

*Spirituality according to
Edith Stein*



Wojciech Zyzak

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Reviewed by:
Prof. Janusz Mastalski
Prof. Jerzy Tupikowski

Text editor (English language version):
Patrick Lahey
Deborah Marriott

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Poland, 30-348 Kraków, ul. Bobrzyńskiego 10
tel./fax +48 12 422 60 40, e-mail: wydawnictwo@upjp2.edu.pl
www.upjp2.edu.pl

www.ksiegarnia.upjp2.edu.pl



INTRODUCTION

Edith Stein is a well-known figure. Nevertheless, in the introduction to this book, which is dedicated to her spiritual heritage, it is worth reminding ourselves of the events of her life. Stein was born in Breslau on 12th October 1891, into a Jewish family during the festival of Yom Kippur (the Feast of Atonement). She was the eleventh child of Siegfried and Augusta Stein (nee Courant). Stein's father died before she reached the age of two, and as a result of this her mother had to run both the house and the timber business. She was a devout woman, but did not manage to pass her faith on to her children as, at the age of fourteen, Stein considered herself to be an atheist. She was a very diligent pupil at the local high school, and after passing her graduation exams in 1911, she started to study German, history, and psychology at the University of Breslau (Schlesische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität). She was also involved in the fight for women's rights. As a result of her interest in philosophy she transferred to Göttingen University in order to study under the mentorship of the creator of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. In 1915 she passed her degree with distinction and left to work as a nurse in the field hospital in Hranice in Moravia during the First World War. A year later she followed Husserl to Freiburg where, as an assistant, she helped him to organize his writings. In 1917 she passed her doctorate *summa cum laude* after writing a thesis on the subject of the problems of empathy.

During this period she underwent a religious awakening which led her to the Catholic faith. In the parish church in Bergzabern she was baptized into the faith on 1st January 1922, which was the Feast of the Circumcision. Then, on 2nd February, the feast of the Purification, she was confirmed by the Bishop of Speyer. In Stein's spiritual experience, the conversion to Catholicism was connected to the call to become a Carmelite nun. However, her spiritual mentors, Josef Schwind and Erich Przywara, convinced her of the merit of teaching in the world. Stein herself also did not want to inflict any more suffering on her mother. She taught German and history at a high school and a teacher training college at the Dominican sisters' convent in Speyer until Easter 1931. The possibility of earning her habilitation in philosophy was her unfulfilled dream. In 1932 she received a lectureship position at the Roman Catholic division of the German Institute for Educational Studies at the University of Münster, where she developed her philosophical and theological anthropology as the basis for Christian teaching.

In 1933, Nazi repression of non-Aryan citizens in the Third Reich made further work impossible. Stein and her spiritual father now saw no reason not to bring to fruition the earlier plan, which had been conceived during the period of conversion, to enter the Carmelite convent. Thus, Stein entered the Carmelite convent in Cologne on 14th October 1933. From 15th April 1934, the day of her investiture, she was known as Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. After 9th November 1938, the date of the *Kristallnacht* attacks on the Jews, the Nazi repression became more brutal, and the person in charge of the convent in Cologne decided to send Stein abroad. On New Year's Eve 1938, she was taken to a convent in Echt, Holland. On 2nd August 1942 the Gestapo removed her and her sister, Rosa, from Echt as part of the deportations of Dutch Jews. The two sisters spent some time in temporary camps in Amersfort and Westerbork. On 7th August 1942, the transportation

of 987 Jews to Oświęcim (Auschwitz) began. Stein was probably sent to the gas chambers on 9th August that year. She was recognised as a martyr, and Pope John Paul II announced her beatification in Cologne in 1987. He canonized her in Rome on 11th October 1998. On 1st October 1999 she was announced, along with St Bridget of Sweden and St Catherine of Siena, as a co-patroness of Europe, joining Saints Benedict, Cyril, and Methodius.¹ Stein left a legacy of very valuable works which, when analyzed, indicate the most significant elements of her spiritual heritage.²

¹ W. Zyzak, *Stein Edyta. Życie i Działalność*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 18, Lublin 2013, col. 927f.

