The Passion of Edith Stein—Revisited

St. Edith Stein/Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (1891-1942) approached the themes of love and friendship through various meanings of 'passion' in her own life: first, the natural passion of love; second, the love of truth and philosophy; and third, the love of God by participating in the Passion of Christ.[1] The paper draws upon several previously published articles and includes new material from the forthcoming third volume of *The Concept of Woman: The Search for Communion of Persons 1500-2000**.[2] For clarity in this paper, Edith Stein will be identified when drawing upon her work as a lay woman, and Sister Benedicta when drawing upon her work as a Carmelite nun.

I. The Natural Passion of Love

Edith Stein turned to the study of Thomas Aquinas well before her conversion to Catholicism in January 1, 1922.[3] In her own words from *Finite and Eternal Being* Sister Benedicta directly states her debt to Thomas' description of the passions: "And has not St. Thomas given us a carefully worked out *theory of affectivity* with sharply defined concepts and classifications, higher and lower orders?"[4]

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[1] Father Eleutherius Winance, OSB was my professor of phenomenology at Claremont Graduate School, 1963-1964 second semester; and he was instrumental in my being received into the Catholic Church at St. Andrew's Priory, Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 1964. It is with great joy that I dedicate the publication of this paper to him in honor of his 100th birthday, July 10, 2009. This paper was presented at the Edith Stein Project Conference, University of Notre Dame, February 14, 2009. Since it draws upon phenomenology and witnesses to the value of intellectual and spiritual friendship among philosophers, it seems particularly appropriate for inclusion in a publication in honor of Father Winance, who fostered these precious values among his graduate students in Claremont. I graduated (Christine Hope Allen) with a PhD in Philosophy in 1967, and have taught in this field ever since at Concordia University- Sir George Williams University, Montreal from 1969-1996 and St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver from 1998-present).

[2] Material for this lecture is extracted and revised from Prudence Allen, "Sex and Gender differentiation in Hildegard of Bingen and Edith Stein," *Communio* 20 (summer, 1993): 389-414; "The Passion of Saint Edith Stein," *Fides Quarens Intellectum,* vol 1, no. 2 (winter 2001): 201-250; Elizabeth A. Mitchell, Allen, and Wright, *Edith Stein: Seeker of Truth* (Denver, Colorado: ENDOW, 2008), and an unpublished manuscript of *The Concept of Woman: Search for Communion of Persons 1500-2000+*, Part I: Metaphysics, chapter 2. (forthcoming from Eerdmans c. 2011).

[3] Jude Doughterty states in "Edith Stein: The Convert in Search of Illumination," in *Western Creed, Western Identity* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000) that "Long before her baptism she began to study Saint Thomas.", 204. Noting that after her baptism that Stein began a systematic study and translation of Thomas, Ralph McInerny asks in his essay "Edith Stein and Thomism," *Carmelite Studies* 4 (1987): 74-87, "Why of all the great doctors of the Church does she turn first to St. Thomas Aquinas? There seems little doubt that she does so because the Church has put him forth as the preeminent master of Catholic intellectuals. Her response is one of docility.", 80.

[4] Edith Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein: Versuch Eines Aufstiegs Zum Sinn Des Seins* (Freiburg: Herder, 1962). Second unabridged edition, translated by Augustine Spiegelman Gooch as *Finite and Eternal Being*: *Attempt at an ascent to the meaning of being*. PhD. Diss., University of Dallas, 1981, (#413-14), p. 636. Italics will be used to represent this text in its English translation even though it has not yet been published in English , (#67), p. 92. A new translation has been published by by Kurg F. Reinhardt, *Finite and*

St. Thomas states in the *Summa Theologica* that "passion is a movement of the irrational soul, when we *think* of good or evil."[5] This movement is not simply an occurrence without direction. Instead, it is a movement towards or away from what he calls "a sensible good or evil." What this means is that the passion springs up in response to something perceived with the senses, something imagined, or something experienced as either good or evil for the person.[6] St. Thomas understands the passions themselves to be morally neutral in that they simply move through a human being in response to the objects experienced in the world.[7]

Thomas Aquinas laid the foundation for the philosophical analysis of natural passions in Part I of II of the *Summa Theologiae* where he described the six concupiscible passions of love and hatred, desire and aversion, and pleasure and pain as having as their object a sensible (or imagined) good or evil which causes pleasure or pain; and the five irascible passions of hope and despair, fear and daring, and anger as having as their object a sensible (or imagined) good or evil which is arduous.[8]

Stein, who had studied psychology before turning to philosophy, displayed a keen interest in how passions, emotions, feelings, or affectivity, operate in the human person. In her major philosophical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Sister Benedicta suggests that feeling should be joined with thinking and willing as a three-part understanding of the human person in analogy with the Holy Trinity. Adopting the insight of Theodore Haeker she states:

> The geniune three-part division of the spiritual life is that in *thinking, feeling, willing.* Modern psychology has discovered it without anticipating that with this lies the basis to a new and more corresponding *analogia Trinitatis*. The emphasis on feeling as an equal domain near thinking and willing, is thus, important to him because he sees here the proper home of love.[9]

Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2002). When this translation is used, it will be particularly identified.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Westminster, Maryland, Christian Classics, 1948), Pt. I-II, Q. 22. My emphasis.

[6] For a detailed account of this aspect of passion see Howard Gil Weil, *The Dynamic Aspect of Emotions in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Pontificia Studiorium Universitas A.S. Thoma Aq. en urbe, 1966).

[7] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Image, 1995) repeats this view of Thomas: "In themselves passions are neither good nor evil. They are morally qualified only to the extent that they effectively engage reason and will" (#1767); and "Strong feelings are not decisive for the morality of the holiness of persons; they are simply the inexhaustible reservoir of images and affections in which the moral life is expressed. Passions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the *virtues* or perverted by the *vices.*" (#1768).

[8] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I-II, Questions 22-48.

[9] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, (#413-14), p. 636. The reference to Theodor Kaecker is to *Schöpfer und Schöpfung* (Leipzig, 1934).

Many different kinds of love may be distinguished, such as the natural passion of love which springs up from within the human person and spiritual love or charity which is infused into the person from the action of the Holy Spirit. To begin with the natural passion of love, in her doctoral dissertation, *On The Problem of Empathy,* under the direction of Edmund Husserl, Stein offers a rich description of the passions, introducing four different classifications often used by psychologists to measure a particular passion: reach, duration, intensity, and depth. The *reach* of a passion is described as follows:

> We can say that every feeling has a certain mood component that causes the feeling to be spread throughout the "I" from the feeling's place of origin and fill it up. Starting from a peripheral level, a slight resentment can fill me "entirely," but it can also happen upon a deep joy that prevents it from pushing further forward to the center. Now, in turn, this joy progresses victoriously from the center and fills out all the layers above it.[10]

Duration, another dimension of passions, is characterized as: "They not only fill up the 'I' in its depth and width, but also in the 'length' of experienced time they remain in it."[11] *Intensity* of feeling, separate from reach and duration provides a third distinction. The most intense passions tend to set the will in motion almost automatically, unless we develop the capacity to think about them before choosing and acting.

