

# CARMEL CLARION



VOLUME XV, NO. 1



## COME IS THE LOVE SONG

**Jessica Powers (1905-1988)**

Come is the love song of our race and Come is our  
basic word of individual wooing.

It lifts audacious arms of lowliness  
to majesty's most amiable undoing,  
to Godhood fleshed and cradled and made least.  
It whispers through closed doors a hurry, hurry  
to Tierce and fiery feast.

The liturgy of Advent plucks its buds  
from the green shrub of love's compendium:  
O Wisdom, Adonai, Root of Jesse  
and sign by which the mouths of kings are dumb,  
O Key, O Orient, King and Cornerstone,  
O our Emmanuel, come.

And Paschaltide prepares an upper room  
where burns the fuller bloom.

Come is the small sweet-smelling crib we carve  
from fir and bear across December frost.

It is the shaft of the flame-hungry Church  
in Paschal spring, or the heart's javelin tossed  
privately at the clouds to pierce them through  
and drown one in the flood of some amazing  
personal Pentecost.

Reprinted with permission from the book of religious  
poetry: **HOUSE AT REST** by Jessica Powers, also  
known as Sr. Miriam of the Holy Spirit OCD, 1984.  
72 pp, paper, \$7.95 plus packing and postage, total:  
\$9.00. The Carmelite Monastery, W267 N2517  
Meadowbrook Road, Pewaukee WI 53072-4599.

## OCDS NEWSLETTER

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DECEMBER - JANUARY 1999

## OCDS National Secretariat Annual Board Meeting, Holiday Inn, Pasadena, California

September 30 and October 1, 1998

**Peggy Wilkinson OCDS, Secular Delegate**

The National Secretariat Board meets two days before every OCDS Congress to discuss Secular concerns and share information between the three Carmelite Jurisdictions.

We began our day with the celebration of the Eucharist. Fr Ted Centala OCD, served as chairperson for this meeting and opened the Secretariat Meeting with a prayer.

Members present were Fr Michael Buckley OCD, Provincial Delegate of the Western Jurisdiction; Penny Brown OCDS, Recording Secretary; Dianne Lee Buzan OCDS, and Doreen Glynn Pawski OCDS, Lay Delegates; Mary Tucker OCDS, of the Western Central office; and Isolate Secretaries Ann Marie Berthiaume OCDS, and Mary Lou Cereghino OCDS. The Isolate Secretaries of the Host Jurisdiction attend the meetings and give a report.

Representing the Central Jurisdiction were Fr Sam Anthony Morello OCD, and Fr John Michael Payne OCD, Provincial Delegates; and Gerald Alford OCDS, Lay Delegate. Fr Jerome Earley OCD, Provincial Delegate from New Orleans, was unable to attend because of the hurricane.



The Eastern Jurisdiction was represented by Fr Ted Centala OCD, Provincial Delegate for the East Coast Division, and Lay Delegate Peggy Wilkinson OCDS. Michael Kotarski OCDS, attended as the Lay Delegate of the Midwest Division. Fr Patrick Farrell OCD, Provincial Delegate and Ruby Alexander OCDS, Lay Delegate were unable to attend.

The minutes of the 1997 Congress, in Melville, NY, were approved after minor corrections. Penny Brown gave a treasurer's report and distributed a financial statement. It was explained that the Board is self-supporting, as each Province contributed \$500 to the Secretariat Fund.

The next item was to discuss the re-wording, or updating, of the Local Statutes for the USA. Fr Ted Centala had previously requested comments from the Secular Communities and all of the responses were considered. It was noted that some of the questions sent in could have been answered in the Rule.

Discussing and agreeing upon the terminology for the various Articles of the Statutes took up the majority of the meeting time. Of particular concern was the Section on "Requirements for Canonical Establishment of a Community." Problems have arisen because of the increasing number of people interested in starting a new Secular Community who do not have proper Carmelite formation. The discussion became so time consuming that a sub-committee was appointed to work only on that Section. A final, slightly longer, version was approved the following morning. one recommendation was to change "at least twelve professed members," to "ten members," as this is already the norm in Canada.

Some other suggested changes were:

-- Additions to the Section on "Particular Acts of Devotions to Mary." To "Days and Forms of Penance," was added "It is a practice of the Church never to fast on Sundays and Holy Days;" and "Secular Order members should remember to do works of charity and exercises of piety as a form of fasting," in accord with the new attitude of the Church. It is important to remember that all of these revisions must be forwarded to Rome for approval.



Ann Marie Berthiaume and Mary Lou Cereghino gave reports on their Isolated members in their Jurisdiction. They have over 200 members in 10 Groups. Their emphasis is on a very personal approach. What literary sources (printed materials) do you draw your major spiritual inspiration from? Each Group has an annual day of recollection on a Saturday. This may demand that they use most of Friday and Sunday for travel. They use good lesson plans, instructions on the Liturgy of the Hours, accountability in all areas of their vocation to the Secular Order, and closure when and if they more on to another Group.

The Central Jurisdiction will host the next Regional Congress. It will be held at The Harvey Hotel, Irving (Dallas) Texas, August 26-29, 1999. The theme is "Carmel and the Kingdom of God the Father." The meetings closed with a prayer.

## **Ninth Western Regional OCDS Congress Pasadena California, October 1-4, 1998**

### **The Presence and Activity of the Holy Spirit in Carmel**

**Peggy Wilkinson OCDS, Secular Delegate**

The love and joy of the participants echoed the theme of this Congress. In addition to the spiritual blessings of each OCDS Congress, there is always the atmosphere of a family reunion. A sense of the Spirit's presence was emphasized by beginning the Congress on the Feast of St. Therese. Fr Michael Buckley OCD, Provincial Delegate of the Western Province, and Penny Brown OCDS and Mary Lou Cereghino OCDS, Co-Chairperson of the Congress, welcomed the participants. After dinner there was a Mass of the Holy Spirit. followed by a wine and cheese reception.

At the International Secular Congress in Rome, October, 1996, a recommendation to have a Secretariat for the Secular Order was approved before we left Rome. Later, Fr Aloysius Deeney OCD, then Provincial of the Central Province, was appointed General Delegate. Fr Aloysius gave the first Conference Friday morning, "The Holy Spirit and the Faithful in the Documents of Vatican II". His emphasis was on the laity's awareness of their dignity and position in the Church. To clarify this, Fr Aloysius recommended that OCDS Communities study the *"Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity,"* (now available in pamphlet form) from the Documents of Vatican II: and **CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI** (Lay Faithful) the Apostolic Exhortation on their "Vocation and Mission in the Church," from the General Synod, Rome, 1987.

Because the new Secretariat office is for the Seculars, and requested by them, we were asked to consider ways of financial support. The Secular Representatives in Rome had also requested that the office be staffed by Seculars and, at the request of Fr Aloysius, one woman has already sold her house and moved to Rome. Fr Aloysius said he is also expecting to hire a man. In addition to the expenses incurred by the General Delegate, the two Seculars will need salaries for their living expenses.

Because of problems with the Rome mail delivery, Fr Aloysius suggested that OCDS Communities could collect donations in whatever way they found convenient. Then once a year, perhaps during Holy Week, these could be sent to their Provincial Delegate. The total collection could then be wired to Rome.

We were informed that there are 36,000 Carmelite secular order members world wide, 13,000 nuns and 4,000 friars. At this time, the expectation is that the Seculars will be instrumental in bringing Carmel into the next millenium.

It would be impossible to do justice to the content of the Conferences and Workshops in a few sentences, so purchasing audio tapes of the presentations is highly recommended. (See the following article for a brief review of each tape and where they may be purchased.) The Mass homilies also provided a variety of material, and Fr Ted Centala 's homily should not be missed. His humour proved that "many a truth is said in jest."



All of the meals and refreshments provided by the Holiday Inn were wonderful. There was a delicious banquet on Saturday evening which was accompanied by the music of Dorothy Tucker, a renowned harpist.

