



# CARMEL CLARION

Discalced Carmelite Secular Order

Washington, D.C.

## EDITH STEIN



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## CARMEL CLARION

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### CARMEL CLARION

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Discalced Carmelite Secular Order, Washington, D.C.

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# Editorial

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When Edith Stein was about to be taken by the Gestapo from the Carmelite convent in Echt, Holland, she said to her sister Rosa, "Come Rosa, we are going for our people." With these words Edith had, in a sense, come full circle.

As a young woman Edith slowly gave up her Jewish faith. For years religion played no role in her development. She was, however, always a seeker of the truth. Throughout her philosophical studies and research she was always open to the truth.

Her religious journey began with the tragic deaths of several of her friends in World War I. One of them was Adolf Reinach, a Christian, who was killed in 1917. Edith went to see his widow Anna expecting to console her over the death of her husband. Instead, Edith was the one being consoled by Anna, a woman of Christian faith.

It would still be many years before the seeds planted in her encounter with Anna Reinach would bear fruit. Then, it was her honesty and her ever-vigilant search for the truth that finally led to her conversion to Catholicism. She found what she considered the truth in the Life of St. Teresa of Avila, a woman of Jewish ancestry and a saint and mystic of the Church.

Almost from the beginning of her life in the Church Edith felt she was called to the cloister of Carmel, but because of the influence she had as a teacher and lecturer her spiritual director told her she had an obligation to continue her public life.

It was only when the Nazi's prevented her from holding any position, because she was a

Jew, that she was finally able to enter the Carmel of Cologne. Here in the silence

and solitude of Carmel her understanding of her destiny deepened and matured. The road from being a non-believer to becoming a Catholic and then becoming a Carmelite nun, gave her a deep understanding of the role the Cross had in salvation. She now came to realize that the role of the Chosen People was to be fulfilled through Jesus' death on the cross, and that she as a member of that People could share in that work of redemption by embracing the Cross. This she called "the Science of the Cross." The circle was now complete. She went to her death for her people by following in the footsteps of Jesus, the Christ.

I might add a bit of little known history. The Washington Province was founded in part by the friars of Bavaria. This is the same province that Edith Stein joined when she entered the Carmel of Cologne. In the Catalogue of the Province, 1936 she is listed among the sisters of the Cologne Carmel. In that same Catalogue appears a listing of the friars living at Holy Hill, Wisconsin.

Our Province was also founded on the East Coast by the friars from Catalonia. Soon two of the friars who lived on our property in Washington, DC will be beatified. They are Fr. Eduard of the Child Jesus, who was prior and Fr. Luc of San José, who was one of the founders. Both of these men returned to Spain and were martyred during the Spanish civil war. ■

Fr. Regis, O.C.D.



# Edith Stein A Fragmented Life

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Fr. Steven Payne OCD  
for *America* Oct. 10, 1998



At an open-air ceremony in the Cologne soccer stadium on May 1, 1987, Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein, that is, he declared her worthy of public veneration as a genuinely holy, or blessed, person.

In Rome on October 11, the Pope canonized Edith Stein, who was known in the Carmelite order as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, proclaiming her a saint.

In the following essay, Steven Payne, O.C.D., provides an overview of the new saint's life and reflections upon certain aspects of its significance. This article is based on a homily the author gave at the Baltimore Carmel on August 9.

**T**he canonization of Edith Stein will no doubt bring, along with further arguments over her status as a martyr, a growing chorus of praise for her remarkable achievements. Yet despite the accolades, we know that her life could hardly be considered a success

story by any ordinary standards. Perhaps it is her very failures that bring her closer to us.

Certainly there is no denying Edith Stein's gifts and accomplishments, for they were many. Still more striking are the innumerable separations, setbacks and disappointments she endured and the countless unexpected turns her journey took. These speak eloquently of the struggle to find meaning in the loose ends that compose our lives. Scarcely anything turned out exactly as she anticipated except, ironically, her death at the hands of the Nazi regime. We have the advantage of hindsight and can glimpse, through the seeming chaos of her life, the hand of God guiding her to a great destiny. But surely the way must have been very dark for her as she was traversing it.

The disappointments began even in childhood. Only two years after her birth in Breslau in 1891 as the youngest child in a large Jewish family, Edith's father died suddenly at the age of 48, leaving behind her mother, Auguste Stein, to manage a failing lumberyard and raise seven children on her own. Though Auguste soon made the family business prosper—some

called her the best businessman in Breslau—this surely limited the time she could spend with her own children. Yet Edith's relationship with her mother became the strongest emotional bond in her life, which made it all the more painful later when Auguste could not accept Edith's conversion to Christianity.

Edith was a bright, precocious and sometimes headstrong child. "In my dreams," she wrote in her autobiography with more than a hint of self-mockery, "I always foresaw a brilliant future for myself. I dreamed about happiness and fame for I was convinced that I was destined for something great and that I did not belong at all in the narrow, bourgeois circumstances into which I had been born."