The fourth dimension of a passion is its *depth* in our personality. This dimension particularly opens up for us the objective intention of a passion as it reveals our hierarchy of values. The intentionality of consciousness, the fact that it is directed outwards towards particular real objects at the same time as it is experienced inwardly is a key claim of phenomenology as practised by Husserl and his doctoral student Edith Stein.[12] She offers an example of hierarchy of values revealed through experiencing the passions of anger and of love:

> Anger over the loss of a piece of jewellery comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person himself would be even deeper. This discloses essential relationships among the hierarchy of felt values, the depth classification of value feelings, and the level of classification of the person exposed in these feelings. Accordingly, every time we advance in the value realm, we also make acquisitions in the realm of our own personality.[13]

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[10] Edith Stein, *On The Problem of Empathy*.(Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1989), #116, 104.

[11] Stein, *Empathy*, #116, 104.

[12] See Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), chapter 1, 8-16. See also Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 1-111.

[13] Stein, *Empathy*, #113, 101.

In another example from her *Life,* Stein describes how she loves different forms of music:

> I loved the classical operas as much as I did the great tragedies. The first I heard was *The Magic Flute*. We bought the piano score and soon knew it by heart. So, too, with *Fidelio* which always remained my favorite. I also heard Wagner and during a performance found it impossible wholly to evade its magic. Still I repudiated this music, with the sole exception of *Die Meistersinger*. I had a predilection for Bach. This world of purity and strict regularity attracted me most intimately. Later when I came to know Gregorian chant, I felt completely at home for the first time; and then I understood what had moved me so much in Bach.[14]

Thomas Aquinas argues that love has a natural complementary passion of 'hate' or 'hatred' towards the loss of something or someone who is loved.[15] Thus, ironically, love is a kind of cause of hate. If we juxtapose some events in the relation between Edith Stein and her mother, we can perhaps grasp this dynamic more clearly. In her memoir, *Life in a Jewish Family*, Edith recounts many a tender moment between mother and daughter and remarks that her long evening study sessions were often accompanied by her mother bringing her refreshments and always kissing her good-night. Edith shared these maternal signs of love for her own relations. Professor Gertrud Koebner said of Edith, regarding her effusive expressions of love: "She never let anything interfere with her love for her sisters and brothers and their children. It's impossible to imagine a more devoted nurse or babysitter than she. When she looked at the infants born during those years back home in Breslau, her face wore a smile from another world."[16]

Yet, when Edith wanted to leave university during World War I to serve as a nurse, she relates:

> I had heavy opposition to face from my mother. I did not even tell her that it was a lazaretto [i.e., for those with contagious diseases.] She was well aware that no suggestion of hers that my life would be endangered could ever induce me to change my plans. So as an ultimate deterrent, she told me all the soldiers arrived from the front with clothes overrun by lice and that I could not possibly escape infestation. Naturally that was a scourge I dreaded- but if the people in the trenches all had to suffer from it why should I be better off than they?...
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> When this tactic failed, my mother declared with all the energy she could muster: "You will not go with my permission."
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> My reply was every bit as determined. "Then I must go without your permission."

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[14] Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family (1891-1916)* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 172.

[15] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I-II, Q. 29, art 2.

[16] Edith Stein-Archive, Karmel Koln, cited in Elizabeth Mitchell, *Edith Stein, Seeker of Truth.* See also the detailed description of Susanne M. Bartdorff, *Aunt Edith: The Jewish Heritage of a Catholic Saint* (Springfield, Illoinois: Templegate Publishers, 1998), especially Chapter 10: 119-29.

> My sisters were downright shocked at my harsh retort... Now, however, granite was striking granite. My mother said no more and was very silent and depressed for several days, a mood which always affected the entire household.[17]

It is well known, that at a later date, after Edith Stein entered the Carmelite monastery, that her mother remained silent towards her for years, hating the decision her daughter had made.

In *Finite and Eternal Being* Sister Benedicta describes how a person must engage with his or her natural passions in order to act according to the proper hierarchy of values; she reflects on how natural attraction and aversion or love and hate arises in the soul and what the person should do in relation to a particular passion:

> Of course, one indeed regards love and hate as elemental powers which fall upon the soul without it being able to resist them. Already from their inclination and disinclination men used to say that they 'could do nothing about them.' And in fact: the soul 'responds' to the 'impression' which it receives from a man—often, at once, with the first movement; otherwise, with longer acquaintance -- involuntarily with preference or dislike, perhaps also with indifference; it feels drawn or repelled; and, it can concern there in an absolutely meaningful coming-to-grips of its own being [*Seins*] with the foreign; a feeling-itself-drawn to what promises its enrichment and challenge, a detour for someone for whom it signifies a danger.[18]

Sister Benedicta's approach, both Thomistic and phenomenological, to the passions of love and hate continue when she argues that it is extremely important to advert to a passion and make a decision about it:

> On the other hand, here serious deceptions are possible: externals can cover the true being [*Sein*] of man and with this, also the significance which belongs to him for others. These natural impulses are, therefore, not something one simply may ignore; it is, however, also not 'rational' to abandon them; they are a verification with the help of the intellect and an influence accessible through the will and are needed.[19]

The human person is able to make a decision for or against a particular passion, while at the same time adverting to it as real. In the third step, Stein describes how this can happen with respect to the passions of aversion or hate:

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[17] Stein, *Life,* 319.

[18] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, #410, p. 631.

[19] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, #410, p. 631.

> And, against all games, the inclination and disinclination stand upright by the command of the Lord: *You shouldst serve with charity others as yourself.* This holds without conditions and deductions.... The saint who resolves on it in confidence to heroically love his enemy, has experienced that he has the freedom to love. A natural aversion is perhaps still maintained for a time; however, it is powerless and not able to influence behavior which is guided by supernatural love.... Love is, indeed his ultimate sense of devotion of his own being [*Seins*] and becoming-one with the beloved.[20]

In her doctoral dissertation, *On the Problem of Empathy*, Edith Stein made some other important distinctions between a primordial experience and a secondary experience of the same passion. She gives an example of this distinction when discussing joy:

> I actively bring to mind a former joy, for example, or a passed examination. I transfer myself into it, i.e., I turn to the joyful event and depict it to myself in all its joyfulness. Suddenly I notice that I, this primordial, remembering "I", am full of joy. I remember the joyful event and take primordial joy in the remembered event. However, the memory joy and the memory "I" have vanished or, at most, persist beside the primordial joy and the primordial "I." Naturally, this primordial joy over past events can also occur directly... Finally, I may be primordially joyful over the past joy, making the difference between these two acts especially prominent.[21]

This distinction between two between two different experiences of joy, primordial and secondary, soon becomes the foundation for her original analysis of empathy. Stein lays the foundation for her more complex analysis of interpersonal relations and love of friendship.