The magnetism of Carmelite gatherings seems to instigate unusual experiences. At one of the breaks as Peggy Shore, OCDS, and I left the hotel for a brief walk, we met "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena." She was waiting for us on the sidewalk. Seeing all the Seculars with name tags, she wanted to know what was going on. After we explained the Congress, she said we should take the opportunity to see historic Pasadena. When we declined, she said "It was meant to be," and took us both by the arm, first to see City Hall architecture, then on the free bus for a tour of "old" Pasadena. She was a delightful guide, and had excellent recall. Peggy Shore remarked that the reason we met her was because "It was the feast of the Guardian Angels," which pleased her very much. All treat she told us was that her name was Ann. We thanked her for her graciousness.

The Central Jurisdiction will host the next Congress, The Harvey Hotel, Irving (Dallas), Texas, August 26-29, 1999. It takes time and effort to attend a Congress, but it is certainly worth it. There is no substitute for being there, meeting the various members of our Carmelite family in person, hearing the presentations, and sharing in the graces.

**AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES FROM THE 1998 Western Regional Congress Pasadena CA, October 1-4, Presence and Activity of the Holy Spirit in Carmel.** There are 11 audio tapes @ \$6.00 plus postage and handling of \$3 for 1-2 tapes, \$5 for 3-11 tapes, or \$55.00 for the whole set plus \$5.00 postage and handling. Write to: **St. Joseph Communications Inc, PO Box 720, West Covina CA 91793. Phone: 800-526-2151.** Review by Fr Theodore Centala OCD.

**1. Homilies. a) The Holy Spirit in Carmel,** by Fr Patrick Sugure OCD. It covers the period in the early Church; in the writings of St Teresa, especially in writing the Interior Castle -- after receiving Holy Communion. (Fr John-Michael Payne's homily was not taped.)

**b) Honor the Blessed Virgin Mary,** by Fr Thomas Koller OCD. The more the Holy Spirit sees that we are dedicated to Mary, the more the Spirit can make us Christ-like. Be creative in the using means to deepen our Marian devotion in Carmel. Study how our Saints had appreciated Our Lady.

**c) The 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time,** by Fr Theodore Centala OCD. Accept the Lord's timing in providential events. Seek not the last seat in purgatory, it is probably taken. Harden not your heart against the Holy Spirit, who enlightens us about both our sins and the holy things of God. Willingly bear your share of the hardship. Stir into flame the Fire so you can offer sacrifices for the missions. Allow the Word of God to come alive, like Little Therese who quoted Scripture 1100 times. Pour yourself out in gratitude and thanksgiving until you are transformed. If you are not readily recognized, a permanent name tag can be attached.



**2. The Holy Spirit and the Faithful in the Documents of Vatican II,** by Fr Aloysius Deeney OCD. Fr. Camilo Maccise OCD superior general had mentioned at the Congress in Rome: "The future of the Secular Order depends on the active mature and responsible collaboration (with the Holy Spirit) in the apostolate of the Order on all levels." In addition to Vatican II, the Synod on the Consecrated Life, especially #54, mentioned that the laity are invited to share more in the work of the continued coming of the Kingdom. The letter "Christifideles Laici" mentions the bond there is between the laity and the religious. Do not follow the picture in the old Baltimore Catechism with the clergy in first place. Now they are accept their role of service among The People of God. Our hierarchy form of organization is necessary, but not essential for the functioning of the Church. The Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church in all Truth.

**3. The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Pillar and the Cloud,** by Fr. David Centner OCD. In the Hebrew Covenant God was especially present in the Pillar and the Cloud. The Word has pitched his tent among us and we have seen his Glory. This Glory is not tied to a particular structure but is present in the people, in Moses' radiant face, in the prophets and saints. Jesus was called Christ because he was anointed by the Holy Spirit. This anointing is available to all who faithfully allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives. Christians are the ones anointed by the Holy Spirit.

**4A. The Holy Spirit and the Mystery of Suffering (workshop),** by Fr Gerald Werner OCD. The goal is to inter-relate Faith and suffering as Christians, with Scripture and Christian Tradition. We find the Spirit under the symbols of wind, water and fire. The Spirit helps to bring out the best in us during times of suffering. There were some papal letters on the topic. "On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering" was excellent, practical and pastoral. But the Holy Spirit was mentioned very little. The Holy Spirit transforms suffering into salvific love. Sin, the lack of love, is the cause of pain in God, Who responds with Love. Some signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit: compassion, peace, joy, fortitude, patience, consolation. The result even the midst of suffering: love, truth, light, life, laughter and playfulness.



**4B. The Holy Spirit & Bl Elizabeth of the Trinity** (workshop), by Sr Carmelina Leland OCD. There are many beautiful parallels in the lives of Bl Elizabeth and Little Therese where we can see the Holy Spirit at work. The Holy Spirit works on us to make us more Christ-like so we will be more pleasing to the Father. The Spirit leads and completes this transformation.

**4C. Therese of the Child Jesus** (workshop), by Fr James Geoghegan OCD. Therese was very dedicated to the Church, and the Holy Spirit works with the Church in a creative faithful way. She was ahead of her time in her thinking on Limbo, frequent Communion, spiritual friendship, use of Scripture, God's merciful love, etc. Now as doctor of the Church her creative fidelity is very evident.

**4D. Weaving of Wedding Garments** (workshop), by Fr Jerome Lantry OCD. We cannot enter the heavenly wedding banquet without a wedding garment. The Holy Spirit is the "weaver" of our present wedding garment so we can spiritually profit from the current wedding banquet: the Mass. The Spirit uses the material of our lives. The Scriptures provide many examples of how the Spirit re-worked the lives of many characters so they could enter the wedding banquet of their day. This is done in baptism, in the desert, in marriage, etc. The Holy Spirit prevents us from doing more evil in our weakness. We arrive at holiness by the working of the Holy Spirit.

**4E. The Interior Castle of St Teresa** (workshop), by Marianne Gonsalves OCDS. The Interior Castle is a road map to live our whole life. Despite the negative view of women in Spanish society at that time St Teresa has provided us with a masterpiece of spiritual genius that is still very relevant today.

**5. Wisdom as a Source of Contemplation**, by Fr Sam Anthony Morello OCD. To be a Catholic is to belong to a wisdom tradition. Wisdom is affective knowledge. We need to evangelize our emotions: our compassionate interaction with other persons; to re-discover the Sermon on the Mount, and the Beatitudes. Some find this boring. But as we dispose ourselves to progressively receive the gift of contemplation, our life can change as wisdom works on a transformation of the whole person. It is important to properly understand how this happens in Christ: the wisdom of the Father. In this wisdom we have a social pluralism the world does not have.

**7. Presence: The Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit**, by Elda Maria Estrada OCDS. The divine presence in its most intimate reality is a communication of God to the human spirit. His Divine Majesty, as Saint Teresa would say, takes the initiative to establish a relationship with each person as a friend.

**6. The Lay Experience of Living the Carmelite Charism**, by Doreen Glynn Pawski OCDS. This account reports and interprets to the members their own experience of living the life of a Secular Order member of Carmel. After an overview of the Secular Carmelite life, Doreen shares a summary of the results of the questionnaire the members had filled out and returned.

--1. What is the length of your membership in Carmel?  
Results: 1 to 50+ years.

--2. How do you weave the daily requirements of the Rule into your daily life as a lay person? Results: set up priorities, or else God will receive the leftovers of our time and energy.

--3. Is it difficult to live our charism in today's world with fidelity and devotion? Results: yes, but all the members seem resolved to go forward in their vocation in Carmel.

--4. How does being a Secular Carmelite seem to influence your life at home, at work, at play? How does it effect your decisions in those areas? Results: our members share what God's love has done for them.

--5. What do you see as your main apostolic endeavor for the Church and the Order? Results: our members are involved a large variety of activities, but especially in the apostolate of prayer.

--6. What role does the monthly meetings play in your life? Results: it is the life-line of mutual support, and a chance to share our personal stories.

--7. What is the singular most important thing to you about being in the Secular Order? Result: the discipline to live a holy life.