[Edith Stein wrote this autobiography, an unfinished memoir of her life up to 1916, between 1933 and 1935 after she had entered the Carmelite order. The German original was published posthumously in 1985. An English translation appeared the following year under the title *Life in a Jewish Family* (I.C.S. Publications: Washington, D.C.).]

## School Years

At the age of six she insisted on being admitted early to the Victoria School in Breslau and was indignant at being sent to kindergarten first. By 13 she thought she had had enough of academics and dropped out of school. She returned to studies after only a few months' absence, but already we can see the intellectual restlessness that would mark her whole life. It was at this time also, she admits, that she made a conscious decision to give up praying and walked away from the devout Jewish faith of her beloved mother.

She entered the University of Breslau in 1911 to study psychology, but was disappointed with the approach of her professors

who were part of a movement at that time trying to reduce psychology to an exact empirical science, like physics and chemistry. "I came to feel that Breslau had nothing more to offer me," she writes. "Something was pushing me to move on." She had heard of the growing reputation of a philosophy professor in Göttingen, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who was developing a new phenomenological method that promised to clarify the foundations of all thought and experience. With a sense of intense intellectual excitement, coupled with the great pain of leaving

*Read more about Edith Stein in this ICS book about her life.*



her mother behind in Breslau, she transferred schools and became a vital part of the so-called Göttingen Circle, a group of Husserl's students who would go on to become famous philosophers in their own right.

Yet here again things did not turn out as she had hoped. A warm friendship with a handsome young philosopher named Hans Lipps never developed into the romance that some expected. When writing her dissertation, at times she became so frustrated and depressed that, as she wrote, "I could no longer cross the street without wishing I would be run over by some vehicle. And when we went on an excursion, I hoped I would fall off a cliff and not return alive."

World War I interrupted university life, and while she bravely volunteered for nursing duty, some of her closest philosophical

associates were dying at the front. She tells us how, at one point, she went to console the widow of one her favorite professors, Adolf Reinach, who had been killed in battle on Nov. 16, 1917. She was surprised to find herself consoled instead by Anna Reinach's great faith. Experiences like this began to make her rethink her casual dismissal of religion. Yet her struggles continued.

Following Husserl to Freiburg, she finally completed her doctorate in 1916, *summa cum laude*, with a dissertation "on the problem of empathy." This was a critical issue in phenomenology, since it has to do with how we are able to know anything at all about the inner life of other persons. After this promising start, she offered to become Husserl's assistant, and he happily agreed. This required her to take the revered master's loose papers and manuscripts, written in shorthand, and try to decipher and organize them into some kind of coherent whole. Yet once again she met only with frustration, because she could seldom get Husserl to review the edited texts she had so painstakingly stitched together.

A brilliant academic future might have seemed assured. But things turned out otherwise. No German university was yet ready to have a female philosophy professor on its full-time faculty, and in fact Husserl's letter of recommendation was less enthusiastic than it should have been. Later on, as Marianne Sawicki has recently noted, Martin Heidegger would publish some of the same Husserl manuscripts Edith Stein had worked on as if he himself had been their editor (Sawicki, *Body, Text and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997]). Yet nowhere do we find Edith complaining that others are taking credit for her work.



### **Conversion and Entry Into Carmel**

It was at about this time that she had her famous conversion experience after reading the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. She is supposed to have read the book during the course of a single night in 1921. When she closed it she declared, "This is truth!" She had finally discovered the truth she had been seeking, not in the works of famous philosophers or theologians, but in the autobiography of another woman of Jewish ancestry who, in the face of great adversity, had found both herself and her God. Stein would later say that her search for truth was itself a kind of prayer, and that "those who seek the truth seek God, whether they realize it or not."

Edith's baptism on Jan. 1, 1922, provoked new conflicts and misunderstandings with her friends and family. Her mother was heartbroken. Fritz Kaufmann (1891-1958), himself a Jew and one of Edith's closest friends from the Göttingen circle, cut off communication with her for some years, and was only won back by Edith's persistence. As she explained, once she admitted people into her friendship, she never let them go.

From 1923 to 1931 she taught in a Dominican teachers' college in Speyer, and from 1932 to 1933 at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster. She excelled, but these jobs were far below what her tal-

ents and training would have warranted. With the rise of National Socialism, more and more doors were closed to her and other Jews. For a time, she was still able to serve as a leader in the Catholic Women's Movement. She translated Thomas Aquinas's Disputed Questions on Truth and tried to reconcile phenomenology with Catholic thought, although many of the scholastic philosophers and theologians of her time were critical of her efforts. In 1933 she had planned to travel to Rome, as she tells us, "to ask the Holy Father in a private audience for an encyclical" against Nazi anti-Semitism. Instead, she was only able to send Pius XI a letter that was delivered but never answered. We can only imagine the impact if the Pope had heeded her advice. But once again her courageous and far-sighted efforts seemed to come to nothing.

In October of that same year, she entered the Carmel of Cologne. She requested and received a religious name that reflected not only her love for the great founding figures of the Discalced Carmelites, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, but her growing understanding, in faith, of her own dark and peculiar path. She became Teresia Benedicta a Cruce (Teresa Blessed by the Cross). More and more she would be drawn into what she would later call Kreuzeswissenschaft, the "science of the cross," the mystery of joy in suffering, of victory in failure, of dying and rising with Christ.

