

**EWTN**Global  
Catholic  
NetworkMOTHER M. ANGELICA,  
FOUNDERESS

(1923-2016)



# February '25

## FAMILY NEWSLETTER

"The rudder of my boat is in my hand, and I can go against the wind and take the risk of running aground, or I can follow the mysterious breeze, never sure of where it leads, but full of confidence that it is aimed at the shore where the Father and Son await my landing."

Mother M. Angelica, PCPA



Dear Family,

We find ourselves in the heart of the winter months – a time between the bustle of the holidays and the renewed activity surge of springtime. It is, for many of us, a calm both after and before the storm. And while we are encouraged in life to pray always, without ceasing,

this time of relative quiet and peace provides us with the opportunity to turn in a special way to prayer.

If you are one who prays the Divine Office – or Liturgy of the Hours – each day, you know you are participating in the communal prayer of the universal Church. Whether this is a key part of your prayer life or something new that you would like to explore, there is an opportunity to share the experience with the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word.

Vespers – the Church's evening prayer – is broadcast on the Network on Sundays. The main focus of this prayer is to thank God for all of the day's blessings. In praying this together, we are blessed to be united in prayer with not only this Family, but the Church around the world.

Throughout the world, the prayers of the faithful are felt in many communities. One of these places is Lourdes, France, well-known for miracles – from faith renewal to extraordinary physical healings – since the Virgin Mary's appearances to a peasant girl, St. Bernadette Soubirous, in 1858.

Lourdes shines a light on the goodness and love of the Blessed Mother and her Son – and on the faith of those who believe. Tune in to the EWTN program *My Lourdes Faith Journey* to be inspired by stories of healing and forgiveness. And remember that it is your donations that help us to share these stories of hope. Thank you so much for your continued generosity.

May the prayers we offer as a Family this month ready our hearts for the upcoming Lenten season – and unify us in gratitude for the Lord's faithfulness and love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Michael P. Warsaw  
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer



Dear Family,

Mother Angelica was a remarkable woman of God. She had the sort of temperament that made decision-making seem like a piece of cake. She could think through situations very quickly, envision the whole scenario, identify possible problems, and come up

with solutions. But her confidence in decision-making did not come from these gifts alone.

What made Mother such a confident and competent decision-maker was her relationship with the Lord and her humble willingness to take all of her decisions to Him in prayer. It's true that the Lord put the rudder in her hands through the gift of free-will; however, Mother chose to cling to Him in the midst of this freedom – not out of fear, but out of love and in a spirit of trust. Though naturally somewhat impatient, she knew how to wait for the wind of the Holy Spirit. God gave Mother freedom; and Mother offered that freedom back to Him. I believe this is the secret of all the saints!

It seemed to me that the Holy Spirit and Mother were always in the midst of a dance – sometimes a square dance, sometimes a waltz, and sometimes a polka! But they were in it together. This was evident to all who witnessed Mother make both small and colossal decisions. The Holy Spirit always had the lead, and Mother was ready to say "yes" to the adventure of following.

Family, though Mother did not always make the perfect decision at the perfect time, she did sincerely strive to be docile to the Holy Spirit. And perhaps, in the economy of God, this surrender bore more fruit than even the decisions themselves. This should give each of us courage. In the end, our decisions will not be combined to make some sort of batting average by which we are judged. Rather, the hope is that each decision will be like a springboard by which we are led into deeper communion, relationship, trust, familiarity, and docility to the Holy Spirit. We see this in Mother's life. May it bear similar fruit in our lives as well.

In Jesus,

Fr. Joseph Mary Wolfe, MFVA  
EWTN Chaplain

# My Lourdes Faith Journey



Lourdes, France, is a place of healing.

Every day, people visit the site where the Blessed Mother appeared 18 times in 1858 to a peasant teenager, St. Bernadette Soubirous. In one apparition, the Blessed Mother told Bernadette to drink the water from the spring that was suddenly uncovered. Throughout 1858, seven people were cured of various diseases, completely contrary to scientific explanation, from using this Lourdes water.

To this day, people receive miracles at Lourdes. Through the years, blindness, paralysis, heart disease, tumors, and Multiple Sclerosis have been cured there. Almost eight thousand unexplained cures have occurred at Lourdes, and 70 have been confirmed. Yet, even though these inexplicable cures are fascinating, there are many more stories of those who receive subtler graces. There are stories of emotional and mental healings. And there are countless stories of those who grow deeper in their faith.

*My Lourdes Faith Journey*, hosted by Marlene Watkins, tells these stories. “I hope that people will be inspired by other people’s journeys,” she says. “My hope is that people know we have a loving God, that we have a heavenly mother, and she loves all of us, and she’s watching over us.”

Watkins, who has visited Lourdes more than two hundred times, was healed from Agoraphobia at Lourdes and was able to forgive someone who had attacked her years prior. In 2006, she became the first Our Lady of Lourdes Hospitality North American Volunteer.