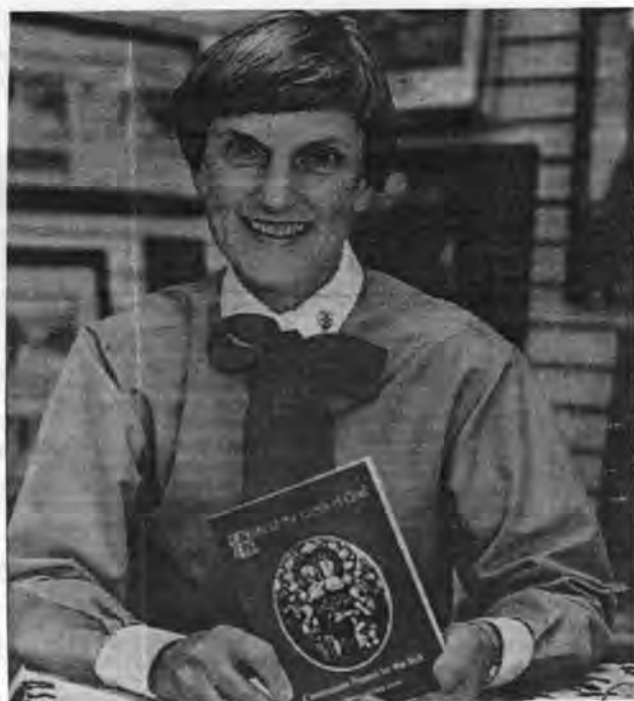
--8. Has there been any events that highlighted the Secular Order charism in your life? Results: we are surprised by how we are a type of God's presence for people, and that they ask us to pray for them.

--9. Do you think that being a Carmelite is a means for enhancing, improving or influencing the lives of others? Can you be a means of change in the world, whether directly or indirectly? Results: most of our members realize, either consciously or intuitively, that everything we say or do impacts others.

Conclusion. It made me realize how privileged I was to be present to these beautiful people who taught me a great deal. In the process we impact on our parishes, our dioceses, and therefore, on the world: the ripple effect.

Preparing for this conference has effected me in ways I would have never thought of when the idea was conceived. I had already known that my lay brothers and sisters in Carmel are special. But I had a very imperfect conception of the depth of your dedication and love for your vocation. Your replies touched me deeply and I am so happy that you were able to express your feelings openly, and that you were willing to share them with others. I am only sorry that I was not able to include every word that was written.

There is hope on my part too, that what you have revealed in your replies will give our beloved brothers and sisters of the first and second orders a better understanding of what the Secular vocation is, what it means to its members, and how it is lived by us. all of us in the Carmelite family as a whole cherish our calling to Carmel. Perhaps today we have all been given a little insight into what is common to all three branches of the Order and what is unique to the Secular Order.



**BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD: Communion Prayers for the Sick**, by Penny Hickey OCDS, Witness Ministries, 825 S Waukegan Rd, A8-200, Lake Forest IL 60045, 800-484- 5350, \$10.00.

The reflections and prayers are taken primarily from various Carmelite authors. Table of Contents:  
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## CARMELITE

## STUDIES

## VIII:

## NEVER

## FORGET,

Sr. Waltraud

Herbstrith

O.C.D., Editor,

ICS Publications,

2131 Lincoln

Road NE,

Washington DC 20002-1151. 320 pages, index, bibliography, photos, paper, \$11.95

Edith Stein (1891-1942) an eminent philosopher, advocate for women, who later become a Discalced Carmelite nun, died like so many millions of Jewish ancestry in the Auschwitz concentration camp, a victim of genocide. Today she is increasingly recognized as one of the towering figures of our times.

The Catholic Church's decision to beatify and canonize Edith Stein as a martyr has inspired many. Yet it has also raised important concerns, especially within the Jewish community, about the significance of this action, and of Edith Stein's life and death, for Jewish-Christian relations.

The essays in this volume, gathered together by Sr. Walfreud Herbstrith of the Edith-Stein-Karmel in Tübingen, Germany, and translated by Edith Stein's sister, Suzanne Batzdorff, explore the broad spectrum of Jewish and Christian opinions on the controversy. Also included are the reactions of Edith Stein's own surviving family members, along with warm remembrances by former students, friends, and acquaintances. Several important new essays have been added to the American Edition.

An excellent companion to Edith Stein's *Life in a Jewish Family*, this seventh entry in the Carmelite Studies series should help readers better appreciate Edith Stein's rich and multifaceted personality, along with the complex role she has come to assume in the ongoing dialogue between Christians and Jews.



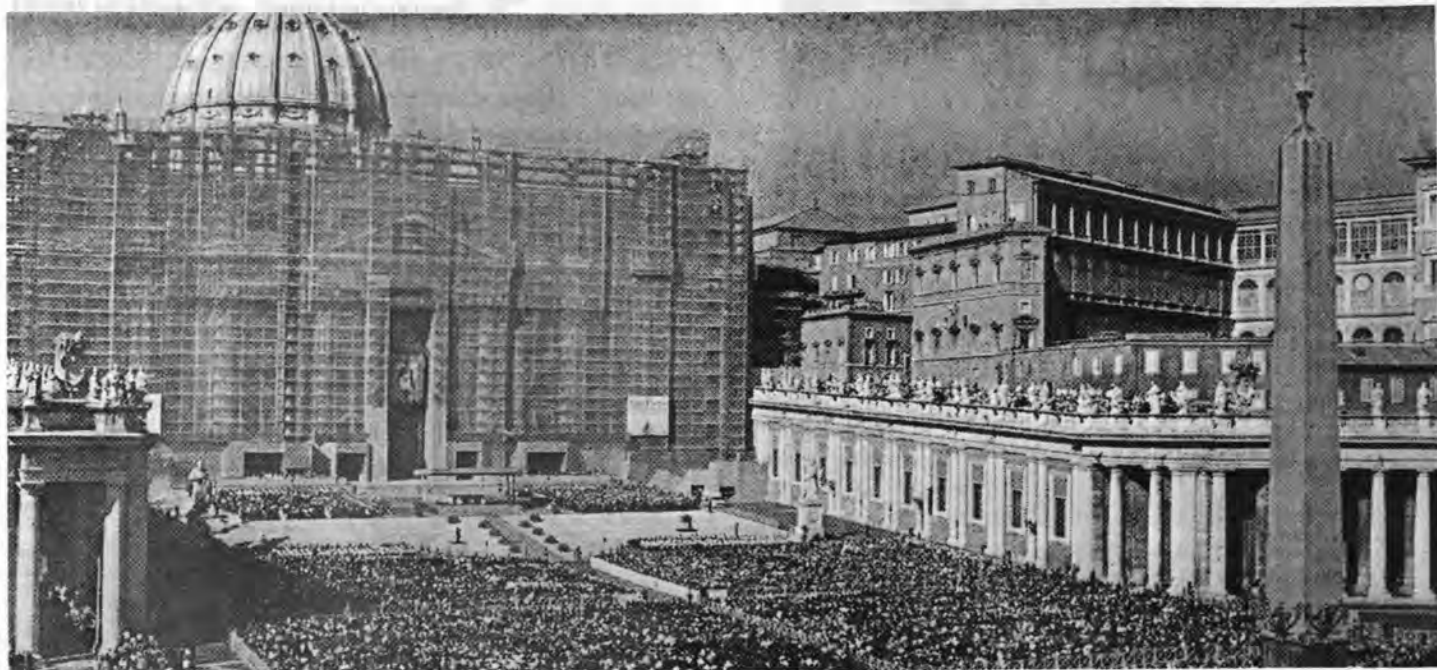
**PERE JACQUES: RESPLENDENT IN VICTORY,**  
by Francis J. Murphy, ICS Publications, 2131 Lincoln Road NE, Wash DC 20002-1151. 224 pages, paperback, \$10.95.

Lucien-Louis Bunel (1900-1945), better known as Pere Jacques, was a Carmelite priest, an educator of youth, a man of deep prayer, and an angel of mercy in the death camps of World War II. He died as a result of his efforts to harbor Jewish youths from the Nazi holocaust. He has been honored as a rescuer, one of the "Righteous Among the Nations," by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the State of Israel, and proposed for canonization within the Catholic Church. This book tells his dramatic story and included major excerpts from his writings.