In an essay on "Love of the Cross" she wrote: "To suffer and to be happy although suffering, to have one's feet on the earth, to

walk on the dirty and rough paths of this earth and yet to be enthroned with Christ at the Father's right hand, to laugh and cry with the children of this world and ceaselessly sing the praises of God with the choirs of angels—this is the life of the Christian until the morning of eternity breaks forth."

Her family, especially her mother, was deeply wounded when she became a nun and viewed her decision as a kind of betrayal of her own people in their deepest hour of need. Yet Edith had discovered a precedent in the Hebrew Scriptures for her mysterious calling. She wrote from Cologne on Oct. 31, 1938, after the death of her mother, about the sufferings of her family as they tried to emigrate: "If only [my family] knew where to go!

But I trust that, from eternity, Mother will take care of them. And [I also trust] in the Lord's having accepted my life for all of them. I keep having to think of Queen Esther who was taken from among her people precisely so that she might represent them before the king. I am a very poor and powerless little Esther, but the King who chose me is infinitely great and merciful. That is such a great comfort."

Edith felt in her heart, in a way she could never adequately explain, that she was giving her life for others. That is, in fact, how she tried to articulate her vocation to an uncomprehending Fritz Kaufmann in a letter of May 14, 1934: "Whoever enters Carmel is not lost to her own, but is theirs fully for the first time; it is our vocation to stand before God for all."



*The baptismal font where St. Edith Stein was baptized.*

## Writing and Auschwitz

While she continued writing within the walls of Carmel, she keenly felt the lack of time and scholarly resources in her new environment, as well as the gaps in her intellectual formation. Nazi policies prevented many of her works from this period, including her masterpiece, *Finite and Eternal Being*, from appearing in print. Some of her letters now preserved



in the archives of the State University of New York at Buffalo are poignant pleas for help in getting that book published in the United States. More than 50 years after her death this has yet to be done, partly because of posthumous fights over her literary remains.

It is a striking fact that Edith's most important works, like all the great Carmelite classics, were written not within the protective environment of a university campus but in the midst of a religious community, with its constant demands and interruptions. In a sense, we can see her as a model for the many women and men who have to pursue scholarship and find their voice outside the customary academic channels.

Given these circumstances, one can well understand why she wrote so often and with so much feeling about the struggle of coping with a fragmented life. "What did not lie in my plans," she said in words often quoted, "lay in God's plans." And elsewhere she wrote: "When night comes, and retrospect shows that everything was patchwork and much which one had planned [is] left un-

done, when so many things rouse shame and regret, then take all as it is, lay it in God's hands, and offer it up to him. In this way we will be able to rest in him, actually to rest, and to begin the new day like a new life."

As the Nazi threat increased, she was finally forced to flee to the Carmel in Echt, Holland, on New Year's Eve in 1938. This move was largely to spare the nuns in Cologne from any

reprisals they might have suffered for harboring a Jewish nun. But the safe haven was only temporary. After Germany invaded Holland, and in retaliation for a July 1942 letter by the Dutch bishops criticizing Nazi policies, Edith Stein was arrested along with her sister Rosa, who lived in the Echt Carmel, and other Catholics of Jewish descent. They were deported to Auschwitz, where Edith Stein died in the gas chambers on Aug. 9, 1942. Almost the last words heard from her as she was being led away from the Echt Carmel were addressed to her distraught sister: "Come, Rosa, we are going for our people!"

Even in death, her troubles were not over. The church's decision to honor Edith Stein as a martyr has made her a "sign of contradiction" for many Jews today, who fear that Catholics are thereby attempting to co-opt the Holocaust. Surely a woman whose Christian faith only increased her appreciation of her Jewish roots, and who worked tirelessly to improve mutual understanding between Christians and Jews, could



only be pained by such disputes. Surely she wanted to be a bridge rather than a stumbling block. We must hope, with her, that these current controversies will be the prelude to a deeper dialogue.

By worldly standards, then, hers was not a triumphant life or death. None of the glorious dreams of her childhood had been fulfilled. To those without faith, Edith Stein's story surely looks like a series of false starts and frustrated hopes. Even today she has not yet received the recognition she deserves for her contributions to feminism, phenomenology, educational theory, Catholic thought and inter-religious dialogue. She did not live to see the fruits of her self-sacrifice. But out of all the apparent failures and disappointments, out of all the disjointed fragments of her life, God wove a great tapestry and accomplished a great work.