² From 1950 onwards, the publishing house Herder published many of Stein's works in the series *Edith Steins Werke* (ESW). However, they were incomplete due to the poorly developed research on her works. New editions of all of Stein's works appear in 26 volumes in the series *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe* (ESGA). Some of her works are of a biographical nature. These include the memoirs *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, and numerous letters which have been published in three volumes, one of which includes correspondence with Roman Ingarden. The first work published by Edith Stein was her Doctor's thesis, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*. Other phenomenological works from this period include *Einführung in die Philosophie* and *Natur, Freiheit, Gnade*. In 1922 two pieces appeared in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, namely *Psychische Kausalität*, and *Individuum und Gemeinschaft*, with the common title *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*. In 1925, Stein published the dissertation *Untersuchung über den Staat*. Another area of her works shows the scholastic philosophical interests of the author. These include the translations: *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* and *De ente et essentia* by St. Thomas Aquinas; Alexandre Koyré's book written together with Jadwiga Conrad-Martius, *Descartes und die Scholastik*; and a review of *Die deutsche Summa*, the translation of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, which was published in the years 1934–1935. This group also includes fragments of the works *Aktuelles und ideale Sein – Species – Urbild und Abbild* and *Erkenntnis, Wahrheit, Sein*; the confrontation of the thoughts of Husserl and St. Thomas Aquinas in the form of a dialogue,

Stein's conversion process to Catholicism was related to a particular divine experience which, in a period of spiritual crisis, 'touched her' and 'seized her', giving her the feeling of a source of strength and security (*Geborgenheit*). This fundamental experience was then a subject of reflection in her early works, especially in *Natur, Freiheit, Gnade*. In the phenomenological method, Stein found a way to such a perception of experience which, in harmony with moderate cognitive realism, constituted a genuine encounter with a real object, which had specific implications in the case of religious experience. From this

Was ist Philosophie? – Ein Gespräch zwischen Edmund Husserl und Thomas von Aquino; and in lecture form, *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*. Stein presented the world-view implications of Husserl's phenomenology in a range of critical dissertations: *Die weltanschauliche Bedeutung der Phänomenologie*, *Husserls transzendente Phänomenologie*, *Edmund Husserl. Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*. She assessed Martin Heidegger's philosophy in a similarly critical manner in articles published under the common title *Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie*. Reflections on the relation of Christian philosophy with other philosophical currents of that age were most widely discussed in two volumes which are very closely related to one another, in *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, and in *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*. Stein wrote two works on the subject of Christian anthropology: *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie* and *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*. Her interest in pedagogy was aroused by the translation of the writings of Cardinal John Henry Newman. She translated his *Briefe und Texte zur ersten Lebenshälfte (1801–1846)*, as well as his *Idee der Universität*. The following texts are also of a pedagogical nature: *Wahrheit und Klarheit im Unterricht und in der Erziehung*, *Die Typen der Psychologie und ihre Bedeutung für die Pädagogik*, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, *Zum Kampf um den katholischen Lehrer*, *Die theoretischen Grundlagen der sozialen Bildungsarbeit*, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, *Der Intellekt und die Intellektuellen*, *Akademische und Elementarlehrerin*, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*,

standpoint, Stein criticized both the later, extreme idealism of Edmund Husserl and modernism's erroneous grasp of the concept of experience. In the discussion on modernism it was particularly in *Was ist der Mensch*, which is based on the encyclical, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, by Pius X, that Stein showed religious experience as an interpersonal relationship and not an intrapsychological process, devoid of any real object. The meeting with God revealed in Jesus Christ was the foundation of her spirituality. Once she had finished reading the autobiography of St Teresa of Avila, which describes the spiritual

Notzeit und Bildung, Natur und Übernatur in Goethes Faust, Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit, Eine Meisterin der Erziehungs- und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jezus. The review of the book by Edgar Dackweiler, *Katholische Kirche und Schule* also belongs to this group.