## Père Jacques: Resplendent in Victory

# Edith Stein's sole boast was the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ



*"For the honour of the Blessed Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the fostering of the Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after due deliberation and frequent prayers for the divine assistance, and having sought the counsel of our Brother Bishops, we declare and define that Bl. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, is a saint and we enrol her among the saints, decreeing that she is to be venerated in the whole Church as one of the saints. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and*

*of the Holy Spirit". With these solemn words pronounced in Latin on Sunday, 11 October, Pope John Paul II canonized St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, a Jewish philosopher, convert to the Catholic faith, Carmelite nun and martyr at Auschwitz.*

*The canonization took place during a solemn concelebrated Mass in St Peter's Square. After the Gospel text (Jn 4:19-24) was chanted in Latin and Greek, the Holy Father gave the following homily in Italian and German. Here is a translation.*

1. *"Far be from me to glory except in the Cross, of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Gal 6: 14).

St Paul's words to the Galatians, which we have just heard, are well suited to the human and spiritual experience of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who has been solemnly enrolled among the saints today. She too can repeat with the Apostle: Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Cross of Christ! Ever blossoming, the tree the Cross continues to bear new fruits of salvation, This is why believers look with confidence to the Cross, drawing from its mystery of love the courage, and strength to walk faithfully in the footsteps of the crucified and risen Christ. Thus the message of the Cross has entered the hearts of so many men and women and changed their lives.

The spiritual experience of Edith Stein is an eloquent example of his extraordinary interior renewal. *A young woman in search of the truth* has become a saint and martyr through the silent workings of divine grace: Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who from heaven repeats to us today all the words that marked her life: "Far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ".

2. On 1 May 1987, during my Pastoral Visit to Germany, I had the joy of beatifying this generous witness to the faith in the city of Cologne. Today, eleven years later, here in Rome, in St Peter's Square, I am able solemnly to present this *eminent daughter of Israel and faithful daughter of the Church* as a saint to the whole world.



Today, as then, we bow to the memory of Edith Stein, proclaiming the indomitable witness she bore during her life and especially by her death. Now alongside Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux, another Teresa takes her place among the host of saints who do honour to the Carmelite Order.

Dear brothers and sisters who have gathered for this solemn celebration, let us give glory to God for what he has accomplished in Edith Stein.

**We remember all concentration camp victims with respect.**

3. I greet the many pilgrims who have come to Rome, particularly the members of the *Stein family* who have wanted to be with us on this joyful occasion. I also extend a cordial greeting to the *representatives of the Carmelite community*, which became a "second family" for Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

I also welcome the *official delegation* from the Federal Republic of Germany, led by Helmut Kohl, the Outgoing Federal Chancellor, whom I greet with heartfelt respect. Moreover, I greet the representatives of the states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate and the Mayor of Cologne. An official delegation has also come from my country, led by Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek. I extend a cordial greeting to them.

I would particularly like to mention *the pilgrims from the Diocese of Wroclaw (Breslau), Cologne, Munster, Speyer, Krakow and Bielsko-Zywiec* who have come with their Cardinals, Bishops and pastors. They join the numerous groups of the faithful from Germany, the United States of America and my homeland, Poland.

4. Dear brothers and sisters! Because she was Jewish, Edith Stein was taken with her sister Rosa and many other Catholic Jews from the Netherlands to the concentration camp in Auschwitz, where she died with them in the gas chambers. ***Today we remember them all with deep respect.*** A few days before her deportation, the woman religious had dismissed the question about a possible rescue: "Do not do it! Why should I be spared"? Is it not right that I should gain no advantage from my Baptism? If I cannot share the lot of my brothers and sisters, my life, in a certain sense, is destroyed".

From now on, as we celebrate the memory of this new saint from year to year, we must also remember the

*Shoah* that cruel plan to exterminate a people --- a plan to which millions of our Jewish brothers and sisters fell victim. *May the Lord let his face shine upon them and grant them peace* (cf. Nm 6:25f).

For the love of God and man, once again I raise an anguished cry: *May such criminal deeds never be repeated* against any ethnic group, against any race, in any corner of this world! It is a cry to everyone: to all people of goodwill; to all who believe in the Just and Eternal God; to all who know they are joined to Christ, the Word of God made man. We must all stand together: *human dignity is at stake*. There is only one human family. The new saint also insisted on this: "Our love of neighbour is the measure of our love of God. For Christians, and not only for them, no one is a "stranger". The love of Christ knows no borders".

**Only the love of Christ makes us truly free**

5. Dear brothers and sisters! *The love of Christ was the fire that inflamed the life of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*. Long before she realized it, she was caught by this fire. At the beginning she devoted herself to freedom. For a long time Edith Stein was a seeker. Her mind never tired of searching, and her heart always yearned for hope. She traveled the arduous path of philosophy with passionate enthusiasm. Eventually she was rewarded: she seized the truth. Or better: she was seized by it. Then she discovered that truth had a name: Jesus Christ. From that moment on, the incarnate Word was her One and All. Looking back as a Carmelite on this period of her life she wrote to a Benedictine nun: "Whoever seeks the truth is seeking God, whether consciously or unconsciously".

Although Edith Stein had been brought up religiously by her Jewish mother, at the age of 14 she "had consciously and deliberately stopped praying". She wanted to rely exclusively on herself. Her mind was concerned to assert her freedom in making decisions about her life. At the end of a long journey, she came to the surprising realization: *only those who commit themselves to the love of Christ become truly free*.

This woman had to face the challenges of such a radically changing century as our own. Her experience is an example to us. The modern world boasts of the enticing door which says: everything is permitted. It ignores the narrow gate of discernment and renunciation. I am

speaking especially to you, young Christians, particularly to the many altar servers who have come to Rome these days on pilgrimage: *Pay, attention! Your lives are not an endless, series of open doors!* Listen to your heart! Do not stay on the surface, but *go to the heart of things!* And when the time is right, have the courage to decide! The Lord is waiting for you to put your freedom in his good hands.

6. St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross was able to understand that the love of Christ and human freedom are intertwined, *because love and truth have an intrinsic-relationship.* The quest for truth and its expression in love did not seem at odds to her; on the contrary she realized that they call for one another.

In our time, truth is often mistaken for the opinion of the majority. In addition, there is a widespread belief that one should use the truth even against love or vice versa. But *truth and love need each other.* St Teresa Benedicta is a witness to this. The "martyr for love", who gave her life for her friends, let no one surpass her in love. At the same time, with her whole being she sought the truth, of which she wrote: "No spiritual work comes into the world without great suffering. It always challenges the whole person".

St Teresa Benedict of the Cross says to us all: Do not anything as the truth if it lacks love. And do not accept anything as love which lacks truth! One without the other becomes a destructive lie.

#### **Mystery of the Cross gradually enveloped her whole life**

7. Finally, the new saint teaches us that love for Christ *undergoes suffering.* Whoever truly loves does not stop at the prospect of suffering: he accepts communion in suffering with the one he loves.

Aware of what her Jewish origins implied, Edith Stein spoke eloquently about them: "Beneath the Cross I understood the destiny of God's People... Indeed, today I know far better what it means to be the Lord's bride under the sign of the Cross. *But since it is a mystery, it can never be understood by reason alone.*"

The mystery of the Cross gradually enveloped her whole life, spurring her to the point of making the supreme sacrifice. *As a bride on the Cross,* Sr Teresa Benedicta did not only write profound pages about the

"science of the Cross", but was thoroughly trained in the *school of the Cross.* Many of our contemporaries would like to silence the Cross. *But nothing is more eloquent than the Cross when silenced!* The true message of suffering is a lesson of love. *Love makes suffering fruitful and suffering deepens love.*

Through the experience of the Cross, Edith Stein was able to open the way to a new encounter with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith and the Cross proved inseparable to her. Having matured in the school of the Cross, she found the roots to which the tree of her own life was attached. She understood that it was very important for her "to be a daughter of the chosen people and to belong to Christ not only spiritually, but also through blood".

8. "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4: 24).

Dear brothers and sisters, the divine Teacher spoke these words to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. What he gave his chance but attentive listener we also find in the life of Edith Stein, in her "ascent of Mount Carmel". The depth of the divine mystery became perceptible to her in the silence of contemplation. Gradually, throughout her life, as she grew in the knowledge of God, worshiping him in spirit and truth, she experienced ever more clearly her specific vocation to ascend the Cross with Christ, to embrace it with serenity and trust, to love it by following in the footsteps of her beloved Spouse: St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross is offered to us today as a model to inspire us and a protectress to call upon.