For those who might consider such a life a failure, let the final word be that of Fritz Kaufmann, one of her friends from student days in Göttingen. After Hitler came to pow-

er, Kaufmann emigrated to the United States, where he taught philosophy at what is now the State University of New York at Buffalo. On Sept. 9, 1945, after receiving word of Edith Stein's fate, he wrote a letter that is preserved in the SUNY Buffalo archives. In it he said:

I am disconsolate at Edith Stein's death though I am still hoping—perhaps, against hope—that the news will not prove true. With Hans Lipps and her my best Göttingen friends are gone, and life seems so much poorer. It is as if a door to a beloved room of the past had been definitely locked. You can hardly imagine what [Edith Stein] meant to me during the first World War when she did everything to keep me spiritually alive and abreast with the intellectual events within our movement and outside. She was the kind genius of our whole circle, taking care of everything and everybody with truly sisterly love (also of Husserl who was seriously ill in 1918). She was like a guardian angel to Lipps in the years of his distress. When I spoke to her last time in the Cologne monastery—a lattice between her room and mine—the evening twilight made her fade to my eyes: I felt I was not to see her again. But who could have thought that these beasts would not stop in their cruelty even before a nunnery, and that she would have to die as she may have done? She had joined the Carmelites' order on account of her special veneration for Santa Theresa, but also because she wanted to offer her life and her prayers, in this ascetic community, to save mankind. Did she succeed, after all, in this highest task? ■

## **THE HEIRS OF SAINT TERESA**

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The symposium is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is recommended by contacting Dr. Christopher Wilson (703) 683-6568.

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# Love of the Cross: Some Thoughts for the Feast of St. John of the Cross

*By St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*

**W**e hear repeatedly that St. John of the Cross desired nothing for himself but to suffer and be despised. We want to know the reason for this love of suffering. Is it merely the loving remembrance of the path of suffering of our Lord on earth, a tender impulse to be humanly close to him by a life resembling his? This does not seem to correspond to the lofty and strict spirituality of the mystical teacher. And in relation to the Man of Sorrows, it would almost seem that the victoriously enthroned king, the divine conqueror of sin, death, and hell is forgotten. Did not Christ lead captivity captive? Has he not transported us into a kingdom of light and called us to be happy children of our heavenly Father?



The sight of the world in which we live, the need and misery, and the abyss of human malice, again and again dampens jubilation over the victory of light. The world is still deluged by mire, and still only a small flock has escaped from it to the highest mountain peaks. The battle between Christ and the Antichrist is not yet over. The followers of Christ have their place

in this battle, and their chief weapon is the cross. What does this mean? The burden of the cross that Christ assumed is that of corrupted human nature, with all its consequences in sin and suffering to which fallen humanity is subject. The meaning of the way of the cross is to carry this burden out of the world. The restoration of freed humanity to the heart of the heavenly Father, taking on the status of a child, is the free gift of grace, of merciful love. But this may not occur at the expense of divine holiness and justice. The entire sum of human failures from the first Fall up to the Day of judgment must be blotted out by a corresponding measure of expiation. The way of the cross is this expiation. The triple collapse under the burden of the cross corresponds to the triple fall of humanity: the first sin, the rejection of the Savior by his chosen people, the falling away of those who bear the name of Christian.

The Savior is not alone on the way of the cross. Not only are there adversaries around him who oppress him, but also people who succor him. The archetype of followers of the cross for all time is the Mother of God. Typical of those who submit to the suffering inflicted on them and experi-

ence his blessing by bearing it is Simon of Cyrene. Representative of those who love him and yearn to serve the Lord is Veronica. Everyone who, in the course of time, has borne an onerous destiny in remembrance of the suffering Savior or who has freely taken up works of expiation has by doing so canceled some of the mighty load of human sin and has helped the Lord carry his burden. Or rather, Christ the head effects expiation in these members of his Mystical Body who put themselves, body and soul, at his disposal for carrying out his work of salvation. We can assume that the prospect of the faithful who would follow him on his way of the cross strengthened the Savior during his night on the Mount of Olives. And the strength of these cross bearers helps him after each of his falls. The righteous under the Old Covenant accompany him on the stretch of the way from the first to the second collapse. The disciples, both men and women, who surrounded him during his earthly life, assist him on the second stretch. The lovers of the cross whom he has awakened and will always continue to awaken anew in the changeable history of the struggling church, these are his allies at the end of time. We, too, are called for that purpose.

Thus, when someone desires to suffer, it is not merely a pious reminder of the suffering of the Lord. Voluntary expiatory suffering is what truly and really unites one to the Lord intimately. When it arises, it comes from an already existing relationship with Christ. For, by nature, a person flees from suffering. And the mania for suffering caused by a perverse lust for pain differs completely from the desire to suffer in expiation. Such lust is not a spiritual striving, but a sensory longing no better than other sensory desires, in fact worse, because it is contrary to nature. Only someone whose

spiritual eyes have been opened to the supernatural correlations of worldly events can desire suffering in expiation, and this is only possible for people in whom the spirit of Christ dwells, who as members are given life by the Head, receive his power, his meaning, and his direction. Conversely, works of expiation bind one closer to Christ, as every community that works together on one task becomes more and more closely knit and as the limbs of a body, working together organically, continually become more strongly one.

