

Mother Mary Angelica of the Annunciation, P.C.P.A. is 83 years old

MOTHER ANGELICA Eternal Word Television Network

Irondale, Ala.

Few people believed Mother Angelica could pull off her dream of creating a cable network that Catholics could watch and learn from. But that didn't stop the determined nun, even though she knew next to nothing about the television business. With only \$200 at her disposal, Mother Angelica built a TV studio in the garage of her monastery in Irondale, Ala., which led to the creation in 1981 of Eternal Word Television Network — the first cable channel dedicated solely to religious programming. Over the past 21 years EWTN has grown to 50 million television homes in the United States and another 30 million worldwide. EWTN has always been offered to the cable industry free of charge and has done so without any advertising revenue. One of the network's most popular programs, *Mother Angelica Live*, was the first national live religious call-in program format on cable television. EWTN has delivered live coverage of several religious events including several of Pope John Paul II's visits to the United States as well as International World Youth Days. Mother Angelica, now 83 and recovering from a stroke she suffered two years ago, also established the world's largest privately owned and operated short-wave radio station, a satellite-delivered AM and FM radio network, a printing operation that sends out thousands of publications each month and a website featuring live audio and video streaming of EWTN's programming.

Accomplishments:

- brought the Poor Clares to Alabama as their abbess (in 1962)
- built the Hanceville monastery (which opened in 1999), and helped turn this pocket of Alabama into a veritable Catholic theme park.
- Mother Angelica is best known as the founder of the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN) — with just under 300 employees, an annual budget of about \$29 million, and an audience of about 66 million households in 43 countries, the largest Catholic cable network in the nation.
- On August 15, EWTN celebrates its 23rd birthday — two decades of skyrocketing growth since Mother Angelica started it in 1981 with just \$200 as a single television station operating out of the garage of her previous monastery in Irondale, Alabama, a Birmingham suburb some 50 miles from Hanceville. Irondale is still the home of EWTN's headquarters, and although Mother Angelica retired as chairman of its board in 2000, she still makes the drive there twice a week to tape her popular *Mother Angelica Live* television show in front of a studio audience
- While praying the Holy Rosary in her office with a recent visitor, she experienced an unusual healing. The visitor asked her to remove the braces from her legs and to try to walk without her crutches. Mother later explained that a heat came over her ankles. "Every time I walked back and forth," she said, "my legs started coming in straight." She was able to walk without her crutches for the first time in over forty years. So too her spinal injury seems to have been fully healed; she no longer needs her back brace. And her asthma? That seems to be gone too, she remarked.