

*Vicky's
EWTN Pilgrimage
2023*



I won a trip to EWJN
in Irondale, Alabama
through the
sweepstakes at 1260
The Rock during their
annual spring spirit
fund drive. How
exciting! I never
thought I would get to
go to EWJN!

Tuesday

We flew into Birmingham on Tuesday afternoon. We picked up our rental car at the airport and drove to Irondale. Security took us to the guest house where we would be staying. We left our belongings and then security came back to escort us to the dining room for dinner. A gentleman named Hernandez prepared and served our meal. It was just me and my friend Linda but there were three place settings on the table so we questioned Hernandez, and he told us that Father Mitch Pacwa would be joining us for dinner. A few minutes later Father Mitch came in and we shared a wonderful meal with him, and I got a couple of photos. I've seen Father Mitch on TV, and heard him on the radio, for years but never thought I would ever get to meet him, let alone break bread with him. After dinner Linda and I stopped into the Chapel for a few minutes and took some photos there before returning to the guest house for the night. It was a 4 bedroom, 3 bathroom house and we were the only ones there so we each had our own bedroom and bathroom.



Wednesday

I went to the 7:00 A.M. Mass offered by Father Mitch, and I stayed for the rosary. Then I met with Debra Rice, who was handling things for us, and is the sweetest lady. I got a tour of the EWTN facility with Cristi Ramis. It was wonderful. I met people whose names I've heard on the radio so now I can put faces to names. I took lots of pictures. I saw all the equipment, and the people who run it. I got to see where the magic happens! When you turn on your radio or TV you expect your station to come on, and all to go well, but you don't think much about what it takes to make that happen. It takes a lot of skill and hard work, and I definitely have a new appreciation of that. After the tour I did some shopping in the gift shoppe, where two very nice ladies, Holly and Maddie, took care of me. Then I met Linda in the dining room for lunch, where we met, and had lunch with Dan Mahoney, who was going to be Father Mitch's guest on EWTN Live that evening. After lunch, we sat in with Father Mitch as he did the radio show Open Line Wednesday. Then we met with Brother John Therese, who took us on a behind the scenes tour of Saint Michaels Hall, the Sacristy, and the Choir Room. I got to sit in Mother Angelica's chair in the Choir room. Then we had dinner with Father Mitch, and Dan Mahoney, and I got Father Mitch to sign the 4 books of his that I bought at the gift shoppe. We also got a visit from Debra Rice. Then we went to the studio for EWTN Live, and after the show we got several pictures with Father Mitch and Dan Mahoney. Then we went back to the guest house for the night.



Thursday

We had breakfast in the dining room and talked to Debra Rice again. Then Jack Williams brought me directions on how to get to Hanceville and Cullman, and I got a hug and 2 photos with him. Then a quick trip back to the guest house and we were on our way to Hanceville. I didn't enjoy the beauty of the drive as much as I could have because I was stressing over driving and not getting lost because I don't do a lot of driving at home. At Hanceville we visited the upper Church, which is beautiful but they don't allow pictures there. Then we visited the lower Church, where Mother Angelica is entombed, and we took some pictures down there. We ran into Father Matthew outside and got a couple of photos of him. Then we visited the gift shoppe in the Castle, and met Brother Leo, and a couple of nice ladies who were visiting there and got pictures of all of them. Then we bought a few things in the gift shoppe, and met two very nice ladies there too. We also spent some time in the building where the Nativity is set up year around, and I got some pictures of that. Then we left for Cullman where we were meeting two of my cousins for dinner. Then it was back to Trondale and settling in for the night.



Friday

We met with Debra Rice and had breakfast in the dining room. Debra arranged for us to meet Father John Paul that morning before he started hearing confessions. I love Father John Paul. He is so sweet. I got 2 hugs, a blessing, and 3 photos with him. It really meant a lot to me to be able to meet him and Debra helped make that happen. Then we briefly stopped in the Chapel before heading back to the guest house to get packed up and ready to leave. We stopped at the dining room on our way out to get the boxed lunches they prepared for us, then stopped at the security guard station to have him help us with the GPS so we could head out to the airport. We got to the airport and turned in our rental car, and then we were on our way! It was a busy few days but it was wonderful to be there. It is amazing to see what Mother Angelica started and how it has grown!



I became a Catholic two years ago because of Catholic Radio, and that is a direct result of the wheels that Mother set in motion. EWTN is a wonderful place, and everyone is so kind and helpful. I am so thankful that I got this opportunity. I'd like to go back someday but if I can't I have this visit to remember forever thanks to EWTN and Catholic Radio
AM1260 The Rock!