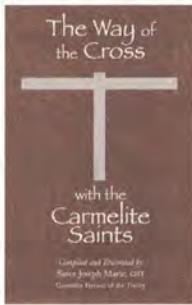
But because being one with Christ is our sanctity, and progressively becoming one with him our happiness on earth, the love of the cross in no way contradicts being a joyful child of God. Helping Christ carry his cross fills one with a strong and pure joy, and those who may and can do so, the builders of God's kingdom, are the most authentic children of God. And so those who have a predilection for the way of the cross by no means deny that Good Friday is past and that the work of salvation has been accomplished. Only those who are saved, only children of grace, can in fact be bearers of Christ's cross. Only in union with the divine Head does human suffering take on expiatory power. To suffer and to be happy although suffering, to have one's feet on the earth, to walk on the dirty and rough paths of this earth and yet to be enthroned with Christ at the Father's right hand, to laugh and cry with the children of this world and ceaselessly sing the praises of God with the choirs of angels—this is the life of the Christian until the morning of eternity breaks forth.

*The Collected Works of Edith Stein: The Hidden Life: Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Texts.* Ed.. Dr. L. Gelbur and Michael Linssen, O.C.D. Trans. Waltraut Stein, Ph.D. ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1992. ■

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Compiled and Illustrated by Sister Joseph Marie, CHT  
Carmelite Hermit of the Trinity



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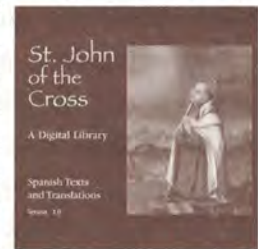


was dissatisfied with answers given her. Only the contemplative life of a Carmelite nun could begin to quench her thirst to know and give herself completely to God. Her entire life was driven by the desire to "return love for love." She entered the Carmelite convent in Florence at the age of seventeen, advanced rapidly in holiness, and died an extraordinary death at twenty-two. Her spiritual director reflecting on her death remarked, "She could not have lived very much longer, so great was the strength of the love of God in her."

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# John of the Cross and Edith Stein: The Cross That Transfigured Their Lives

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*Jesus Garcia Rojo*



## **I. Discovery of A Spiritual Master**

**I**t is difficult to know exactly when Edith Stein came into contact with St. John of the Cross. We know that in 1921, after reading the Life of St. Teresa, she decided to become Catholic. We also know that from January 1, 1922, the date of her baptism, until her entrance into the Carmel of Cologne (October 15, 1933) she worked as a teacher and lecturer with an intense life of prayer. Would she have already known John of the Cross by then?

The fact that in both her retreat for taking the religious habit and her retreat for making her profession she chose St. John of the Cross as her guide is very significant. It appears that Edith very quickly came to consider St. John of the Cross as a great spiritual teacher. In a work on the history and spirit of Carmel she writes: "As our second friar and teacher we venerate St. John of the Cross as the first Discalced Carmelite friar. In him we find especially the spirit of the ancient hermits in its purest form... It was he who formed, together with St. Teresa, the first generation of discalced friars and nuns, and through his writings taught us the way of the Ascent of Mount Carmel," a way in which the shadow of the Cross is projected ever more intensely.

Not content to name herself "of the Cross," Edith aspired to become like her crucified Lord. Therefore, she offered herself as a victim for her people, thus completing what was lacking in the passion of Christ. She understood that the soul which is betrothed to Christ is crucified. The Cross is converted, then, into light which illumines and transfigures all of reality. The Cross for Edith is the anchor of salvation. A few days before being led to the gas chamber of the concentration camp she wrote to the Echt community in these terms: "We (she and her sister, Rosa) are very peaceful and happy. Naturally, for now we are without Mass and communion; perhaps later it will be possible. Now we have been given the experience of how one can live supported interiorly."

On the feast of St. John of the Cross in 1934 Edith prepared a meditation on the love of the Cross. To what can we contribute the great love St. John had for the Cross? Is it merely the loving remembrance of the path of our Lord on earth, a tender impulse to be humanly close to him, by a life resembling his? Nor does it have anything to do with masochism. It is the desire to identify oneself with Christ, in whose case the



Cross is an indispensable element. Edith explains that in the battle that the disciple of Jesus wages in order to free himself from the powers of evil, the Cross is our principal weapon. Crucifying ourselves we have access to our liberation. If this is difficult to understand, it is even more difficult to live. Difficult, but not impossible. In fact, at the point where events had taken Edith at the end of 1941, she wrote to Mother Ambrose Antonia Engelmann, prioress of Echt: "I am happy. A science of the Cross can only be obtained when one has experienced being at the foot of the Cross. I am convinced of this and therefore say from my heart: Ave Cruz, spes unica. May you be blessed, oh Cross, my only hope."

## **II. The Science of the Cross: The Doctrine becomes Life**

*The Science of the Cross* is a study on the teaching of St. John of the Cross, written to commemorate the fourth centenary of his birth. Edith began the work in August 1941. Her arrest and later execution in the gas

chamber shortened her work. From the three parts the work was going to have, the authoress was only able to develop the first two: the message of the Cross and the teaching of the Cross. The third part, the following of the Cross, she was not able to write in ink; she wrote in her blood.

