23-27, 2001

EWTN covers the Pope's visit to Ukraine.

July 2001

EWTN launches in Canada.

Sept. 5, 2001

Mother has a stroke which results in the paralysis of half her face. Said Mother: "I've never had in all my life such an awareness that God was choosing me to help people. This is to bring people to a new reality that suffering is brought by God to make us holy."

Sept. 11, 2001

EWTN responds to the Sept. 11 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and other terrorist attacks that day on U.S. soil with 24-hours of special programming.

Dec. 5, 2001

Mother recruits Father Mitch Pacwa as the permanent guest host for her show. He filled in whenever her health precluded her from appearing.

Dec. 11, 2001

With one eye patched as a result of her stroke, Mother Angelica misses a raised platform blocking her path at a Books-A-Million store and falls, slamming her face into the ground and cracking her left arm above the elbow. The next day, she is given the wrong plasma to thicken her blood, which contributes to her perilous condition. Mother has a vision of the souls in hell, but she is comforted by St. Michael the Archangel. She says: "We must suffer...to keep souls from going to hell. People don't understand what it means to go to hell."

Dec. 24, 2001

Mother has a lethal stroke and collapses. Her only chance of survival is immediate brain surgery. Medical personnel say if Mother does not die within the week, she will be a complete vegetable. A week later, she can not only move her legs, but feeling returns to the left side of her face even as her comprehension improves.

2002

Jan. 25, 2002

Mother Angelica returns home although she will experience seizures of varying intensities over the next two years. They sap her energy and confine her to bed for long periods of time. Her language skills deteriorate.

Feb. 13, 2002

Mother tells Raymond Arroyo that the reason for her stroke is "purification." She also says that just before the stroke "...Jesus came and testified to me...that I would suffer much...Suffer anguish for Jesus' sake..."

June 16, 2002

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonization of Padre Pio in Rome.

July 2002

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonization of Juan Diego in Mexico.

July 31, 2002

EWTN airs World Youth Day in Canada, July 18-28

September 2002

EWTN works with Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. to create the video, "September 11th: A Spiritual Response" on "Catholic Compass." In this show, Father Groeschel gives viewers an in-depth look at how to cope with the prior year's terrorist attacks on the United States.

October 2002

Mother Angelica tapes new rosary video with her nuns for EWTN, which begins airing in March 2003.

EWTN launches in India

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonization of Josemaría Escrivá

December 2002

Mother appears in a pretaped segment on a live program saying "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year." She's supposed to add the tag line, "Keep us between your gas and electric bill," but she can't say. EWTN airs the botched attempt to acquaint the audience with her condition.

2003

Jan. 22, 2003

EWTN covers 30th annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

April 2003

EWTN launches new website for young people called EWTNKids
EWTN covers 18th annual World Youth Day in Rome

EWTN Detailed Timeline

May 4, 2003

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonizations of Pedro Poveda Castroverde, José María Rubio y Peralta, Genoveva Torres Morales, Angela de la Cruz and María Maravillas de Jesús in Spain.

May 18, 2003

EWTN airs live coverage of the canonizations of Maria de Mattias, Jozef Sebastian Pelczar, Urszula Ledochowska, and Virginia Centurione Bracelli from St. Peter's Square, Rome.

June 2003

Mother Angelica is inducted into the Cable TV Pioneers Class of 2003.

September 2003

EWTN launches in New York City and other major markets.

Sept. 5, 2003

Cardinal Ratzinger grants "The World Over" with Raymond Arroyo an exclusive interview. Less than two years later, he becomes Pope Benedict XVI.

October 2003

EWTN airs live coverage of the beatification of Mother Teresa.

Oct. 12, 2003

Mother Angelica goes to Lourdes for a secret six-day pilgrimage. She hopes for another miracle of physical healing, but this time the Lord says no.

2004

February 2004

EWTN airs Town Hall Meeting with the National Review Board on Clerical Sexual Abuse as the board discusses the results of their report.

March 2004

EWTN launches throughout Canada.

March 5, 2004

Jim Caviezel, who portrayed Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ," appears on "The World Over" with Raymond Arroyo

April 2004

Mother Angelica celebrates her 81st birthday at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament and EWTN airs a day of special programming in her honor.

May 2004

Alabama Broadcaster's Association names Mother Angelica as "Citizen of the Year."

June 2004

EWTN adds more than 12 million homes on DIRECTV.

July 2004

EWTN Global Catholic Network hits the "100 Million Television Homes" mark.

Oct. 24, 2004

EWTN launches a new live show, "Sunday Night: Live with Father Benedict Groeschel."

2005

January 2005

EWTN's "Life On The Rock" covers the first "West Coast March for Life" from Oakland, Calif.

EWTN Detailed Timeline

April 2005

EWTN provides extensive coverage of the events surrounding the death of Pope John Paul II.

June 2005

EWTN Launches on SKY.

EWTN reaches 110 million homes in 110 countries worldwide.

August 2005

EWTN covers Pope Benedict XVI's first apostolic trip: the 20th annual World Youth Day in Germany.

September 2005

EWTN offers live Masses and prayers for victims of Hurricane Katrina and other storms.

October 2005

EWTN begins celebrating 25 years with its first 25th Anniversary Family Celebration in Denver.

EWTN makes its live programs and classic broadcasts available for podcast on the Internet.

December 2005

EWTN covers Pope Benedict XVI's first Christmas Mass.

2006

January 2006

EWTN continues celebrating 25 years with its second 25th Anniversary Family Celebration in San Francisco, California.

EWTN.com celebrates 10 years on Internet.

March 2006

25th anniversary celebrations continue at the Municipal Auditorium in San Antonio, Texas

May 2006

The St. Charles Family Arena in St. Louis, Missouri is host to that city's 25th anniversary celebration of EWTN.

EWTN provides live coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's trip to Poland.

June 2006

25th anniversary celebration is held in Philadelphia, Pa.

2007

EWTN launches on the Astra Satellite in Western Europe.

2008

EWTN provides complete live coverage of Pope Benedict XVI's first visit to the United States.

2009

EWTN hits the "150 million television homes" mark.

Dec. 8, 2009

EWTN becomes available to all U.S. affiliates in HD.