We give thanks to God for this gift. May the new saint be an example to us in our commitment to serve freedom, in our search for the truth. May her witness constantly strengthen the bridge of mutual understanding between Jews and Christians.

St Teresa Benedicta  
of the Cross,  
pray for us! Amen.

**L'Osservatore  
Romano, N. 41 -  
14 October 1998**



# Edith Stein, a beacon of light

Before imparting the final blessing at the canonization Mass of Sr Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, on Sunday, 11 October, the Holy Father led the recitation of the Angelus, which he introduced with a brief meditation and greetings to the pilgrims in various languages. Here is a translation of his remarks, which were made in Italian, German, English, French, Spanish and Polish.

We conclude this solemn celebration by praying the *Angelus*. Let us look at Our Lady with the eyes of the new saint, who, in contemplating the mystery of the presentation in the temple, remarked: "When the Virgin Mary brought the Child to the temple, she received the prophecy that a sword would pierce her soul.... It is the prediction of the Passion, of the struggle between light and darkness, which already appeared before the crib!".

St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross understood that *crib and Cross were closely connected*. This inner awareness allowed her to become deeply attuned to the Blessed Virgin. She wrote of her: "Praying before God, loving him with all her heart, imploring his grace for her sinful people by offering herself in reparation for this people, and, as the servant of the Lord, being attentive to every one of his signs: this was her life". Edith Stein, also a daughter of the Jewish people, spoke of Mary and, almost without realizing it, *mapped out the plan of her own life decision*.

Let us ask the new saint to intercede for us with the Blessed Virgin, so that we can all respond generously to our vocation.

I extend a special greeting to the many German-speaking pilgrims. I also greet those who have come from the Netherlands. The new saint, Sr Teresa

Benedicta of the Cross, never tired of seeking the truth. I ask you to follow the way of the truth. Only in the truth will your personal life and society have a solid foundation.

Edith Stein stands out as a beacon which casts its light amid the terrible darkness which has marred this century. In the martyr, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, so many differences meet and are resolved in peace. I invoke her intercession upon all of you who have come from different parts of the world to honour her and the witness which she bore. To her prayers before God I entrust all who suffer for the sake of justice and human dignity. God bless you all.

I greet you, dear French-speaking pilgrims who are attending the canonization of Edith Stein. May the new saint be an example for you of the spiritual and intellectual life! May she help you to seek God in yourselves and to seek yourselves in God, in order to find the One who is the Truth and the source of eternal happiness!

I affectionately greet the Spanish-speaking pilgrims who are attending this solemn canonization of Edith Stein. As I entrust you to the intercession of this saint, a daughter of the Teresian Carmel, I am pleased to give you my Apostolic Blessing.

I cordially greet my compatriots,



those present here and those participating in this celebration by radio and television. I rejoice with you that you have the opportunity to experience this solemn day, the canonization of Edith Stein — Sr Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a martyr of Auschwitz.

I remember that in 1982, also in October, in this very place I was able to canonize Maximilian Mary Kolbe. I was always convinced that these two martyrs of Auschwitz together would lead us into the future: Maximilian Mary Kolbe and Edith Stein — St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

Today I am aware that a sort of cycle is being completed. I thank God for this and I am pleased that veneration of this saint is growing and spreading in our homeland.

Praised be Jesus Christ!

## OCDS EASTERN REGIONAL RETREAT

July 23-25, 1999, Holy Cross College, Worcester MA, "Journeying Towards Contemplation"

Elda Maria Estrada OCDS, Retreat Directress

Due to the success of the first Regional Retreat, we are happy to announce that a second will be offered next July. Elda Maria's next topic will focus on the nature, process and degrees of contemplation in the Carmelite tradition. The fee of \$125.00 per person is for double occupancy includes private baths and five full meals (three on Saturday and two on Sunday). Single rooms are available for a \$50.00 supplemental fee. (Total: \$175) All rooms are air-conditioned, and all the buildings handicapped accessible. Send the form and

\$50.00 non-refundable deposit to: Annette L'Italian OCDS, 2 Alma Terrace, Peabody MA 01960-5104 ---

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## SAINT EDITH STEIN

**Called to the Truth - Blessed from the Cross**

**Portrait of a Life by Friedrich Cardinal Wetter  
Archbishop of Munich and Freising Germany**

**Translated by Sr. Josephine Koeppl OCD,  
Carmelite Monastery, 70 Monastery Road Elys-  
burg, PA, 17824-9697 USA.**

On May 1, 1987, the Holy Father beatified the Carmelite nun, Edith Stein, [Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Cologne [West Germany, at that time]. By this action, the Church testified that her life in God had come to completion. God had called her home into his eternal life. But men inflicted other treatment on her: they killed her in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, most probably on August 9, 1942

More than fifty-six years have passed since then. Yet, Edith Stein does not belong to the past. "The saints practically never got old . . . They never become men and women of yesterday. They are always men and tomorrow. Witnesses of a Gospel future of mankind and of the Church, witnesses of a world to come," said Pope John Paul II to religious in Lisieux on June 2,

1980. The witness of Edith Stein's life is to come alive among us and be fruitful in us.

What was the main thread of Edith Stein's life, that upon which everything, everywhere depended? She tells us in one letter, written toward the end of her activity as a teacher in Speyer and referring to her many lecture tours of that time, "*Basically, I have always only a small, simple truth to tell: how one can begin to live at God's hand.*" What she recommended to others, she practiced herself: she lived like a child at the hand of the Lord. Later in Carmel she wrote: "*To be God's child means to live at his hand; to do God's will, not one's own; to lay all one's cares and hope in God's hand, no longer to care about one's self and one's future. Thereupon rests the freedom and joyfulness of the child of God.*"

For Edith Stein, the decisive element in anyone's life is their "story" with God: that God leads them and that they allow themselves to be led; that life is lived at God's hand. How did she herself do this?

**In Breslau.** Edith Stein was born of Jewish parents in Breslau on October 12, 1891. Her birthday that year was the day on which the great Jewish feast of reconciliation was commemorated for it was Jom Kippur, which is known for a day of fast, prayer and atonement for sin. This feast became as it were a foreshadowing of her whole life, as though God wished by means of it to indicate what was once to become of the life and death of this child.

Edith Stein grew up as the youngest in a circle of seven siblings. She lost her father when she was not quite two years old. Her mother was anxious to bring up her children in the faith of their Fathers. Auguste Stein was a Jewess, and she took pride in being it totally. She followed the prescriptions of Jewish law strictly, keeping the fast even in her advanced years. Where God's affairs were concerned, there was no relaxation for her. The table prayers were said in Hebrew.

Edith Stein reported later: "There was little actual (religious) education to talk of in our lives. We children learned how to behave by watching our mother as though she were a mirror of virtue. Her chief concern was to impress deeply in our childish hearts a great aversion to sin. *"If Mother said, 'That is a sin,' we all knew she meant it was ugly and undignified behavior."*



Such education in a pious fear of God was joined to a deep maternal love which fired Edith's youth with warm solicitude. But Edith was not only her mother's favorite, but as the youngest, she was cherished by her brothers and sisters. In the bosom of this family, Edith grew up and enjoyed a happy childhood.

In the midst of her years in school, something surprising happened. Edith always next to the best in class, no longer felt any desire to go to school. That was at Eastertime, 1906. Edith was not yet fifteen years old. What was happening to her? Her mother sent her to Hamburg, where Edith's sister Else, wife of a physician, lived. There she was to be of help in the household. This was a wise decision on the mother's part for, when she paid a visit in Hamburg after a few months, she found that Edith had developed most favorably in the meantime. The youngster in the family had regained her interest in study. She returned to the classroom in Breslau and graduated with honors in 1911. At the graduation celebration the director of the school characterized each student in a brief phrase. When Edith Stein's turn came, he said: "Strike the stone (Stein), and wisdom pours out."

After graduation, she went on to the Alma Mater of her home city, the University of Breslau, where she took up Germanistics, history, and psychology. The course of events in her life then seemed quite normal apart from the Hamburg interlude. But that appearance was deceiving. Despite Edith's brilliant achievements her mother was concerned about her favorite daughter. Why? Edith's interest was one-sidedly intellectual. She had become a radical feminist, as Edith herself admits when looking back to that time in her life.

