

The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Vocation Group invites you and your family to read the story of one person who made a difference. Why not read this story around the family dining table?



Saint Edith Stein



By Deacon Brian Gabor

“We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.” (Hebrews 12:2)

The word “witnesses” in this quotation from the book of Hebrews is understood to refer to those who have gone before us, now in heaven as “the Church triumphant,” observing us (“the Church militant”), and supporting us with their prayers, which they present to God on our behalf. Additionally, however, the word “witnesses” can and should also be understood to refer to those individuals who indeed, “bear witness.” In other words, those who can be seen as examples and signs for another—namely, Jesus Christ.

While everyone in heaven is a saint, the Church recognizes – that is, canonizes – only a few. We can look to imitate or simply be motivated by those deemed a saint by the Church because of the way they lived and the things they did while on earth.

One such saint is a woman named Edith Stein. Edith (also known by her religious name of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) was born to a prominent Jewish family in Breslau, Germany, on October 12, 1891. She left the Jewish faith and became an atheist around 1904. Her brilliant intellect led her to become a leading philosopher of her day. In her continued desire to seek the truth, she was moved by the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas and the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. She was baptized on January 1, 1922. She gave up a professorship at a university and entered the Carmelite Order of Sisters.

Edith fled Germany for the Netherlands to escape the Third Reich. After the Nazis began to occupy the Netherlands, she was arrested as part of the order by Hitler to liquidate all non-Aryan Catholics. She died in the gas chamber at Auschwitz on August 9, 1942.

Edith Stein’s “witness” or example to us is that, with all her intellect and her understanding of philosophy, she was led in her quest for truth to the Catholic faith—a faith that many of us can easily take for granted. While we are not in danger of being killed for our faith, we can look to Edith and admire her journey and emulate her fidelity to truth and her love of Christ and his Church.

Pope John Paul II canonized Edith Stein on October 11, 1998.

P R A Y F O R V O C A T I O N S

Promoting vocations is the responsibility of everyone.

One person CAN make a difference!



Blessed Mother Teresa