In order that the reader might know what she is writing about Edith notes that she is not dealing with

a theory, but with a real and operating truth that "as a seed penetrates into the center of the soul and grows, imprinting on it a characteristic and determined stamp." *The Science of the Cross* is for Edith a living force which gushes from the deepest part of man, giving place to a particular vision of God and of the world. That was the experience of the saints, the way she focused on in St. John of the Cross.

Being an artist, John of the Cross did not conform himself to an exterior form of the Cross, but, on the contrary, he converted himself into the image of the Crucified. Life and teaching are found perfectly united in him. The images that he painted and carved, and his poetry, are reflective of the experience he had of the mystery of the Cross. Begun in him in early infancy, Edith interprets the practices of mortification and service offered to the sick in Medina del Campo as unmistakable signs of the love of the Crucified. His desire to follow more closely Christ Crucified is what moved him to seek entrance into the Carmelite Order. For the same reason,



he later thought to abandon Carmel, but did not do so because St. Teresa turned him toward the reformed Carmel. This path provided him with the situation to understand and savor the science and wisdom of the Cross.

Among other things, he understood that the Cross is the way to love and that death with Christ is the indispensable condition for being able to rise with Him. According to

Edith "it was during the celebration of Mass when, above all, his science of the Cross developed; it was then that his mysterious and progressive transformation into the Crucified took place. When he was prior of Segovia the response he gave to the picture of Christ carrying the Cross, shows well that he had assimilated the science of the Cross. At the end of his life he would have the occasion to show it: deprived of any office at the Chapter of Madrid, and exiled to Mexico. Sickness stopped this plan from going forward, but, he had to suffer Fr. Diego Evangelista's defamatory campaign. He also had to sustain the asperities of the prior of Bead. This was the final episode of his transformation in Christ. John's entire life was impregnated with the love of the Crucified; a love which he tried to inculcate in others, because the way of the Cross is the secure way. Therefore, to those desiring Christ without the Cross, John would say, "He who does not seek the Cross of Christ does not seek the glory of Christ."

### **III. Crucified Love**

Within the Sanjuanist scheme, purification of the senses and the faculties is a necessary requisite for union with God. He who desires to draw near to God must experience the Dark Night. Abandoning ones natural way of

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understanding, he enters into the Dark Night, guided by the light of faith.

*This guided me  
more surely than the light of moon  
to where he was awaiting me  
— him I knew so well —  
there in a place where no one appeared.  
(N, St. 4).*

Faith is light, but also a cross. "The way of faith," declared Edith "is a kind of *Via Crucis*." According to this, to enter more and more into the Night means to take up the Cross each time more resolutely. The Cross and Night are the way to celestial light. Reaching a new life demands a living death of the Cross. In this respect, Edith Stein cited the known passage from the Ascent of Mount Carmel, according to which, Christ, dying on the Cross, accomplished the greatest work of His life: the reconciliation of God with us. The way which leads to union with God is a dark and painful road, but is at the same time, a quick and secure one.

Turning the spirit toward God, faith is a process of liberation. Freeing one from everything that is not God, the man of faith is placed on the road for an encounter with God which surpasses his natural ways of understanding. This encounter will end finally when man is capable of dying to self. Dying to oneself means placing oneself entirely in the hands of God as Jesus did. To show this, John of the Cross and Edith with him, use a beautiful comparison. It is the comparison of the incandescent log. As the log is placed on the fire in order to dry, and once dry, begins to shine as a red hot coal, so also is the soul which is placed on the fire of divine love if it desires to be united with God. As the fire pu-



soul! And  
what else  
do you search for outside,  
when within yourself you  
possess your riches,  
delights, satisfaction,  
fullness, and kingdom -  
your Beloved whom you  
desire and seek? Be  
joyful and gladdened in  
your interior recollection  
with him, for you have  
him, so close to you.  
Desire him there, adore  
him there.

- St. John of the Cross  
The Spiritual Canticle

rifies the log, enflaming it, thus also the fire of divine love purifies the soul, freeing it of its miseries. It is a painful, but necessary process of transformation. For to love with the love of God one must die to every other love. For the soul to burn and shine brilliantly the divine fire must drive out all other fires. Love has the quality of making equal those who love. The creature will be made equal to God if, allowing itself to be burned by love; it crucifies its tastes and appetites.

#### **IV. The Joy of the New Life**

Until now we have presented the following of Jesus, as the way of the Cross. We add

now that it is a way in whose end is found the true glory and life. That way is none other than the paschal way, begun by Christ.

Through the Cross, Christ Jesus attained union with the Father. *Per crucem ad resurrectionem*. After the painful way of Calvary, the soul achieves the desired union. Now, therefore, Edith comments, "it is submerged in the brilliant light of the morning of the resurrection." The night and the Cross are left behind. If she never speaks of them it is to show its presence has been highly positive. "New life has been born from death. The glory of the resurrection is the reward of having suffered faithfully the night and the Cross." All the passed work and suffering are now considered as something of little worth, compared to the joy of the new life. It has been "a sheer grace." The light of the new day replaces the darkness of the night.