But what distressed the heart of her mother most was the discovery that while Edith was indeed clever, she was not pious. So far she had kept aloof from making any religious commitment at all. She showed little interest in Judaism. Through filial piety she did accompany her mother to the synagogue whenever Frau Stein wished it. But when she was there, she was more edified by her mother's absorption in God than by the worship they attended. Her mother's concern was not unfounded for Edith Stein had set aside the faith of her Fathers at an early age, and she called herself an atheist because she was unable to believe in God's existence.

This situation had already developed before she left school and went to Hamburg. She herself writes: "It was not difficult for me to leave home. That was the time in which I lost what faith I had had as a child and began to withdraw, as an independent person, from all direction by my mother or brothers and sisters. . . [In Hamburg,] consciously, I freely decided to get out of the habit of praying. I gave little thought to my future, but continued to live with the conviction that I was destined for something big."

As a fourteen-year-old, Edith Stein became an atheist; for her there was no God. With full consciousness and of her free will she weaned herself from praying; she tore her hand out of God's hand. In her life, God no longer had any role to play, at least according to appearances. But, again, these were deceptive. Looking back upon these years, later, she writes: "*My search for truth was all a single prayer.*" A remarkable word, a word of comfort for all who have difficulty with faith. Although she had torn her hand out of God's, she stretched it out to Him in search of help. It is Edith Stein's unique habit never to accept anything without having tested it, not even the faith of her Fathers. She wants to get at the bottom of things. That is why she unrelentingly seeks for truth, not suspecting that in so doing, she is seeking Him who is Truth in himself.

**In Göttingen and Freiburg.** The search for truth led her to philosophy. In 1913, she changed location going to Göttingen where, at that time, Edmund Husserl was drawing much attention by his phenomenology. In 1916, Husserl went to Freiburg-im-Breisgau and took his highly-gifted student along as his assistant. She got her doctorate in 1917. In February 1919, the "Master", as Husserl was known, wrote about his 27-year-old assistant: "Should the academic field be opened to women, I could recommend her sincerely and before anyone else for habilitation (as a professor)."

While Edith Stein sought for truth along the paths of philosophy, God prepared her interiorly in other ways. While she was still in Göttingen, she had met Max Scheler (1874-1928) and, through him, for the first time, had come into contact with Catholic ideas. She writes about it and so, gives an insight into this phase of her interior development: "*His influence in those years affected me, as it did many others, far beyond the sphere of philosophy. I do not know in which*

*year Scheler returned to the Catholic Church. It could not have been long before I met him. (He had been baptised in 1899 in St. Anton/Munich.) In any case, he was quite full of Catholic ideas at the time and employed all the brilliance of his spirit and his eloquence to plead them.*

*This was my first encounter with this hitherto totally unknown world. It did not lead me as yet to the Faith. But it did open for me a region of 'phenomena' which I could then no longer bypass blindly. With good reason we were repeatedly enjoined to observe all things without prejudice, to discard all possible 'blindness'. The barriers of rationalistic prejudices with which I had unwittingly grown up) fell, and the world of faith unfolded before me. Persons with whom I associated daily, whom I esteemed and admired, lived in it. At the least, they deserved my giving it some serious reflection. For the time being, I did not embark on a systematic investigation of the questions of faith; I was far too busy with other matters. I was content to accept without resistance the stimuli coming from my surroundings, and so, almost without noticing it, became gradually transformed."*

A second experience which became important to her interior journey happened during her stay in Freiburg. In November, 1917, Professor Reinach, once a student of Husserl's, was killed in Flanders. One year earlier, the Reinachs, who, like Edith, were of Jewish descent, had received Baptism and had become Protestant Christians. Frau Reinach asked Edith Stein to perform a bereaved friend's loving service by putting Professor Reinach's philosophical legacy in order. Edith Stein, naturally, was ready to comply, but she was afraid of meeting with Frau Reinach. What kind of comforting words could she offer the broken and despairing widow, who had lost her husband after so short but so happy a marriage?

But the reality was quite different. She did not find a broken, despairing widow; instead, here was a woman who clung to the Cross of Christ, and who found strength from that Cross to carry her through the abyss of her sorrow. This experience touched Edith Stein to the heart. Later, she said about this meeting: "*This was my first encounter with the Cross and with the divine power which it gives to those who carry it. For the*

*first-time I saw the Church which had been born of the redeeming sufferings of Christ in her triumph over the sting of death; that victory was palpably before me. That was the moment in which my unbelief collapsed, Judaism waned and Christ blazed forth: Christ in the mystery of the Cross."*

This revelation which Sr Benedicta of the Cross (her religious name) made to a priest, shortly before her death, closed with the words: *"Therefore, at my Clothing Ceremony, I had no other desire to make known than to be given the title "of the Cross" in the Order."*

One sees God's guidance of her manifested ever more clearly. Through the meeting with Frau Reinach there was a first glimpse of Christ in the mystery of the Cross. God had led her to this first encounter with the Cross of Christ; and through Frau Reinach, He had brought Edith in touch with the divine power which the Cross makes available to those who bear it. And Edith Stein allows herself to be led by God's hand, not yet knowing who is leading her nor where the road is to take her. She continues her search for truth, and God's hand guides her mysteriously forward to truth.

**In Bad Bergzabern.** It was August, 1921. Edith Stein was staying as a guest with her friends, Hedwig Conrad-Martius and the latter's husband in Bad Bergzabern, in Pfalz. The couple had business which took them away from home. Before they left, Frau Conrad-Martius took her friend, Edith, to the bookcase and urged her to choose whatever she liked. Edith Stein tells us, herself: *"I reached in at random and brought out a hefty volume. It carried the title: Life of Saint Teresa of Avila, written by herself. I began to read, was captivated immediately, and did not stop until I had read to the end. As I closed the book, I told myself: 'This is the truth.'"* She had read straight through the night until in the east the sun was rising.

What had happened? Throughout all her years she had been searching for truth. In this night, it was truth which she found. But it was not what the philosophers, to whom she belonged, called truth. Rather, it was an entirely different truth: a truth that was a person, the loving "You" that was God, whom Teresa of Avila had experienced, and to whom she bore witness in the story of her life. The sun was rising as Edith Stein closed the book that morning and said: "This is the truth." But in her innermost self, the light of grace and of the love of

God had been enkindled. Edith Stein had sought for truth and had found God.



Her decision was made: Edith Stein asked Father Breitling of Bergzabern to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to her. This was scheduled for New Year's Day, 1922. Edith spent the night before as a vigil, in prayer. On the morning of **January 1, 1922**, accompanied by her friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius as sponsor, she approached the baptismal font in the parish church of St. Martin in Bergzabern and received the Sacrament of Baptism. At that time she chose the name of Teresa Hedwig. She participated at Holy Mass, and received the body of the Lord for the first time; from then on she went to Communion daily. She also began the full recitation, daily, of the Breviary, the Church's official Liturgy of the Hours. On the Feast of the Purification she received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Ludwig Sebastian in his private chapel in Speyer. Edith Stein was overjoyed at having found God and at becoming a child of Mother Church.

And what about her own mother in Breslau? Edith Stein was in trepidation at the thought of informing her mother of everything. She considered it probable that, in shame and blame, she would be banished from the family she so cherished. She did not take the easy way of simply writing a letter, but went home to Breslau, where, kneeling by her mother, she told her: "**Mother, I have become a Catholic.**" The valiant woman was grief-stricken. She wept. Edith had not expected that. For the first time, she saw her mother cry. None of her relatives could understand Edith's new way. Edith stayed with her mother for half a year, keeping the fast and accompanying her to the synagogue as she had always done. When the Rabbi read the words: "Hear, O Israel: God, your God, is one," her mother grasped Edith by the arm and whispered: "Do you hear? God, your God, is but one!"

Edith had sought truth and found God. And, beginning at that night of grace in August, 1921, in Bergzabern, Edith said: "**From that moment on, Carmel was my goal.**" But she was still far from reaching that goal. She continued to look for the way she was to take, led by God's hand. How does that way look?

**In Speyer.** Edith had found God. She was baptized in the name of the Triune God and sealed by the Spirit of God. This meant she had reached the goal in her search for truth, but her way at hand was far from its terminus.