> Now let us take the parallel to empathy. My friend comes to me beaming with joy and tells me he has passed his examination. I comprehend his joy empathically; transferring myself into it, I comprehend the joyfulness of the event and am now primordially joyful over it myself. I can also be joyful without first comprehending the joy of the other. Should the examination candidate step into the tense, impatient family circle and impart the joyful news, in the first place, they will be primordially joyful over his news. Only when they have been "joyful long enough" themselves, will they be joyful over their joy or, perhaps as the third possibility, be joyful over his joy. But his joy is neither give to us as primordial joy over the event nor as primordial joy over his joy. Rather it is given as this non-primordial act of empathy that we have already described more precisely.[22]

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[20] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, #410-411, p. 632A.
[21] Stein, *Empathy*, #14, p. 14.

[22] Stein, *Empathy*, #13, p. 13.

In the following passage Edith introduces the theory that in friendship and love a human passion can be a *shared experience even in a primordial way*:

> Should empathy persist beside primordial joy over the joyful event (beside the comprehension of the joy of the other), and, moreover, should the other really be conscious of the event as joyful (possibly it is also joyful for me, for example, if this passed examination is the condition of a trip together so that I am happy for him as the means to it), we can designate this primordial act as joy-with-him or, more generally, as fellow feeling. ...The joy of the most intimate participant will generally be more intense and enduring than the other's joy. But it is also possible for the other's joy to be more intense. They may be naturally capable of more intense feelings than he; they may be "altruistic" and "value for others" *eo ipso* mean more to them than "values for themselves"; finally, this even may have lost some of its value through circumstances unknown to the others. On the other hand, in the ideal case (where there is no deception) empathic joy expressly claims to be the same in every respect as comprehended joy, to have the same content and only a different mode of being given.[23]

With this theoretical introduction of Edith Stein's phenomenological analysis of the human passions, this paper now turns more directly to her passion for truth and the way in which human friendships supported and strengthened her love for truth.

II. The Love of Truth

In *Fides et ratio,* John Paul II identifies the desire for truth as a fundamental passion in human nature: "Born and nurtured when the human being first asked questions about the reason for things and their purpose, philosophy shows in different modes and forms that the desire for truth is part of human nature itself."[24] Edith Stein, in her essay on "Husserl and Aquinas: A comparison," describes this drive within the philosopher as part of the potentiality of human nature:

> ...the spirit of genuine philosophy alive in every true philosopher, in anyone who cannot resist an inner need to search out the *logos* [*logos,* mind, reason] of this world, its *ratio* (as Thomas translated the word). The born philosopher brings this spirit with him into the world—as *potency*, in Thomistic terminology. The potency becomes actualized when he meets a mature philosopher, a "teacher." This is the way true philosophers reach out to one another over the bounds of space and time.[25]

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[23] Stein, *Empathy*, #14-15, pp. 14-15.

[24] John Paul II, *Fides et ratio* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998), #3.

[25] Edith Stein, "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison, Version I," in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. by Walter Redmond (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2000), 7-8. For a more complete analysis of Stein's work on Thomas and Husserl, see Sister Mary Catherine Baseheart, S.C.N., The Encounter of Husserl's Phenomenology and the Philosophy of St. Thomas in Selected Writings of Edith Stein, Ph.D. Diss,

In *Fides et ratio* John Paul II also proposes Edith Stein and Thomas Aquinas as models of how to integrate faith and reason in the elaboration of pathways to the truth. Stein herself reflected on this question when she noted a material and formal dependence of philosophy on faith and the place of "supernatural reason" in philosophy.[26] One of her axioms is summarized as: "Philosophy aspires after truth to the greatest possible extent and with the greatest possible certainty."[27]

As a young woman Edith Stein was driven by an intellectual desire for truth, a love for truth, and an intellectual delight and joy in discovering truth. Her passion for truth is captured in the titles of many recent works on Edith Stein: i.e., Joyce Averech Berkman's excellent and thorough chapter entitled, "The Intellectual Passion of Edith Stein: A Biographical Profile;" Angela Ales Bello's Italian text: *Edith Stein: La Passione per la Verità;* Terry Wright's article, "Artistic Truth and the True Self in Edith Stein; Rhonda Chervin's chapter "Edith Stein: Love of Truth; Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda's chapter "My Desire for Truth Was Itself a Prayer"; and Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D's "Truth in Final Glory."[28]

An important characteristic of Stein's philosophical passion for truth is her collaboration with others in the search for objective truth. Stein describes in her own words how she forged a friendship with three girl friends to study psychology, medicine, and philosophy. "Without a moment's hesitation, ... we plunged into Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I no longer recall how far into it we got. With death-defying fervour, during one semester, we plowed through all of Meumann's *Experimental Psychology*..."[29] Their shared intellectual excitement flowed over into her private life as well. She continues her account:

University of Notre Dame (1960). See also John Nota, "Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger," in *Carmelite Studies* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987): 50-73.

[26] Stein, "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison," 17-20.

[27] Stein, "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison," 17. See also Mary Catherine Baseheart, S.C.N., who states: "The most striking characteristics of her [Stein's] investigations has been mentioned above: her passionate pursuit of truth.", *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), x.

[28] See Joyce Averech Berkman, "The Intellectual Passion of Edith Stein: A Biographical Profile," in her edited book *Contemplating Edith Stein* (Notre Dame Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), chapter 1, 15-47; Angela Ales Bello, *Edith Stein: La Passione per la Verità* (Padova: Edizioni Messaggero Padova, 1999); Terry Wright, "Artistic Truth and the True Self in Edith Stein," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly,* vol. 82, no 1 (Winter 2008):127-142; Rhonda Chervin, "Edith Stein: Lover of Truth", in James Sullivan, ed. *Blessed by The Cross: Five Portraits of Edith Stein* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Catholics United for the Faith, 1990): 17-20; Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, "My Desire for Truth Was Itself a Prayer" in *Edith Stein: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 2001), 59-60; and Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D's "Truth in Final Glory," in *Edith Stein: Philosopher and Mystic* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990): 155-61.

[29] Stein, *Life*, 122.

> I had just finished my first semester (at the university) and had brought along Spinoza's *Ethics* to read during that vacation. I was never found without the small book. If we went into the woods, I carried it in the pocket of my rainproof cape; and while the others lolled around under the trees, I would search out a deer lookout, climb up to it, and then become absorbed, alternately, in deductions about the sole substance, and then in the view of sky, mountains, and woods.[30]

These complementary ways of expressing her love for truth include both dialogue with friends and times of solitary contemplation. Added to this is a vigorous disposition to work hard on writing. She provides us with a remarkable description of this process as she worked on her doctoral dissertation in 1916.