Many pedagogical aspects in Stein's works related to women. They can be found in such articles as: *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes, Das Ethos der Frauenberufe, Grundlagen der Frauenbildung, Die Bestimmung der Frau, Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung, Elizabeth von Thüringen, Christliches Frauenleben, Aufgabe der Frau als Führerin der Jugend zur Kirche, Mütterliche Erziehungskunst, Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung, Sendung der katholischen Akademikerin and Theoretische Begründung der Frauenbildung.* After entering Carmel, Stein wrote a wide range of short texts on the subject of spirituality: *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jezus, Die heilige Teresia Margareta vom Herzen Jesu, Kreuzesliebe. Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz, Über Geschichte und Geist des Karmel, Die Seelenburg, Das Gebet der Kirche, Neue Bücher über die hl. Teresia von Jesus, Eine deutsche Frau und große Karmelitin. Mutter Franziska von den unendlichen Verdiensten Jesu Christi* OCD (Katharina Esser) 1804–1866, *Sämtliche Schriften der heiligen Theresia, Sancta Discretio in der Seelenführung, Ein Auserwähltes Gefäß der Göttlichen Weisheit. Sr. Marie-Aimée de Jésus aus dem Karmel der Avenue de Saxe in Paris 1839–1874, Ave Crux. Spes unica, Hochzeit des Lammes, Zur ersten hl. Profieß von Schwester Mirjam von der kleinen hl. Teresia, Verborgenes Leben und Epiphanie and Kreuzerhebung.* To this group we can also add the dialogue *Te Deum laudamus*,

and mystical experiences of this reformer of the Carmelite Order, she proclaimed 'it is true', which makes it possible to propose the theory that God bestowed similar experiences upon her. *The Science of the Cross (Kreuzeswissenschaft)*, which she wrote within the course of a year, towards the end of her life, dealt with the question of mystics, and may lead us to the assumption that Stein was, in fact, a mystic herself.

Stein sought the truth throughout her entire life, until she found it in Christ. Thanks to meeting God at the moment of her conversion, deepened by the conscious experience of baptism and other sacraments, the development of her prayer life, meditation on the Bible, the catechism, and other religious books, and an active love for others, she was able to draw on various sources of the spiritual tradition of the Church. Additionally, before her baptism, she had been fascinated by the figure and spirituality of St Francis. She was captivated by his perfect imitation of Christ, which she also admired in St Elizabeth of Thuringia, who was a loyal pupil of the poor man of Assisi. She also understood that St Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* was a book which was not only for reading but, moreover,

Nächtliche Zwiesprache, Ich bin in eurer Mitte allezeit, and the poems Ich bleibe bei euch..., and Und ich bleibe bei euch. Aus einer Pfingstnovene. Her translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite also came from this era, resulting in the dissertation *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis*. Stein's last work, the book *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, was written on the 400th anniversary of the birth of John of the Cross. See I. J. Adamska, *Pisma Edyty Stein. Prezentacja dzieł Edyty Stein, ich geneza i zasadnicza treść*, in: *Światłość w ciemności*, Karmel Żywy nr 5, red. J. W. Gogola, Kraków 2003, pp. 273–293; J. Machnac, *ESGA – Edyty Stein Dzieła Wszystkie. Rys historyczno-merytoryczny*, "Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny" 16 (2008) 2, pp. 207–223; C. M. Wulf, *Rekonstruktion und Neudatierung einiger früher Werke Edith Steins*, in *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, Hg. B. Beckmann, H. B. Gerl-Falkovitz, Würzburg 2003, pp. 249–267; W. Zyzak, *Stein Edyta. Dzieła*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 18, Lublin 2013, c. 928f.