From the time of her Baptism on, Edith longed for total consecration of herself to God. Father Breitling, who had baptized her, recommended her to his friend from their student days, the Vicar General of Speyer, Msgr. Schwind, who then became not only Edith's paternal friend, but her confessor and spiritual advisor. This wise pastor advised her not to enter a religious order now, immediately after her Baptism. She should come to be "at home" in the Catholic Church first of all. To that end, he was instrumental in getting her a position in the teachers college run by the Dominican Sisters at St. Mary Magdalene's in Speyer. Edith Stein also lived in the convent; her life-style matched that of the religious in its extreme simplicity.

She was a brilliant teacher, setting high standards, but she was never petty. Besides her school activity she was much sought after as an advisor by those having

vital questions, not only students but priests and religious, as well. She was untiring in her love for the poor to whom she gave whatever she was able to spare through her simplicity. Through all arrangement made by Vicar General Schwind, Pater Erich Przywara, S.J., and Edith Stein met for the first time, in 1925, in the Vicar General's home. The genial Jesuit scholar urged Edith Stein to busy herself with Thomas Aquinas. The meeting had a further consequence in that Edith Stein undertook a demanding activity giving lectures in and beyond Germany.

Those around her were puzzled by her heavy schedule. Asked how she managed to do all this, she answered: "**All one needs to do is to have, first of all, a quiet corner somewhere where one can communicate with God in such a way as though nothing else existed, and this must be done daily. The time I consider as best given us [for this is the early morning hours, before one's daily work begins. Furthermore, it is imperative that one receives one's particular mission there, ideally for each day, and that it be not chosen by oneself, finally, but that one consider oneself completely as a tool. The strength and ability which one brings to one's work must be seen, not as something for us to use, but rather, for God to use in us.]**"

Prayer, the encounter with the Lord, was not only the source of her strength, but the center of her life as well. Often and for long periods she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament during the day, in the evening, at night, sometimes the whole night through. She knelt motionless for hours, completely absorbed in prayer. A Sister who was temporarily assigned as portress at that time recounts: "The mystery of Christmas must have gotten to Fraulein Doktor! Midnight Mass had ended, the Church had been emptied, the lights were turned off. No one noticed the silent woman praying below the choir loft. The last of the church doors was locked, too. The next morning, when she opened the doors, the Sister Sacristan hardly dared to believe her eyes. There, before the crib, absorbed in prayer, knelt Edith Stein. Later, as the Sister attempted to apologize, full of remorse that what must be presumed to be inattention had caused Fraulein Doctor to be robbed of her sleep, the latter asked: "**Who can sleep during the night in which God became man?**"



There were other occasions when Edith Stein spent the whole night in church. On one similar occasion, the Sister Portress said to her in the morning, "How tired



you must be!" The answer was another question: "*Tired when one is with Him?*"

Toward the end of her years in Speyer, she made private vows. Something she said at that time reveals how deeply God initiated her into the mystery of His love; "*The boundless, loving surrender of oneself to God and the reciprocal gift of Himself by God, the complete and lasting union, this is the highest elevation the heart can attain, the highest rung of prayer. Souls who reach this level are truly the heart of the Church.*" In these words, Edith Stein allows us a glimpse of her own interior.

On September 17, 1927, Edith Stein suffered a severe blow. Msgr. Schwind, her spiritual father, in whose house she had been made to feel like one of the family, died of a stroke while hearing confessions in the cathedral. He, who knew her more intimately than anyone else, once told her that upon his death her "way of the cross" would begin. The Cross which Edith had encountered for the first time ten years earlier at Mrs. Reinach's, now becomes more and more distinct. In prayer God gave her a premonition about the way on which He intends to lead her, the way of the Cross. On Septuagesima Sunday, 1930, she writes: "*After every encounter (she speaks of the encounter with God in prayer), in which I become aware of my inability to effect any direct influence, I have an increased awareness of the urgency of my own holocaust.*"

Archabbot Raphael Walzer took over the spiritual direction of Edith Stein. In Holy Week of 1928 she went to Beuron (his abbey) for the first time. Witnesses noticed that Edith Stein often prayed for hours at a time before the picture of the Sorrowful Mother venerated at Beuron, also that she spent the entire Good Friday praying in the Church, and she did not take food of any kind that day. She had been born on the Jewish Day of

the Atonement; now it was the Christian Day of Atonement, the day on which God reconciled the world to himself through the Cross of his Son, was a particularly holy day for her.

Archbishop Walzer advised her to give up teaching. In March, 1931, she bade farewell to Speyer. She sums up these years for us herself: "*As a teacher in the Dominican Sisters' teachers college, I was allowed to become familiar with the real Catholic world.*"

**In Münster.** In the spring of 1932, she took up her university lectureship at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster. While the swastika came to be seen more and more on the streets, the Cross of Christ gained an ever more prominent place in her life. In order not to endanger the Institute because of her Jewish extraction, she gave up her position there in the spring of 1933. Her last lecture was delivered there on February 25, 1933.

After the National Socialists had taken over power she was full of anxiety over the fate of the Jewish people. As clear-sighted as she was, she foresaw what was to happen to the Jews. "*Now, of a sudden, a light dawned for me, that God's hand was again laid heavily upon his people and that the fate of that people was mine as well,*" she writes in January, 1933.

At the beginning of April, 1933, she was on the way to Beuron when she made a stopover in Cologne and, with an acquaintance, attended the "Holy Hour" on the Thursday before the Sacred-Heart-Friday [the First Friday of the month] at the Carmelite Monastery in Cologne-Lindenthal. Edith Stein wrote about that visit: "*I spoke to the Savior and told Him that I knew it was His own Cross which was now being laid upon the Jewish people. Most of them did not understand this; however, those who did understand were obliged to take it upon themselves willingly in the name of all. This I was willing to do. He need only show me how I could do so. As the Holy Hour ended, I had an inner certainty that my petition had been answered. But what the carrying of the Cross would entail was not yet known to me.*"

Upon her return to Münster from Beuron, she felt an interior urge to make a decision. "*For nearly twelve years, Carmel had been my goal*": since that hour of grace in Bergzabern in which the "*Life of St. Teresa*"

had fallen into her hands and the long search for the true Faith had found its fulfillment. On April 30, the Sunday of the Good Shepherd, the paternal feast of St. Ludger's Church in Münster was celebrated with a 13-hour prayer vigil. *"In late afternoon I went there and told myself: I won't leave before I know clearly whether I am allowed to enter Carmel now. As the final Benediction was being given, I received the assent of the Good Shepherd."* This reminds us of Jacob's wrestling with the angel; "I will not let go of you unless you bless me." (Gen 32,27)

Now Archabbot Walzer also withdrew his objections. In May she again went to Cologne. Edith's acquaintance there visited a close friend who was one of the nuns at the Carmelite Monastery. Edith writes: *"While she was in the speakroom, I knelt in the Chapel near the shrine of the little St. Thérèse. The calm of one who has attained her goal came over me."* The date for admission of the postulant was set for the 15th of October, the feast of the great Teresa of Avila

In the middle of August, Edith Stein travelled to Breslau in order to tell her mother, personally, what she was intending to do, and to make her farewells. *"The last day I spent at home was October 12, my birthday. It coincided that year with a Jewish festival, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.* My mother went to the services in the synagogue of the Rabbinical Seminary. I went with her since we wanted to spend this day together. (My niece) Erika's favorite teacher, an outstanding scholar, gave a beautiful sermon. We had not talked much in the streetcar on the way to the synagogue. In an attempt to offer some small consolation, I had remarked that at first my time (at the monastery) would be only a trial period. But that was of no help. If you take a trial upon yourself, I know you will pass it.'

Now, after the service, mother insisted on walking home. A three-quarters-of-an-hour walk at 84 years of age! But I had to give in, for I was well aware that she wished, very much, to have some more time to talk to me without interruption.

"Wasn't the sermon beautiful?"

"Yes."

"Then it is also possible for one to be pious as a Jew?"

"Certainly, unless one has learned something else."

Now, her response was desperate. "Why did you have to learn it? I don't want to say anything against him. He was probably a very good man. But why did he make himself out to be God?"

It was a terrible day for both mother and daughter.

"That night, most likely, neither of us were able to find any rest."