> Now I resolutely put aside everything derived from other sources and began, entirely at rock bottom, to make an objective examination of the problem of empathy according to phenomenological methods. Oh, what a difference compared to my former efforts! Of course, each morning I seated myself at my desk with some trepidation. I was like a tiny dot in limitless space. Would anything come to me out of this great expanse—anything which I could grasp? I lay as far back as I could in my chair, and strenuously focused my mind on what at the moment I deemed the most vital question. After a while, it seemed as though light began to dawn. Then I was able, at least, to formulate a question and to find ways to attack it. And as soon as one point became clear, new questions arose in various directions (Husserl used to call these "new horizons"). ... [P]age after page was filled. The writing would bring a rosy glow to my face, and an unfamiliar feeling of happiness surged through me.... I was amazed at all the knowledge I now had about things of which I had been totally unaware a few hours earlier.[31]

Later on in her life, Sister Benedicta lost this early enthusiasm for her philosophical writing, but she still worked because that was her gift to others. In a letter written in 1934 to the Father Provincial of the Dominican Fathers in Cologne, she writes:

> In recent years, it has cost me a great deal to become ever more aware that I lack the necessary equipment to undertake the tremendous intellectual tasks imposed on us by our times, which I am convinced I see very clearly.
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> Even more painful is the insight that it is too late to make up these deficiencies. I would be very happy not to have to do any more writing. But as long as my superiors are of the opinion that through my knowledge I may be able and obligated to be of use to others, I shall have to accept the fact that

[30] Stein, *Life,* 132.

[31] Stein, *Life,* 376-77.

> the shortcomings, so well known to me, will also become apparent to others.[32]

One of the most striking aspects of her love for truth was her engagement in dialogues of friendship to help correct her errors and participate in a community of Catholic scholars once she had converted to the faith (requesting Baptism, as is so often reported after reading the Life of Teresa of Avila with the words: "This is the Truth!").[33] Her love of truth led her to her great love of friendship; and her love of friendship led her to an ever greater love of truth. Thomas Aquinas identified four essential characteristics of friendship: it is based on benevolence, is mutual, is founded on communication, and is a form of charity.[34] These characteristics flourished among Edith and her philosopher friends: Roman Ingarden, Jacques and Raissa Maritain, and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Each of these examples will be described in turn.

We saw above how in undergraduate university Edith Stein studied philosophy and psychology together with her friends. In graduate school, among her many friends was **Roman Ingarden (1873-1970)**, who later was the person who introduced her work to the young Karol Wojtyla. Ingarden himself described his intimate intellectual friendship with Stein:

> ...we conversed together every day [1916-1917] on many subjects, but especially on various details of her personal activities as an assistant [to Husserl]....When eventually I went for several months to my own country, a lively correspondence took place between us. [When] I came back to Freiburg [1917-1918]...[h]ardly a day passed during that period in which we did not meet and talk together. Having passed my doctor's degree examination I returned to Cracow, and from that time till the outbreak of war in 1939 we met only twice; ...but during the whole of that period we continually wrote letters to each other**.** After the end of the war I was told that she had been killed.[35]

Alasdair MacIntyre, in *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922,* often refers to the relation between these two intellectual friends. [36] From the over 150 letters

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[32] Edith Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters: 1916-1942* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993), #184 , 189.

[33] Joyce Berkman mentions also that Edith Stein had carefully studied Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, making a thirty day retreat ending with her conversion. See "The Intellectual Passion of Edith Stein," note 73.

[34] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, Q. 23.

[35] Roman Ingarden, "Edith Stein On Her Activity as an Assistant of Edmund Husserl: Extracts from the Letters of Edith Stein with a Commentary and Introductory Remarks," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 23, no. 2 (December 1962): 155-75.

[36] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922* (Lanham/Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 74 and 90. For example, between 1913-1916, "On her visit to Heidelberg, ...she also deepened her friendship with Roman Ingarden ...[who] was two years younger than Stein;" and from 1916-1922 after the war, "Roman Ingarden, on whom Stein had relied heavily for intellectual support— returned to a newly independent Poland."

exchanged, in their correspondence between 1917-1918, Stein shares her work of preparing the manuscript of "the Master" Husserl's Part I of *Ideas* for publication. She also speaks with Ingarden about her frustration that her relationship with Husserl is not one of genuine collaboration, and even though she is offering introductory classes in phenomenology: "[O]nly habilitation [pre-requisite for appointment as professor] is out of reach for me (though Elly [Husserl's daughter Elisabeth] pleaded my case in that regard), for that is opposed 'on principle.'"[37]

In a letter she thanks Ingarden for his critique of her doctoral dissertation, and adds that she needs to clarify the concept of 'psyche', which in turn is dependent upon the clarification of the concept of 'intellect'. Stein adds: "I must learn to go into greater depth. In any case, I believe that is the weak spot of my talent. Basically, I work more with my poor understanding than with intuitive gifts; perhaps that is why I am especially suited to be the Master's assistant."[38] During this period she was working for Husserl on his concept of the person, as she often shared with Roman Ingarden. At the same time, however, she tells her friend: "At present I am occupying myself somewhat with physics and mathematics (in the interest of natural philosophy)."[39] Edith Stein tried to mediate for Ingarden with Husserl, and she writes about her failure. As MacIntyre recounts: "In a letter to Roman Ingarden in June (1918) she tells how she had visited Husserl in the hope of discussing Ingarden's work with him, but 'on the doorstep I met the little Heidegger, the three of us took a long walk—very nice— and talked about the philosophy of religion.'"[40]

The second friendship that Edith Stein loved was with Jacques and Raissa Maritain. Although this relationship did not have the intimacy of her student friendships, it offered a new experience of love of professional friendship among scholars. **Jacques Maritain (1882-1973)**, invited Edith Stein, when she was a professor at the College Marianum in Münster, at the height of her research and lectures on the concept of woman, to attend some intellectual retreats with others interested in Thomas Aquinas. Maritain describes the dynamics of the Study Circles and Annual Retreats at Meudon, one of which Edith Stein attended:

> ...those who attended them formed a most varied ensemble. There were young persons and old persons, male students and female students, and professors — laymen (in the majority), priests and religious—professional philosophers, doctors, poets, musicians, men engaged in practical life, those who were learned and those who were uneducated —Catholics (in the

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[37] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, Letters to Ingarden, #3, #5-8, here #8, 3-11. See also a (1931) letter #85 to Sister Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, OSB, in which Edith Stein describes her failed attempt to engage Heidegger in helping her., 83-84.

[38] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #13, 15.

[39] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #14, 17. See also #19-20, 21-23.

[40] MacIntyre, *Edith Stein*, 164. He cites a twice removed series of sources for this letter: *Briefe an Roman Ingarden, 1917-38*, Freiburg: Herder 1991, p. 36, quoted in T.F. O'Meara, O.P., *Erich Przywara: His Theology and His World*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002, p. 120.