for praying and living by, and worked with it before her baptism. Her confessor was the Jesuit priest Erich Przywara, so she was acquainted with Ignatian spirituality. From her baptism, up to the time when she accepted a lectureship position in Münster, she lived and worked at the Dominican convent in Speyer which, in connection with her interest in St Thomas Aquinas, makes it possible to catch a glimmer of the influence of Dominican spirituality within her. The fact that Stein spent all the important liturgical celebrations at the Benedictine Archabbey in Beuron for many years, and that the Archabbot there became her spiritual director is evidence of her love for the Benedictine tradition. She was also brought closer to this by her friend Adelgundis Jaegerschmid who was a Benedictine nun from Freiberg. Her fascination with St Benedict can also be seen in her choice of religious name, and in the specific penchant for beauty in the liturgy. Of course, it was Carmelite spirituality that exerted the greatest influence on her as seen by how, from the moment of her conversion, together with her baptism, the thought of entering the Carmelite Order emerged within her. Even whilst she was living in the world, she made some private vows, and the world perceived in her the Carmelite spirit. Her Carmelite identity developed even more in the Order and was further emphasized by the name which she chose. Apart from St Teresa of Avila, another figure which made a great impression on Stein was St Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, of whose spirituality she commented that she had never come across anything greater.

Religious identity in Stein's life increasingly took the form of expiatory spirituality, which was expressed in a specific love of the Cross and accepting it for all people, and especially for the Jewish nation, up until the time of her martyr's death. Stein's spirituality was characterized by a healthy evangelical radicalism in the practicing of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This spirituality had a Trinitarian dimension and also found expression in the intellectual seeking of traces of

the Holy Trinity in man and all creation, inspired by the spirituality of St Augustine of Hippo. It was simultaneously a Christocentric and deeply ecclesial spirituality. Her numerous works, especially *Eucharistische Erziehung* and also the evidence of her long adoration of the Holy Sacrament, show a profound Eucharistic characteristic of her spirituality. She found her fundamentals in the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments. She always remained faithful to the Jewish culture and nation, which is why she displayed certain elements of Old Testament spirituality, which found natural support in the Carmelite Order due to devotion to the prophet Elijah.³ Stein reflected upon a rich variety of spiritual experiences, thanks to which, in her writings, we are able to distinguish a wide range of subjects which are significant for spiritual theology, and which are the subject of this book.

³ R. Azcuay V., "Sancta Discretio" und Virgo Benedicta. Der Einfluß der benediktinischen Spiritualität auf Edith Stein, in: *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, op. cit., pp. 201–210; B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, Würzburg 2003; A. E. Bejas, *Edith Stein – Von der Phänomenologie zur Mystik. Eine Biographie der Gnade*, Frankfurt am Main 1987; *Odkrywanie Boga. Święta Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża Edyta Stein (1891–1942). Materiały z Sympozjum*, red. J. Machniak, Kraków 1998; E. Otto, *Welt, Person, Gott. Eine Untersuchung zur theologischen Grundlage der Mystik bei Edith Stein*, Vallender–Schönstatt 1990; *Światłość w ciemności*, op. cit.; W. Zyzak, *Fundamentalna rola wiary w życiu i pismach św. Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, Kraków 2005; W. Zyzak, *Kobieta według Edyty Stein*, Kraków 2002; W. Zyzak, *Stein Edyta. Duchowość*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 18, op. cit., col. 930n.



EDITH STEIN BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND THOMISM

In order to understand Stein's spiritual heritage and her contribution to the way spiritual theology is approached, it is necessary to outline her philosophical evolution.⁴ Particularly important was the way that she connected her works with life experiences and treated philosophy as something considerably more than a mere branch of science. For Stein, philosophy was the foundation of her entire outlook on life, and spirituality based on that outlook. In her doctoral thesis, which examined the problem of empathy, she took the stance of 'phenomenological reduction'. In Stein's opinion, the aim of phenomenology is explanation, and by this explanation the ultimate justification of all noesis. In order to achieve this explanation, the philosopher excludes everything which is 'doubtful' in any way, along with everything which can be removed from her contemplation. The science which she wants to be the ultimate explanation for all scientific knowledge may not be based on any science which already exists, but must justify itself. Hence, she does not make use of the findings of any of the positive sciences. The method which she used was based on exclusion: in other words, the reduction of the whole of the world which surrounded her, i.e. both the physical and the psycho-physical, both the physical body

⁴ W. Zyzak, *Edyta Stein jako fenomenolog*, in: *Edyta Stein. Fenomenologia Getyńskiego-Monachijska. Analizy*, red. J. Machnac, Wrocław 2015, pp. 161–174.

