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Dear *Christifidelis* Reader:

You can't imagine how pleased I am to write this letter without having to ask you for money. I am only too happy to leave that task to my successor. Because this issue was completed ahead of schedule and was released for printing on March 31, I would like to discuss a few items that came to my attention after that date or could not be included in the newsletter due to lack of space.

Apostolic Exhortation on the Family

According to news reports, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on the family, *Amoris laetitia*, was scheduled for release on April 8th, a few days after this is written. I am sure that there will be tons of commentary from various points of view and we will let things settle down before making known the Foundation's observations.

The Lead Article

In view of the gravity of the issues, this article should have been much longer. As so often happens, the physical layout of *Christifidelis* did not permit it and I will continue to address the problem in future issues. I am also considering combining all articles pertaining to this matter in one file, which can be made available on the Foundation's website. If there is sufficient interest we might produce a printed version.

I invite all our readers to express their written views on this question and on any other matter relating to the content of the newsletter directly to me. For those of you with Internet connections, emails sent to the above address are received on my inbox here in San Antonio. Letters or Reply Forms sent to our Hopedale office will be forwarded to me. Thank you for your participation.

EWTN and Mother Angelica

At about 6:00 PM on Easter Sunday, my telephone rang and my wife answered. She told me that Michael Warsaw, Chairman and CEO of EWTN, was on the line and handed me the telephone. I guessed that his call could be about just one thing, which he confirmed a few seconds later. The news of Mother Angelica's passing was sad but not unexpected and I was very sorry that I was unable to accept his gracious invitation to attend her funeral.

There has already been a flood of moving and eloquent tributes to Mother and I cannot find the words to add to them. Suffice it to say that I hope and pray that she will one day be raised to the altars of the Church she so dearly loved and served with such steadfast and heroic devotion.

In the aftermath of Mother's death, besides the many tributes, I was saddened to see some statements about her relationship with EWTN. Here is an example:

For it was precisely Mother's "enemies within the Church" who had gained the victory by driving her from her position of control over EWTN, leaving the network entirely in the hands of lay people, many of them ex-Protestants, who did not have her traditional pre-Vatican II spiritual formation and old fashioned Catholic militancy. The nun [Raymond] Arroyo calls "the undisputed matriarch of Catholic communications" had been neutralized.

http://www.onepeterfive.com/mother-angelicas-legacy-speaking-christs-truth-to-power/?utm_source=feedburner

This statement was first made public about ten years ago, when I was a member of the EWTN Board of Governors. Management decided not to make a public response, which I believe was the right move at the time. Now that I have retired as an officer and Governor of the network, I am obliged to set the record straight by stating my firm conviction that **Mother's decision to resign as CEO of the network was her own, freely made, and that she was not forced into exile. Afterward, she continued to exercise considerable influence over the affairs of the network.**

Much of the evidence that could be produced to support my claim is and must remain confidential. Some facts have become public — albeit not widely known — and it is upon them that I base my argument. I will speak on only three subjects; whether Mother's decision was truly her own, whether she was really neutralized and the allegations made regarding the EWTN Board of Governors.

A special meeting of the EWTN Board of Governors was held on Saint Patrick's Day in 2000. On the agenda were resolutions to accept Mother's resignation as CEO and amend the corporate by-laws to eliminate ex-officio memberships and rescind her reserved power to veto any action of the Board. I was not on the Board then but was present on the telephone as spokesman for the Saint Joseph Foundation, which prepared the canonical arguments supporting Mother's reasons for her decision. Also present with me were our consulting canonist and one other member of the Foundation's staff. Even if I was free to disclose details of the meeting, I do not think it wise to do so here out of respect for the privacy of the participants, especially those who have died since, and a desire to avoid reopening old wounds that have long since healed; but I can say that no one who heard her words on that occasion could have had the slightest doubt that Mother's decision was made freely and personally, however much they might have disagreed with the prudence or timeliness of her action. In the end, the Board approved the resolutions by a lopsided majority.

A few weeks after the meeting, Mother Angelica invited me to join the EWTN Board of Governors, on which it was my honor and privilege to serve until I retired in 2014. I am obliged to challenge the mischaracterization of the Board as consisting only of lay people, many of them ex-Protestants. The EWTN Board has always included men in holy orders, including her immediate successor. As of 2014, one priest, a diocesan bishop and two archbishops were members. Furthermore, at the time of the meeting, those lay members of the Board were personal friends of Mother Angelica who had been appointed by her. They would never have cooperated with an effort to replace her and the proceedings of the meeting prove it.

It is my personal understanding that no one could attain or retain membership without Mother's approval. This practice continued after her retirement and only ended after her physical condition made it impossible. As one ex-Protestant who was personally and directly involved, I am convinced that the Board and the network's management have always done their utmost to uphold Mother's vision. Even if it turns out that in spite of their best efforts they did not always succeed, their good intentions are beyond question.

I should also say that I am acquainted with and respect the work of some of those who have made and support the claims that I have contested. I believe they acted in good faith and share many of their views concerning the crisis in the Church. I now invite them to reconsider their positions on the three matters at issue here. If they continue to maintain that EWTN has strayed from its original mission, I have full confidence in the EWTN Board of Governors and management to respond appropriately.

In closing, I recall what Mother Angelica said on St. Patrick's Day sixteen years ago: "I will watch over this network after I retire and I will watch over it after I'm dead." We can thank God that she kept the first part of her promise and now continues to keep the second.

Reverend Mother, pray for us.



Charles M. Wilson