> majority), but also unbelievers, Jews, Orthodox, Protestants.... The unity came either from a *profound love*, or from a more or less great interest in Thomist thought. It came also from *the climate of friendship* and of liberty in which all were received.
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> They did not go to class... They were received into the hearth of a family, they were the guests of Raissa Maritain. Such meetings and such a work in common are inconceivable without a feminine atmosphere. ... Without her [Raissa]—and without her little sister—[Vera] there would have been no Thomist circles, any more than there would have been a Meudon (any more than there would have been a Jacques Maritain).[41]

In one letter of 1932, Edith Stein writes to Jacques Maritain: "My heartfelt thanks for your kindness in sending me your important new work [*The Degrees of Knowledge*] To study it will be a great gain for me.... I recall with great pleasure the wonderful day in Juvisy and the hours spent in your home. With grateful and most cordial greetings to your dear wife (Raïssa)..."[42] Jacques Maritain later wrote about his own experience of meeting Edith in earlier years: "How can one describe the purity, the light which shone from Edith Stein at the time of her conversion, the total generosity which one felt in her and which was to bear fruit in martyrdom?"[43]

In 1933, Edith Stein wrote a second letter to Jacques and Raissa Maritain, in which she thanked them for another gift:

> You have given me great joy with your beautiful book [no indication of which book]... I, too, cherish a grateful memory of the beautiful hours in Juvisy and Meudon. All during the past month I have been greatly consoled by the thought of having such *good friends united to us by the bond of faith*. I no longer have my position with the Pedagogical Institute and I will be leaving Münster in a few weeks. But do not be concerned about me: ... ('All things work together for the good of those who *love* God.').[44]

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[41] See Jacques Maritain, "Thomist Study Circles and Their Annual Retreats (1919-1939)," *Notebooks*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Albany, New York: Magi Books, Inc., 1984), chapter 5: 133-185, here 134-135, for his personal journals on the purposes and persons present at various meetings. Emphasis added.

[42] Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #125, 124-25. Sarah Borden notes that Stein does try to integrate some of Maritain's themes in her work on *Finite and Eternal Being*, by employing Jacques Maritain's distinctions about Christian philosophy, in *Edith Stein* (London/New York: Continuum, 2003), 95.

[43] Freda Mary Oben, *Edith Stein: Scholar.Feminist.Saint*, (New York: Alba Hourse, 1988), 19, note 25 which refers back to Jacques Maritain, forward to John M. Oesterreicher, *Walls are Crumbling* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1950), vii.

[44] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #144, 146-47. In 1953 Jacques Maritain wrote another essay in which he referred to primordial forms of things that could be accessed through the preconscious of an artist. There are interesting connections between Maritain's theme and Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross's theme of pure forms. See "The Preconscious Life of the Intellect," in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), esp. 69. Emphasis added.

Shortly after Hitler came into power, all those with Jewish heritage were denied the opportunity to teach; and so Edith Stein then requested entrance into the Carmelite Monastery in Cologne. She seemed to have experienced a foretaste of the deeper reality of Christian friendship that builds communion on earth that will become eternal in heaven. St. Augustine, St Thomas, Aelred of Rivaux, and the Maritains all described Christian friendship as the foundation for eternal relations among human beings.[45]

In the third example, Edith Stein developed a great love for her friend **Hedwig Conrad-Martius (1888-1966),** who had published several books and major articles on ontology and metaphysics establishing herself as "the 'first lady' of German philosophy."[46] Their correspondence began around 1918 with a formal salutation of "Dear Frau Dr. Conrad" and signed "Best regards, Edith Stein;" and it developed by 1938 into the more intimate salutation of "Dear Hatti" and signed "In the love of Christ, your Benedicta."[47] Hedwig Martius, completed her doctoral dissertation;[48] and finally secured a teaching position in philosophy at the University of Munich in 1949, which she held for over 15 years.[49] Hedwig and Edith shared a love of metaphysics, phenomenology (and Husserl in particular), and the profound bond of Hedwig being her "beloved baptismal sponsor" when Edith was received into the Catholic Church in 1922.[50]

In some of their letters Edith and Hedwig clarified points of agreement and disagreement in their respective thoughts about the relation of ontology to metaphysics and about the proper range of metaphysical enquiry. For example, in 1932 Stein states: "But I have another idea about metaphysics: as a grasp of the whole of reality through an

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[45] See Prudence Allen, RSM, "Friendship, Gender, and Vocation," *Josephinum: Journal of Theology*, vol. 15, no. 1 (winter/spring 2008): 102-139.

[46] James G. Hart, "Hedwig Conrad-Martius' Ontological Phenomenology", (Ph.d diss., The University of Chicago Divinity School, 1972), 1. In addition to her doctoral dissertation *Die erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen des Postivismus*, on the subject of the ground of the theory of knowledge of positivisms under Husserl at Goettingen in 1912, she published the following: *Our Anthology und Erscheinungslehre der realen Aussenwelt* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1916); *Metaphysische Gespraeche* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1921); *Realontologie* (Halle: Neimeyer, 1923); *Bios und Psyche* (Hamburg: Classen & Goverts, 1949); *Abstammungshehre* (Munich: Koesel, 1950); *Naturwissenschaftlich-metaphysische Perspectiven* (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1949); *Die Zeit* (Munich: Koesel, 1957); *Utopien der Menschenzuechtung*, *Der Sozialdarwinismus und seine Folgen* (Munich: Koesel, 1955); *Das Sein* (Munich: Koesel, 1957); *Der Raum* (Munich: Koesel, 1958); *Die Geistseele des Menschen* (Munich: Koesel, 1960), *Ser Selbstaufbau der Natur* (Munich: Koesel, 1961); and *Schriften our Philosophie*, I (1963), II (1964), and III (1965) (Munich: Koesel) with her philosophical writings from Journals 1927-1962. See Hart, 639-41.

[47] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Lette*rs, #23, 36 and #257, 270.

[48] See Hart, "Hedwig Conrad-Martius' Ontological Phenomenology", where he states that "The work is referred to as "die Preisschrift" because it won a prize at Goettingen. The University had offered a prize for the best essay on positivism. Husserl was willing to accept the work for a doctorate at Goettingen. However, because Goettingen did not recognize the "real gymnasium" diploma of Conrad-Martius she took her degree at Munich under Pander– who acknowledged it immediately as a doctoral thesis., 12 note 1.

[49] Hart, "Hedwig Conrad-Martius' Ontological Phenomenology", 6.