and the human and animal spirit, together with the psycho-physical character of the scientist herself. After such a reduction all that remains, according to the phenomenologist, is an infinite field of pure investigation.⁵

At this point, an initial concentration of interests concerning the theory of knowledge can be seen whilst avoiding the question of real existence. According to Stein's understanding, positing the existence of a given thing, which can be seen with one's own eyes, may be excluded, but it is not possible to exclude what is not subject to any doubt, that is one's own experience of this thing. Thus, through Stein, the whole 'phenomenon of the world' was preserved, even after its positing was removed. It is exactly these 'phenomena' that are the object of phenomenology and Stein concerned herself with reaching their essence. Each phenomenon is an exemplary model for the consideration of essence. Thus, the phenomenology of perception which Stein pursued was not satisfied with describing a singular perception, but rather determined to ascertain what 'perception in general' essentially is in itself and acquire such knowledge on the basis of a specific example, by performing ideational abstraction.⁶ As a consequence of the impossibility of excluding the experience, the experiencing subject, 'I', who sees the world, and one's own person, as a phenomenon, transpire to be as indubitable and impossible to cancel as the experience itself.⁷

Later on, Stein began to study the philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas intensively. At this point she performed a critical assessment of specific forms of phenomenology in the light of his philosophy. In her work *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino*.

⁵ E. Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Reprint der Originalausgabe 1980, Halle 1917, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung Stein attempted to show what the two philosophies have in common, i.e. the quest to gain the most universal and soundly consolidated understanding of the world. However, in her opinion, Husserl sought the starting point in the immanence of awareness, while Aquinas' starting point was religious faith. According to Stein, phenomenology, as a science about essence, wants to show how a world, and possibly different worlds, may be built for the consciousness through spiritual functions. Investigation of the actual state of these worlds is left by phenomenology to positive sciences, whose factual and methodical assumptions are considered in the phenomenological investigation of their possibilities. Meanwhile, Aquinas is not concerned with the possible worlds, but only with the most perfect picture of the existing world. Stein's fascination with Aquinas' philosophy was due to the fact that the starting point of imparting unity, from which the entire question of philosophy was made accessible, and to which it constantly returned in Husserl's work, was the transcendental pure consciousness, however, for Aquinas, this point was God and His relationship with His creation.⁸

Since Stein emphasized the unity of philosophy, she sought a formful comparison of the two systems.⁹ Husserl had molded her philosophical thinking, but Stein had become acquainted with Aquinas' philosophy thanks to a translation she had undertaken, and this, inevitably, led to a confrontation.¹⁰ Conrad-Martius was of the opinion that

⁸ E. Stein, *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*, in: *Festschrift Edmund Husserl zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet. Ergänzungsband zum Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Halle a. d. Saale 1929, p. 338.

⁹ E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, Freiburg im Breisgau 2004, p. 14.

¹⁰ E. Stein, *Entwurf eines Vorworts zu "Endliches und ewiges Sein"*, ESW 15, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, p. 63.

Stein's philosophical importance depended on the fusion of Thomism and phenomenology which was in her approach to the Catholic faith.¹¹ Stein noted the similarity in phenomenology and Thomism in the objective analysis of essence. She wrote that, when Husserl issued *Logische Untersuchungen* for the first time, it was received as a return to the great tradition of *philosophia perennis*, through a release from skepticism. However, he later propounded the idea of an absolute and universal science, which, according to Stein, demanded a confrontation with Thomistic philosophy.¹² Phenomenology, unlike scholasticism, was not equipped with scholarly and precise conceptual apparatus. By the same token, scholasticism lacked direct contact with real things, which, according to Stein, was a breath of fresh air for phenomenologists. She was also aware that the conceptual apparatus could easily bar the way to accepting something new.¹³ On the other hand, in 1930, Stein accurately wrote about the shortcomings of phenomenology, that wherever phenomenologists are unable to make further analysis, they enter the word 'somehow'.¹⁴

Regarding the question of fundamental truth, the paths of Husserl and Aquinas, according to Stein, ultimately diverge. For Aquinas, the fundamental truth, principle, and criterion for all truth is God himself. This constitutes his first philosophical axiom. All the truth which we are able to learn comes from God. That is why, the task of philosophy is to accept God as an object of investigation and to develop

¹¹ E. Avé-Lallemant, *Edith Stein und Hedwig Conrad-Martius – Begegnung in Leben und Werk*, in: *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹² E. Stein, *Husserls transzendente Phänomenologie*, ESW 6, Louvain 1962, p. 33–35.