The next morning, Edith travelled to Cologne. On the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, whose autobiography had led her to the Faith, she was allowed to enter the enclosure. *"At last it was opened for me, and, in the deepest peace, I stepped over the threshold of the house of the Lord."*

**In Cologne.** What did Edith Stein want in Carmel? To have a share in the Cross of Christ. In her first conversation with the Prioress she said. *"Human activity cannot help us; only the Passion of Christ can do so. To share in that is my desire."* And in what did her sharing in the Cross of Christ consist? First of all, she became steeped in insignificance. Her Mistress of Novices reports; "Actually, entrance into Carmel for Edith Stein meant descending from the height of a famed career into the depth of insignificance."

Despite the high honor she had had in the world and despite her age---she had just become 42 years old--no exceptions were made for her. Like all the others, she was assigned to some household chores. "She was so inexpert in all housework and so awkward that it was a pity to watch her at it."

After the half-year trial period, she received the religious habit and began her novitiate. That took place on **April 15, 1934**, on the Sunday of the Good Shepherd. On the same Sunday, a year earlier, in St. Ludger's Church, she had been granted the Good Shepherd's "Yes" for her admission to Carmel.

Archabbot Raphael Walzer celebrated the Divine Liturgy. She was given the religious name of **Teresa Benedicta a Cruce: Teresa blessed from the Cross.** After the celebration Archabbot Raphael Walzer spoke once more with Edith Stein, privately, and face to face. he was not yet fully satisfied with the story and he asked her to tell him frankly how she felt in her new

life. Her answer: "Completely at home."

This "completely at home" expressed not only her security in the convent but also her security in the hand of God. Surrender to the will of God made her life very simple and gave her a holy, carefree spirit.

God's hand led Sister Benedicta ever more deeply into the mystery of his love. On *Easter Sunday, 1935*, she made her first profession. One of the novices asked her, that day, how she felt. Her answer was: "Like the Bride of the Lamb."

But the joy and peace which radiated from Sr. Benedicta may not obliterate one thing. She was aware that she was to be conducted deep into the mystery of her Divine Bridegroom's Cross. To a friend of hers she declared in that same Easter-week: "*They will surely come to take me out of here.*"

On the 14th of September of that same year, her mother died in Breslau at the exact hour in which the daughter renewed her vows. Frau Stein had become reconciled to her favorite daughter's way, although it remained inexplicable to her

Sister Benedicta made her perpetual profession on Thursday of Easter week, 1938. It was April 21; her mentor, Edmund Huserl died on April 27. On the 1st of May--it was once more the Sunday of the Good Shepherd--she received the black veil (sign of the finally professed). On the little prayer card commemorating the occasion was a quotation of St. John of the Cross: "*From now on, my only charge is to love more.*" Even though Edith Stein was well aware of the importance of external activity, she knew as well, that the actual decisions are made elsewhere, in the heart that lovingly surrenders itself to God and that accepts the Cross of the Lord, which is the source of all blessing.

The Nazis' hatred of the Jews was continually heightened. It was clear to Edith Stein that her presence there constituted a threat for the Carmel of Cologne. So they weighed the possibilities of a transfer to a foreign Carmel. Edith Stein would have wished most of all to go to the Carmel of Bethlehem. But this plan could not be put through. On the Night of Broken Glass, November 9, 1938, the hatred of the ruling party vented itself against the Jews. Edith Stein was filled with pain and horror. "*It is the shadow of the Cross which has fallen on my people. Woe be it, when the wrath of*

*God will fall on this city and this land for what has happened to the Jews today.*"

Sister Benedicta was unable to remain there any longer. On New Year's Eve, a physician friend of the Carmelite community brought her by car over the border into Holland to the Carmel of Echt.

**In Echt.** Externally, at least for the moment, she had escaped from danger. But interiorly, she embraced the Cross of the Lord more fervently and joined herself even more closely to the suffering of her people. On Passion Sunday, 1939, she begged her Prioress in writing for the permission to offer herself as a victim of atonement for the peace of the world. She wrote: "*Dear Mother, will Your Reverence please allow me to offer myself to the Heart of Jesus as a victim of atonement to obtain true peace: that the power of the Antichrist, if possible, will collapse without beginning a new world war, and that a new order can be established. I would like to make this offering this very day because it is already the twelfth hour. I know that of myself, I am nothing, but Jesus wishes it, and he will surely call many others to do likewise during these days. Passion Sunday, 26, March, 1939.*"

In Echt, she worked intensively on John of the Cross (his writings). What she wrote about the teaching of St. John of the Cross in this, her final, uncompleted literary work, *Science of the Cross*, seems to be an imaging of herself; "*Therefore the bridal union of the soul with God is the goal for which she was created, purchased through the Cross, consummated on the Cross, and sealed for all eternity with the sign of the Cross.*"

At another point, she writes: "*This union with God ... was the fruit of an interior purification, in which a richly endowed nature took upon itself the burden of the Cross and surrendered itself for crucifixion into the hands of God; a spirit of greatest strength and vitality has given itself into captivity, a heart full of passionate fire has come to peace through a radical renunciation.*"

Holland was occupied by the Germans in the year 1940, and so the danger from which she escaped by leaving Cologne caught up with her again. That same year, her sister Rosa also arrived at the Carmel of Echt where she took up the duties of a portress. In 1942 disaster overtook the two sisters. They were compelled to

attach the yellow star designating them as Jews to their clothing, although this could not disturb her interior calm. During those weeks she wrote: *"I am content with everything. A Knowledge of the Cross can only be won by experiencing the Cross profoundly. I was convinced of that from the first moment and said, with my whole heart: 'Ave Crux, spes unica.'"* She saw the Cross approaching her relentlessly and greeted it as spes unica, as her only hope.

On July 26, 1942, the Bishops of the Netherlands had a pastoral letter read publicly in which they protested against the persecution of the Jews. Thereupon, Catholics Jews were declared the most dangerous enemies who should be deported to the East very soon. On July 28, Sr. Benedica received the news that one of her brothers, together with other family members, had been sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. On July 29, Edith wrote on a Postcard: *"I shall accept whatever God ordains."*

**To Auschwitz.** On August 2nd, at five o'clock in the afternoon, two SS officers appeared at Carmel; they had come for Sister Benedicta and her sister, Rosa. As they left the house, Sr. Benedicta took Rosa's hand and said only: *"Come, we will go for our people."*

Via the camp at Amersfoort, they arrived at the collection site of Westerbork. Edith Stein, known for her lack of household skills, manifested an astonishing activity in the barracks. One Jew, lucky enough to escape the deportation, reports: "Among the prisoners brought here on August 5, Sister Benedicta was noticeable because of her great air of peace and her composure. The misery in the camp and the excitement among the new arrivals was indescribable.

Sister Benedicta went around to all the women, consoling, helping, calming them like an angel. Many mothers, nearly frenzied, had neglected their children for days; they brooded in dull despair, paying no attention to their surroundings. Sister Benedicta at once took charge of the little ones, washed and combed them, and saw that they got food and care. As long as she was there, she kept busy washing and cleaning and bringing about a lot of loving activity so that everyone was astounded."

In a brief letter sent to Echt on August 6, she asked for some supplies for herself and Rosa and she men-

tions *"being able to pray gloriously"*. Her interior union with the Lord, her Bridegroom, gave her a deep peace even in the face of death.

On August 7, at three-thirty in the morning, the transport train of prisoners moved away. Late in the afternoon the train--the prisoners were crowded into cattle cars--made a stop in Schifferstadt, close to Speyer. Here Edith Stein was seen for the last time by surviving witnesses. Here, she sent greetings to the Sisters at St. Magdalena's in Speyer, adding the phrase: *"We are heading east."* Two days later the train arrived in Auschwitz. The prisoners were at once led to the gas chambers where they perished.

Her last words at the Schifferstadt train station, *"We are heading east"* is more than a geographical indication. When the women came to the grave on the first Easter morning in order to anoint Jesus, the first rays of the sun appeared in the east, and they received the news that the Crucified One had arisen. (cf. Mk 16:2-6) The way Edith Stein travelled at God's hand did not end in the Suffering of the Cross in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, but rather in the Resurrection with Christ. This is what the Church testified on October 11, 1998, with the festive Canonization Ceremony.

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