That light is the Holy Spirit who, as fire, burns in the soul, bathing it in glory and refreshing it in divine love. So enflamed and transformed is the soul in the flame of love that it does no work of itself. Without it knowing how, God gently and lovingly is disposing it. The joy and peace are so great that it experiences that, for an instant, it has already attained eternal life. "Whoever does not experience it," says, Edith, judges it to be an exaggeration. But it is no exaggeration. God offers himself generously to whoever is faithful to his love. And even though it is not as it will be in the Beatific Vision, in the state of union of which we speak, "the soul shines as an oven of fire with peaceful, glorious and tender vision."

We have said that the fire that burns and embraces the soul is the Holy Spirit. We say now that that fire does not destroy nor cause pain, but above all, delights and in-

creases devotion. It is the gentle cautery, which gently causes a delicate wound, which can only be cured by the one who causes it. Marvelous paradox! Edith writes, quoting John of the Cross, "As often as the cautery of love touches the wound of love, it causes a deeper wound of love, and thus the more it wounds, the more it cures and heals" (F2,7). According to this, the soul will be totally healed when it is totally made a wound of love.

Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that the union of the soul with God is a

## ✉ Letters to the Editor —————

Dear Editor

Thank you for publishing "Establishing God's Kingdom Within and Without," which was presented first at the OCDS Regional Congress in January, 2004. I first heard of the idea of the Kingdom of God in my freshman year at Ford College in 1956. However, I was vague on how to realize God's Kingdom in my life.

Your article showing how the Carmelite saints expressed their living the Kingdom and the Beatitudes was most helpful. I have a better understanding now of what Jesus meant.

Yours truly,  
T.F., OCDS, Auburn, NY

Praise be Jesus Christ! I wanted to tell your Reverence how thoroughly I am enjoying the most recent Clarion and the articles on the Martin family! Thank you very much for providing such excellent spiritual nourishment!

In Our Lady of Mt Carmel,  
M.R., OCDS, Loretto, PA

union of love with the three Divine Persons. And if, in the terminology of John of the Cross, the Holy Spirit is gentle cautery, the Father is a gentle hand; a tender hand which embraces and sustains everything in existence. God's hand is the life of the world, and his nearness produces indescribable gifts and graciousness. Again citing John of the Cross, Edith writes, "You granted this with the liberality of your generous grace, which you used in contacting me with the touch of the splendor of your glory and the figure of your substance [Heb. 1:3], which is your only begotten Son, through whom, he being your substance, you touch mightily from one end to the other [Wis. 8:1]. And your only begotten Son, O merciful hand of the Father, is the delicate touch by which you touched me with the force of your cautery and wounded me" (F2,16).

In the teaching of John of the Cross, the Son is the delicate touch, through which the mercy and gentle hand of God touch us. It is a touch so gentle and delicate that there is no other point of comparison. It is a substantial touch, without figure or form, which knows eternal life.

In summary, whoever reaches the state of union with God lives the same life of God, and is God by participation. This is the key of the soul's behavior: Edith, making her own the words of John of the Cross, says, "In this state of life so perfect, the soul always walks in festivity, inwardly and outwardly, and it frequently bears on its spiritual tongue a new song of great jubilation in God, a song always new, enfolded in a gladness and love arising from the knowledge the soul has of its happy state" (F2,36).

The new life which comes forth from God and of which the soul participates is accompanied by resplendent marvels of light and love. ■

## Quotations from Edith Stein

*Everything depends on love, because in the end we will be judged according to love.*

*God became a human child so that human beings could become children of God.*

*To believe in saints means only to sense in them God's presence.*

*Test everything and keep what is good.*

*We can lead others only to do that which we ourselves practice.*

*Everyone who loves is eager to do something for the beloved.*

*Prayer is the highest achievement of which the human spirit is capable.*

*People have much more potential than they know.*

*One cannot expect a rabbit to behave like a lion.*

*I knew from the very first days of my life that it is much more important to be good than to be clever.*

*God is in the depth of the soul, and nothing it contains is hidden from him.*

*The darker it gets around us here, the more we must open our hearts to the light from above.*

*If you try to get rid of your old cross, you usually get a more burdensome one.*

*Service is the effect of love, and because love varies from person to person, so does the entire spiritual life.*

# Two Saintly Teresas

*Fr. John Sullivan, OCD*



A happy choice, not chance, put Teresa of Jesus and Teresa Benedicta of the Cross close to each other on the Church's list of saints. Edith Stein requested and got Teresa's name as a religious upon entering the order Saint Teresa founded, just as she had chosen it previously at her baptism when she took the Christian names Teresa Hedwig.

But their close association does not depend on a name. At a deeper level both were "able in adversity"; and both show us how to hold up under life's difficulties. Several striking parallels exist in their lives that further illustrate closeness between them to our benefit.