¹³ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 149.

¹⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 2000, p. 107.

the concept of God and also the way all creation relates to Him. In order to do this, it is necessary to refer to all possible sources, not only from natural knowledge, but also from Revelation. Thus, the theory of knowledge ultimately becomes part of the study of the nature of being, and all philosophical disciplines become part of one huge ontology or metaphysics. Meanwhile, for Husserl the world built in the mind of the subject always remains a world for this thinking subject. Stein wrote that in Husserl's 'transcendental phenomenology' it is impossible to extract from the sphere of immanence such an objectivity, which would be truth and reality, free of all subjective relativity. The intellect will never be at ease in its search for the truth in identifying the real existence of objects with their occurrence in the conscious, which was the outcome of the transcendental investigation. This makes the existence of God himself relative, which contradicts faith. In Stein's view, this is the sharpest contrast between transcendental phenomenology and the Catholic faith. The latter has a theocentric orientation and the former an egocentric one.¹⁵ Stein searched for a correlation between the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Thomas Aquinas through Franz Brentano who taught the creator of phenomenology to employ scientific precision in the cultivation of philosophy. This sharpness of directing thoughts and the clarity of Brentano's concepts were, in turn, the heritage of a scholastic tradition, as he had grown up in a strict school observing traditional Catholic philosophy. This was concerned not so much with transferred content, but more with the spirit of real philosophising which is present in *philosophia perennis*.¹⁶ Stein's works testify to the laborious task of attempt-

¹⁵ E. Stein, *Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*, in: *Festschrift Edmund Husserl zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet. Ergänzungsband...*, op. cit., p. 325f.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 315f.

ing to integrate the two systems and their inherent confrontation. She wrote about her book, *Akt und Potenz*, that she developed the issues from Aquinas' point of view in order to then create 'her system of philosophy', that was to confront Aquinas with Husserl.¹⁷ Her book, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*,¹⁸ was also in a similar vein. Likewise, in *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person* she adopted a realist/phenomenological approach, using scholastic/Thomistic terminology.¹⁹ She permitted Aquinas to guide her in the selection of issues, as this prevented her from being biased, and guaranteed that significant matters would not be overlooked. The method, however, remained phenomenological, which required an intuition focused on essential matters along with a new portrayal of things as they are which excluded previously known theories.²⁰

In the phenomenological school, Stein learned to differentiate the method of philosophy and the method of the positive sciences. She stated that philosophy possesses its own cognitive function, which enables it to determine the basis of other sciences, that is, their object, cognitive means and methods. The cognitive function of phenomenology is intuition, also known as eidetic seeing. For Stein, this concerned the cognitive efficiency which draws a general structure from specific objects, which enables one to say, for example, what something is or what the sense of a given name is. Understanding intuition in this sense has, according to Stein, much in common with what traditional philosophy calls abstraction. She went on to deliberate

¹⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 227.

¹⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, Freiburg im Breisgau 2000, p. 434f.

¹⁹ B. Beckmann-Zöller, *Einführung*, ESGA 14, Freiburg im Breisgau 2004, p. XVII.