Now she brings a message of hope and healing to the EWTN audience. *My Lourdes Faith Journey* features stories of those who have suffered from heartaches, including miscarriages, loss of parents, and widowhood. One episode features Noah Lett, EWTN Theological Advisor, who shares a mystical experience concerning St. Bernadette. And there are also stories of those who have incurable diseases, showing how they have been inspired to greater holiness by their pilgrimages to Lourdes.

While many people are healed in scientifically impossible ways in Lourdes, pilgrims aren’t always cured of their health issues. Watkins says, “People don’t always get the miracle they’re asking for, but they get the miracle that they need.” More important than physical healings, the spiritual healings and renewals are almost palpable at Lourdes. “We’re all thirsting for a deepening of faith. We might not know it, but we really are. We’re all seeking. We might think we’re seeking something else, but we’re really seeking eternity,” she says.

Each episode of *My Lourdes Faith Journey* introduces us to those who have sought – and eventually have found – peace, closure, and forgiveness. And most importantly, they have discovered Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother.

Watkins knows that the Blessed Mother loves each one of us individually. “[Mary] came here for us. She did not come down in the grotto just for Bernadette or just for France, but she’s here for all of us and for eternity,” says Watkins. “I want people to know they have a real mother.”

Yet the Blessed Virgin never points to herself, but always to her Son. As Watkins says, “If you’re close to her, you are close to Christ.”



*My Lourdes Faith Journey* airs on EWTN Saturdays at 9:00 AM and Sundays at 11:30 PM Eastern. It’s also available anytime at [ewtn.com/ondemand](http://ewtn.com/ondemand).



# SUNDAY VESPERS

WITH BENEDICTION



During most of the year, the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word share a special weekly prayer, Sunday Vespers, with the EWTN audience. This gives us a glimpse into the official prayer of the Church: the Liturgy of the Hours. Also known as the Divine Office, these prayers, which consist mostly of the Psalms, are prayed throughout the day to sanctify it. Vespers is usually prayed around sunset, as the name comes from the Latin word *vespere*, meaning “evening.”

“It’s a gift to join our voices in communal prayer with the Church,” says Fr. Patrick Mary, MFVA. “We’re all praying the same thing, united in prayer, prayerfully reciting the same Psalms, offering to God the Father our intentions in this act of worship.”

Fr. Patrick says that the idea of structured prayer dates back several thousand years. “In the Old Testament, the Jews participated in liturgical prayer. They prayed the Psalms,” he says. “Over time, these set prayers came to be developed in the Church into what we refer to now as the Liturgy of the Hours or the Divine Office. This is a way to sanctify the day, to pray throughout the day.” In the New Testament, we see a greater call for regular prayer. Fr. Patrick says, “The Lord taught the Apostles to pray at all times, and not to lose heart. [The Divine Office] is a way that we’re praying throughout the day.”

“Adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and supplication are all encompassed in the Liturgy of the Hours,” Father says. “The main theme of Vespers is thanksgiving, as we thank God for the graces that He’s given us throughout the day.”

While priests and religious are required to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, anyone can gain much from these prayers. Father says, “The laity are also encouraged to pray it. They’re highly encouraged to do so. Our goal with televised Vespers is to make it available so that many others can join in this official prayer of the Church for the honor and glory of God.”

During the benediction after Vespers, the EWTN Family can also adore the Lord from their homes. Fr. Patrick says, “Although [viewers] are not there physically present in the chapel, it certainly can help them to lift their minds and hearts to God, to turn to prayer. Although churches are privileged places of prayer, one can, in fact, pray anywhere.” *Sunday Vespers with Benediction* airs Sundays at 5:00 PM Eastern.

Fr. Patrick says, “We are grateful to Fr. Samuel Weber, O.S.B., who prepared the chant settings we use for the sung televised Vespers.”

## Incense in Worship

Each week, the friars use incense during Sunday Vespers. Fr. Patrick says, “As we see the incense rising up, we are reminded of our prayers rising up before the throne of God.” Here are a few verses he gave to show the significance of incense in worship.

### Psalm 141:2

“Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice!”

### Revelation 5:8

Golden bowls of incense are depicted as “the prayers of the saints.”

### Revelation 8:3-4

“And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God.”

**Did you know?** Mother Angelica founded the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word in 1987. In Latin, the order is *Missionarii Franciscani Verbi Aeterni*, which is why the Friars are called the MFVAs. Their primary apostolate is to “communicate the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith through word and example.”

## GIVING TO EWTN

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Our beloved Foundress, Mother Angelica, wanted people around the world to know Jesus and grow in their love for Him – and for EWTN to help them on their journey of faith. That's why she asked the EWTN Family to “keep us between your gas and electric bill.”

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## *Our Lady of Lourdes* **NOVENA**

**February 2 – 10 (Feast Day: February 11)**



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O ever Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Mercy, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Comfort to the Afflicted, you know my wants, my troubles, my sufferings.

Deign to cast upon me a look of mercy. By appearing in the Grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, from whence you dispense your favors; and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal. I come, therefore, with the most unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession. Obtain, O loving Mother, the granting of my requests. Through gratitude for favors, I will endeavor to imitate your virtues, that I may one day share your glory. Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. Amen.

*(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)*

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## **FEBRUARY 2025**