[50] See Oben, *Edith Stein*, 16-20.

inclusion of revealed truth, and therefore grounded on philosophy *and* theology."[51] In 1933, she describes more of her methodology and of the cross-fertilization of their two philosophical minds: "[T]he paper on *Act and Potency* that I wrote in the summer of 1931... is in no way in a condition ready for publication and I believe I've advanced in many points this winter, but at least you would see in it the attempt to come from a scholasticism to phenomenology, and vice versa (You might also be moved ... to make available to me as soon as possible your work on matter and mind and the one on substance and soul.)."[52]

In the same letter Edith Stein admits to her "godmother" her insecurity as a scholar and asks for her intercessory prayers:

> Yes, if you will undertake to mediate for your godchild the meaning of her life's task. I shall be very glad to send you this monstrous opus [on Catholic pedagogy], obviously so you may criticize it severely; a *radical* critique for I have often asked myself whether, in fact, I am not overreaching my own capabilities in the philosophical work I have undertaken. I believe this doubt haunts me ever since Lipps... criticized my long article in the fifth *Jahrbuch* so radically: and at that same time Frau Reinach attempted to show me that the shortcomings in my work... lay in the fact of my having far deeper shortcomings.[53]

The beautiful example of intellectual friendship that this letter reveals puts a face-to-face dialogue on the metaphysical retrieval that Edith Stein will develop**.** Even with suffering from the sting of previous critiques, Edith asks her friend Hedwig to give her a **"**radical critique" as well. Before long they exchanged complete copies of each other's collected works.[54]

The significance of this dynamic of critique and honest evaluation of philosophical work between the two women philosophers in the first part of the twentieth century anticipates an important development in the Church in the middle of this century. In 1964, Pope Paul VI, in Chapter III of *Ecclesiam Suam,* declared that: "To this internal drive of charity which seeks expression in the external gift of charity, We will apply the word "dialogue."[55] Just four years later the young Karol Wojtyla, in *The Acting Person* describes critical dialogue as "the one that may be applied to the formation and the strengthening of inter-human solidarity through the attitude of opposition… The principle of dialogue seems to be best suited to select and bring out what in controversial situations

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[51] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #126, 126.

[52] *Ibid.*, #135, 134..

[53] *Ibid.*, #135, 135. Her emphasis.

[54] *Ibid.*, #138, 137-38.

[55] Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, 64.

is right and true, and to eliminate any partial, preconceived, or subjective views and attitudes."[56] Pope John Paul II developed this notion further in *Ut Unum Sint*:

> If prayer is the "soul" … of the yearning for unity, it is the basis and support for *everything the council defines as "dialogue."* This definition is certainly not unrelated to today's *personalist way of thinking*. The capacity for "dialogue" is rooted in the nature of the person and his dignity. As seen by philosophy, this approach is linked to the Christian truth concerning man as expressed by the Council: man is in fact "the only creature on earth which God willed for itself"; thus he cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself". Dialogue is an indispensable step along the path *towards human self-realization*, the self-realization both of *each individual* and of *every human community.* Although the concept of "dialogue" might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension. It involves the human subject in his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each.
>
> This truth about dialogue, so profoundly expressed by Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, was also taken up by the Council in its teaching and ecumenical activity. Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some ways it is always an "exchange of gifts."[57]

Edith Stein anticipated in her Christian friendship with Hedwig Conrad-Martius the authentic attitude of inter-personal engagement encouraged by that John Paul II in *Vita Consecrata*:

> The experience of recent years widely conforms that "*dialogue is the new name of charity*", especially within the Church. Dialogue helps us to see the true implications of problems and allows them to be addressed with greater hope of success. *The consecrated life*, by the very fact that it promotes the value of fraternal life, *provides a privileged experience of dialogue*.[58]

It was very fortunate that Hedwig had all of Edith Stein's works, for upon entering religious life, she took nothing with her. By the end of 1934 she now writes as "Sister Benedicta" to her old friend: "I am very grateful that you occupy yourself with *Akt und Potenz* [*Act and Potency*]. I had just intended to ask you for that book in this letter. Mother Subprioress is very eager for me to prepare it for publication... I would

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[56] Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969), 344. The Polish edition was published in 1969.

[57] John Paul II, Encyclical *Ut unum sint* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1995), 28, referring back to *Gaudium et spes*, 24 and *Lumen Gentium*, 13.

[58] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata* (Sherbrooke, QC: Mediaspaul, 1996), 74. Our italics. This principle is stated in the inverse in *Fraternal Life in Communion*: "Without dialogue and attentive listening, community members run the risk of living juxtaposed or parallel lives, a far cry from the ideal of fraternity.", 32.

appreciate very much knowing whether you consider it worth publishing..."[59] Then five months later, "For the past few days our Father Provincial was here with us and he has given me the task of preparing *Akt und Potenz* for publication... [T]he discussion of your *Metaphysische Gespräche [Metaphysical Discourses]* cannot remain as it is... Now I would have to use Seinsstufen [Degrees of Being] and the book on plants as a basis. I would be most grateful if you could send me both as soon as possible."[60]

By summer of 1935, Sr. Benedicta is deep into the revision process and shares with Hedwig: "I was stuck in the first part of my manuscript and, to get on with it, I urgently needed to consult other sources, particularly Aristotle and Thomas...[and] the article on substance and soul that you wrote for *Recherches*, and I need it badly.... Probably very little of my manuscript will remain, for I now find it completely inadequate."[61] Sister Benedicta clarifies for Hedwig the new direction that she is taking in her thought in another letter a few months later: "... I seem to be more Platonic and more Augustinian than you, perhaps precisely because I proceed from Aristotle-Thomas. What I say about substance resulted from a tough wrestling to understand the Aristotelian *ousia* [substance.] Essentially I owe the whole breakthrough from the first draft to the second to my work with Aristotle."[62]

In an additional paragraph with significance for the history of the concept of woman, Sister Benedicta invites Hedwig Conrad-Martius to share her intellectual friendship with Gertrud von le Fort: "I believe you would be please to read Gertrud von le Fort's book *Die ewige Frau [The Eternal Woman]*. ... It has three sections: ...The Eternal Woman, Woman in Time, The Timeless Woman. The final section is [on] the mother. And you would make Gertrud von le Fort very happy were you to send her the plant book; *you will notice yourself how much the two belong together*. After all, at my very first meeting with Gertrud von le Fort I found a strong affinity with you. It would be wonderful if the two of you got in touch."[63] In this attempt to join the two scholars, one a metaphysician and the other a poet, Sister Benedicta, perhaps unknowingly, begins to prepare the way for her own departure from their lives.

From this time on, their correspondence begins to share the dark clouds that were gathering in Germany, i.e., nephews going to America and the suffering and death of her mother. Yet Sister Benedicta continues her writing on what will become *Finite and Eternal Being*: "Now I have been able to resume work on the endless opus. For several weeks I have been plaguing myself with an appendix on Heidegger's *Philosophy of*

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[59] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #189, 194.

[60] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #201, 206-207.

[61] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #205, 212.