## **Advocates of the Persecuted**

Among Madre Teresa's letters (no. 218 in Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh's new ICS Publications edition) we find a burning plea to the King of Spain for the release of her kidnapped collaborator John of the Cross. This was the letter in which she described her fellow Doctor of the Church as a saint for "he is one and has been one all his life." By penning that missive she dared to approach the most powerful sovereign in Christian Europe: her aim was to enlist his help to protect someone suffering unfairly for following his conscience, not to obtain favors, or privileges to make her own life easier. Centuries later, in the same year she entered one of Teresa's Carmels, Dr. Edith Stein drafted and entrusted a letter to her spiritual director for delivery to the most powerful leader of her own Church, the Pope. She called upon Pius XI to bestir himself to intervene with a moral stance against the "open heresy" behind an upsurge of Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany that, she was sure, would eventually turn into persecution of the Church as well. Both the arguments and the style she adopted indicate she was not writing merely to better her own personal condition, rather, she was clearly appealing to the Successor of Peter to protect innocent people unjustly persecuted by insidious enemies of God.

## **Forced to Move**

Teresa the Foundress felt forced to abandon the monastery she entered for a new monastic home to assure greater fidelity to the Rule of Carmel

(the one she adopted at San José was the one she felt was observed by the hermits on Mount Carmel). Teresa Benedicta was forced to leave her monastery in Cologne on the Rhine for another in a small village in Holland, after the ravages of the Kristallnacht pogrom endangered herself and her beloved community in the Schnurgasse. A copy of the petition document she signed to ask Vatican approval for her transfer (published by the Catholic Historical Review) shows her signature affixed to that tragic text. She never returned to the Cologne monastery before her untimely death.

### Careful Authors

Teresa the writer felt it necessary to allow sympathetic theologians to edit out overly vivid expressions from her mystical treatises so she could safely avoid problems with the Inquisition. Never in trouble with church censors, Teresa Benedicta took vain steps to have her great synthesis *Finite and Eternal Being* reach print and failed to see it published, due to the discriminatory laws of the Nazis against Jews. She was putting finishing touches on the manuscript of her beautiful commentary *The Science of the Cross*, about Saint Teresa's faithful collaborator Saint John of the Cross, the day the Nazis arrested and deported her to die in Auschwitz.

### Jewish Ancestry

Frequently Teresa of Jesus would put her nuns on their guard against attachment to their family honor, calling it even "black" honor, because she wanted them not to mistreat either herself or some other members of the first generation of Discalced Carmelites who descended from Jewish ancestry. She wanted them to welcome relatives of the so-

called "conversos" into their midst and avoid pride and prejudice: a pride that looks down on others who do not fit one's categories of ethnic worth and swiftly engenders prejudiced behavior against them. Scholarly proof of the Jewish ancestry of Teresa of Avila appeared in America in the first volume of *Carmelite Studies* back in 1980. Her Jewish spiritual daughter, Teresa Benedicta, took pen in hand to ward off contemporary prejudicial attitudes against her people with her beautiful autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family*. The translation of that book received the Catholic Press Association's "Spiritual Book of the Year" Award in 1986. No wondering



Stein was reported to exclaim "This is the truth" the morning she finished reading Saint Teresa's account of her own life. That book captured the many ways God shone through the difficulties and sufferings Teresa encountered, and so it nourished Stein who by then was so hungry to uncover the presence of God in the things she experienced.

### Teachers in the Church

Edith made her momentous discovery of the truth by reading Saint Teresa's autobiography

in 1921 before she entered Saint Teresa's Discalced Carmelite order, and thus before she got to know better the details of La Madre's life and work. Afterward she wrote the following words of praise of the spiritual writer to whom she owed so much: "Actually, there are few saints so humanly near to us as Our Holy Mother. . . a woman with the daring and strength of a man, revealing natural intelligence and heavenly wisdom, a deep knowledge of human nature and a rich spirit's sense of humor, the infinite love of a heart tender as a bride's and kind as a mother's." It would not seem presumptuous, I think, to apply those words written about the "great Teresa" to Stein herself: "so humanly near to us. . . (with) natural intelligence and heavenly wisdom, deep knowledge of human nature, a heart tender as a bride's. . ." Both Teresa of Avila and Teresa Benedicta are teachers of great renown. The former is even one of that rarest of species, a woman Doctor of the Church. If the Vatican continues the practice of declaring doctors of the Church, one would imagine how good the chances of the latter are of joining the others, now that Pope John Paul II has declared

her a saint. Both Teresas realized in their own lives the truth of the gospel reading for the feast of Teresa of Avila: "My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the One who sent me (Jo 7:16)." They served the One who sent them as they assured us God is close to all of life's difficulties. They were very "able in adversity" because they trusted in "the Lord, a rampart, a shield" whose only purpose is to "give us favor and glory (Ps 83:12)," as the Responsorial Psalm for October 15th puts it. May we too learn to read the signs of our times and know how to decipher our particular set of life's problems, so we can allow God's Spirit to well up in us and flow out into others' lives for their consolation (the gospel passage for Saint Teresa's day at Jo 7:38 shows Jesus promising living waters flowing out from those who believe in him).

The story of both Teresa of Avila and Teresa Benedicta Stein assure us that the experience we gain from the things we suffer can affect others for the good and help them forward. By accepting the good example they give of such applied wisdom, we can feel capable of offering meaning and hope to each other. ■



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