[62] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #213, 220. Bold my emphasis. For an article on the relation between the early work of Edith Stein on woman's *ethos* and Aristotle, see Jane Kelley Rodeheffer, "On Spiritual Maternity: Edith Stein, Aristotle, and the Nature of Woman," *Annual ACPA Proceedings*, vol, LXXII (1999): 285-303.

[63] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters,* #213, 220. As a good friend, Sr. Teresa Benedicta gave Hedwig explicit directions on how to find the book and how to get in touch with Gertrud. Emphasis added..

Being. And, because I had to plow through all his works to do so, I could not even read your reprints."[64] In another letter of 1936, after sharing her news of the possible publication of her own "small attempt" at ontology, she supported her friend: "Your ontology is eminently ahead of mine, even if it is not written; it stands behind everything you have said and written in the past years." And she asks Hedwig for her review of Heidegger's *Being and Time*; and "[b]esides that I would like *very* much to have an introductory presentation on the latest on atomic theory, if you have anything on that."[65] This request is likely a response to the excitement in the 1930's attendant upon the meetings of the International Congress for the Unity of Science in Copenhagen, in 1934 and 1936. At the center of this excitement was the challenge for positivism of the developing restated claims of Niels Bohr for theories of complementarity for the relations between different explanatory theories of "kinetic-dynamic complementarity and wave-particle complementarity."[66]

By 1938, her manuscript *Finite and Eternal Being* was being bounced around different publishers who apparently feared publishing it because of the situation in Germany and Austria with respect to her Jewish heritage. In 1940, Sister Benedicta sent her last very guarded letter, with no salutation, but asked if Hedwig could send her a new book so that she could write something again... and "since the printing of the book came to a standstill."[67]

III. Love of God Through Participation in the Passion of Christ

The Passion of Christ is related to the gift of martyrdom as a suffering for the faith, in obedience to a call from God the Father, for the redemption of others. It also included a notion of "passing over" or "alteration" due to an action of another with a specific goal of sharing in the redemptive sufferings of Christ.[68] James Collins notes that Edith Stein was discussing this mystery as early as a lecture in 1931:

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[64] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #224, 233-34. See also, John Nota, "Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger," *Carmelite Studies IV; Edith Stein Symposium: Teresian Culture* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987):50-73.

[65] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #228, 240. Niels Bohr's discovery of the principle of complementarity of classical and quantum physics with respect to understanding how to measure light as a wave or a particle would have been part of this new atomic theory that Sr. Teresa Benedicta was seeking to understand. It is also significant that Dietrich von Hildebrand shortly after used the phrase "metaphysical complementarity" of a man and a woman in marriage, in his 1929 lecture *Die Ehe* (On Marriage).

[66] See *The Philosophical Writings of Niels Bohr: Causality and Complementarity*, ed Jan Faye and Henry J. Folse (Woodbridge, Connecticut: Ox Bow Press, 1998). See especially the editor's introduction 1-23 for a discussion of his complex relations between complementarity theories, and logical positivism, realism, and metaphysics. See also the actual texts of his lectures on these themes between 1932-1938 in Cambridge, Copenhagen, and Warsaw, and publications in scientific journals during the same time frame up and including 1962.

[67] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, #315, 326. See also #257, 270-71.

> In company with Przywara and other leaders of German Catholic intellectual life she participated in the many conferences which were indicative of a deep-rooted and articulate religious quickening. Her lectures delivered before university audiences as well as at popular meetings of Catholic associations sought to impart to others the fruit of her meditation upon the Mystery of Faith and the mystery of being. In one such address given at Bendorf-on-Rhein she affirmed her belief that all our educational and cultural endeavor must be directed to forming ourselves on the model of the Person of Jesus Christ. To become an *alter Christus* is the norm of our conduct, the final goal of earthly existence.[69]

Sister Benedicta, in *Finite and Eternal Being* describes how the soul acts as the 'three-dimensional' meeting space for the dual nature the essence of a particular person:

> The soul is the "space" in the center of the body-soul-spiritual totality. As *sentient soul it abides in the body,* in all its members and parts, receiving impulses and influences from it and working upon it formatively and with a view to its preservation. As *spiritual soul it rises above itself*, gaining insight into a world that lies beyond its own self—a world of things, persons, and events—communicate with this world and receiving its influences.... [I]n the soul the personal I is in its very home... Here, in this inwardness of the soul everything that enters from these worlds is weighed and judged, and here there takes place the appropriation of that which becomes the most personal property and a constituent part of the self—that which, figuratively speaking, "becomes flesh and blood."...
>
> The soul cannot live without receiving.... [T]he recipient is an existent with an essence of nature of its own (i.e. an *ousia*), an existent which has its own specific mode of receiving and which incorporates into its own being that which has been received. What discloses and reveals itself in these experiences is the very essence or nature of the soul, with all the qualities and powers that are rooted in the essence. In these experiences the soul appropriates to itself what it needs in order to become what it is destined to be.[70]

When considering the human being in general, Sr. Benedicta argues, according to the Reinhardt translation, that "Not the essential form but only the pure form of the essence of which things '*partake*' by their essential form is what is 'communicable' to a

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[68] See "Passion" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1967).

[69] James Collins, "Edith Stein and the Advance of Phenomenology," *Thought: Fordham University Quarterly*, vol xvii, no. 67 (December 1942), 708.

[70] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 373-74. Stein also speaks of an individual form. See Sarah Borden Sharkey, "Edith Stein and Thomas Aquinas on Being and Essence," *American Catholic Philosophical Association Quarterly*, 82, 1 (winter 2008): 87-104 for an excellent discussion of individual form.

multitude of individual things."[71] In the Gooch translation, the same passage reads: "'Participating' in a multiplicity of individual things is not the form of a nature, but a pure form or essence with which things '*participate'* through their form of a nature."[72] Either by participation or partaking, the pure form of human being is communicated to the essential form of an individual thing of its kind:

> ...[T]he being human of this particular human being is actual and actuating in this person. This person shares it with no other human being. It is not, prior to the person's own being, but steps into existence together with the person. It determines *what* this particular human being is at any particular time, and this changing what expresses a more or less extensive approximation to the end, i.e., to the *pure form*.[73]

The pure form is outside of time and space, but as a real end, it provides the goal for the actualization of an individual woman or man. In Sister Benedicta's words: "The human being who attains to his or her end does not thereby become a *pure form* but rather a perfect image or copy of the pure form. And whether the person attains to the end or not, the person bears within the self the 'seed' of the end."[74] Thus we can say that the canonization of St. Edith Stein/Teresa Benedicta of the Cross implies that she became a perfect copy of the pure form of human being and of the unique pure form of her own particular identity as that specific woman philosopher who lived in Germany between 1891 and 1942.

In 1936, Sister Benedicta was asked to write a book about the mystical way of St. John of the Cross, the 16th century co-founder with St. Teresa of Avila of the Carmelite reform. She entitled the work: *The Science of the Cross*; and in it she directly linked the passion of Christ with the dark night of the soul: "To engage in battle with one's desires or to take up one's Cross means actively to enter into the Dark Night."[75]

In her final years, some of the ways that Sister Benedicta lived her spiritual passion of love for the Passion of Christ may see seen in her correspondence and in other's witness to her actions. In 1938 she wrote Mother Petra Brüning, of the Ursuline Order, from Cologne Carmel, describing her vocation, the suffering of her family members, and the facts of her own current situation:

> December 9, 1938
>
> Dear Reverend Mother.
>
> Many thanks for your loving letter of November 23. I must tell you that I already brought my religious name with me into the house as a

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[71] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Reinhardt translation, 486.

[72] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Gooch translation, [213] 319; and (445), 690.

[73] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being,* Reinhardt translation, 226. Italics her emphasis.

[74] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being,* Reinhardt translation, 230.

[75] Edith Stein, *The Science of the Cross: A Study of St John of the Cross* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960)., 32.

postulant. I received it exactly as I requested it. By the cross I understood the destiny of God's people which, even at that time, began to announce itself. I thought that those who recognized it as the cross of Christ had to take it upon themselves in the name of all. Certainly, today I know more of what it means to be wedded to the Lord in the sign of the Cross. Of course, one can never comprehend it, for it is a mystery…

… Our Reverend Mother has asked our sisters in Echt (Holland) to receive me. Today their loving acceptance arrived. If it is possible to get all the necessary papers together in time, we would like to make the transfer even before December 31st. These are the facts.

And now I would like to wish you a very grace-filled Christmas feast. As the atmosphere around us grows steadily darker, all the more must we open our hearts for light from above. Most cordial thanks once more for all the *love* you have shown me in these five years in the Order. Since your way sometimes leads to Holland, I may even have the hope of seeing you again. I commend myself to your prayers for the next weeks and months.

In caritate Regis qui venturus est (in the *love* of the King who is to come), your grateful,

Sister Teresa Benedicta a Cruce[76]

In another letter written in 1940 to Sister Agnella, Stadmuller, OP, the goal of St. John of the Cross's mystical way of prayer is stated clearly and simply:

> "*Pure love"* for our holy Father John of the Cross means *loving God for his own sake,* with a heart that is free from all attachments to anything created: to itself and to other creatures, but also to all consolations and the like which God can grant the soul, to all particular forms of devotion, etc.; with a heart that wants nothing more than that God's will be done, that allows itself to be lead by God without any resistance.[77]

Sister Benedicta continues by describing to her Dominican friend both the value and the method of this self-passion, or dying to the self:

> Should we strive for *perfect love*, you ask? Absolutely. For this we were created. [Perfect love] will be our eternal life, and here we have to seek to come as close to it as possible. Jesus became incarnate in order to be our way. What can we do? Try with all our might to be empty: the senses mortified; the memory as free as possible from all images of this world and, through hope, directed toward heaven; the understanding stripped of natural

[76] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters,* Letter 287, to Mother Petra Brüning, OSU, Dorsten, 295-96. Emphasis added.

[77] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters,* Letter 311 to Sister Agnella, Stadmuller, OP, 318. Emphasis added.

> seeking and ruminating, directed to God in the straightforward gaze of faith; the will (as I have already said) *surrendered to God in love*.
>
> This can be said very simply, but the work of an entire life would not attain the goal were God not to do the most essential. In the meantime we may be confident that he will not fail to give grace if we faithfully do the little we can do.[78]

She concludes that if a person willingly engages in the battle of the active night of the senses, or accepts the suffering of the passive night of the senses, then the person "exchanges sensual for spiritual joy and remains permanently united to God."[79]

On August 7th, 1942, the transport in which Sister Benedicta and her sister Rosa were traveling to her death at Auschwitz, stopped at the train station of Schifferstadt, not far from the town of Speyer where Stein had lived and taught for so many years at the Dominican school. Apparently the prisoners were allowed some access to the outside air as the train waited on a side rail. Stein identified herself to the station master, Valentine Fouquet; and she sent greetings to the Schwind family, who resided nearby, and to the sisters of St. Magdalena's convent. She then added the comment, "We are heading east."

Later that same day, having been transferred to a cattle train, she reportedly stopped briefly in her old hometown of Breslau, and was reportedly sighted by the postal worker, Johannes Weiners, who was working in the railroad depot in Breslau (now in Poland). Weiners noticed the nun appearing at the entrance of the railway car as the door was slid open by a guard. After their initial conversation, Sister Benedicta looked around to see where she was; then she said: "This is my beloved hometown. I will never see it again." She added: "We are riding to our death." Johannes Weiners asked her: "Do your companion prisoners believe that also?" She answered: "Its better that they do not know it." The account continues with a description of the postal workers arguing among themselves whether or not they should do anything for those in the railway car. When some of them asked her if they could bring them any food or drink, she answered: "No, thank you, we accept nothing."[80] These gentle words of refusal, of gratitude, and of detachment are the final words recorded from her. If Sister Benedicta spoke these words as a way to protect the railroad workers from retribution, then the act of charity through self-denial, would have freed the postal workers from their difficult situation. Other accounts of people who observed Sister Benedicta during the transport to her death record that she gave special attention to the needs of the children and of their mothers during this traumatic time.[81]

At her canonization Pope John Paul II described her as "A Catholic during Nazi persecution, [who] remained faithful to the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, and as a Jew, to

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[78] Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters,* Emphasis added.

[79] Stein, *Cross*, 71.

[80] Koeppel, in Stein, *Life*, 434.

[81] For several detailed accounts of other witnesses, see Teresia Renata Posselt, O.C.D., *Edith Stein: The Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 2005, "the Way of the Cross," chapter 21: 211-222; and "The Last News," chapter 22: 223-31.

her people in loving faithfulness."[82] Pope John Paul II declared Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Saint Edith Stein, a martyr of the faith. To conclude: the following poem written by Sister Benedicta provides a holy echo of the chamber in which she gave her life of "Bridal Love" to her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ:

The inmost chamber of the human soul
Is favourite dwelling to the Trinity,
His heavenly throne right here on earth.

To free this heav'nly realm from hostile hand,
God's Son descended as the Son of Man.
He gave His blood as ransom.

Within the heart of Jesus pierced with lances,
The realm of heaven and earth become united.
And here we find the spring of life itself.

This is the heart of Trinity divine,
The center also of all human hearts.
Source of our life from God.

It draws us close with its mysterious might,
It keeps us safe within the Father's lap
And floods us with the Holy Spirit.[83]

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[82] From the official program of the *Canonizzazione della beata Teresa Benedetta Della Croce/Edit Stein*, Piazza San Pietro, 11, Octobre 1998, 32.

[83] Edith Stein, *Selected Writings*, (Springfield, Il: Templegate Publishers, 1990), 49.