²⁰ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, Freiburg im Breisgau 2004, p. 28f.

that a detailed phenomenological analysis of intuition and abstraction could indicate that there is no sense in debating which of the two the true philosophical method is.²¹

Stein's comparison of Husserl's phenomenology and Aquinas' philosophy, clearly concentrates on issues related to idealism and realism. In her philosophical reflections on the subject of act and potency, she distinguished two directions: one emerging from the transcendental/philosophical way of approaching a problem and the other from the formal/ontological. The former is Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, which is a study of the structures of consciousness through which and in which a transcendent world is built in the immanence. The metaphysical side of the problem faces the question: is this world a relative world for the consciousness which constitutes it, and through which it is dependent and maintained through the constituting acts, or is the path from the immanent sphere to the transcendent one a transition to the autonomic world, which is independent of consciousness.²² In answer to these questions we can observe that Stein experiences a certain evolution.

She decided to write her doctoral thesis on the subject of empathy (*Einfühlung*) since her mentor, Edmund Husserl, in his lectures on nature and life stated that the objective, external world could only be experienced intersubjectively, i.e. through a certain number of recognising individua which remain in a mutual exchange of thoughts. The condition for this was the experience of other individua. Husserl called this experience empathy, but he did not say exactly what it was.²³

²¹ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 156.

²² E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, Freiburg im Breisgau 1998, p. 20.

²³ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 218f.

Therefore, Stein's interest in this topic was related to the problem of idealism and realism. We already know that Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* made a great impression, as they seemed to be a radical retreat from the critical idealism in Kantianism and Neo-Kantianism. 'New scholastic' was observed in them, as the focus turned away from the subject and towards the things. Once again, cognition seems to be the acquisition of laws from things, unlike in critical philosophy where it is the process imposing its laws onto things. That is why, as Stein said, all young phenomenologists are distinct realists. Nevertheless, the aforementioned works of Husserl somewhat indicated the willingness of the mentor to return to idealism and this consequently led him towards transcendental idealism. The old students from Göttingen could not go with him down this road.²⁴

In Husserl's philosophy, only the way in which things appear, and not things as they are themselves, constitute the subject for investigation. Therefore, it is not possible to analyse things 'as they are within themselves', but as they are intuited in the consciousness, in other words, as phenomena. Husserl attempted to cause prolific skepticism of Kant. For, in his opinion, a phenomenon contains a certain 'how' and a certain 'something' for theory. Kant asked 'how' something is experienced and Husserl went one step further and asked how 'something' is experienced. The proof that intentional consciousness is always directed at 'something' opened up the possibility of reaching the things themselves, which had been closed since the times of Kant. It was, however, a theoretical possibility as things themselves are not thought up outside of the consciousness, they are noetic-noematic structures, through which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness.²⁵ At the beginning it was common for all phenomenologists to focus

²⁴ Ibid., p. 200f.

²⁵ H. B. Gerl-Falkovitz, *Einleitung*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 15.

on the sources of essential intuition in order to gain from them insight into the essence, i.e. apriorism, in contrast to the traditional philosophic approach with its deduction and metaphysical/speculative stance.²⁶ For Husserl, if the object were to appear in the consciousness by itself, in other words, if it did not appear as the result of some mediative intervention, he was not concerned about whether the object existed in reality or not. After excluding the question about existence, Husserl focused on the question about how the object is came to appear in the consciousness.²⁷

From the very beginning, Stein contended with the problem of idealism. After converting to Catholicism, she became interested in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, who was a determined realist. Influenced by his work, her book *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins* contained a definite criticism of Husserl's idealism. According to Stein, the conflict between realism and idealism in the Kantian explanation was concerned with the mixture of feelings encompassed in the form of sensuality and understanding. Whilst Kant remained persistently with *Ding an sich* as something unknowable in itself, but a real fundament of the appearing world, Stein asserted that this remnant of 'naive realism' appears to be radically removed in the idealistic explanation which Husserl conferred upon his teachings about the transcendental constitution of the objective world. The world of things is, for Husserl, only a title for the relationship of acts in which, on a higher level, an intersubjective community of 'monads', having a mutual interaction, complies with the strictly defined laws of organization, and advances from act to act, giving senseless impressions a sense within themselves, through which intentional objects are built.

²⁶ H. R. Sepp, *Die Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls und seine "Schule"*, "Edith Stein Jahrbuch" 3 (1997), p. 239.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

In this case, the statement about the emergence of an object was merely a form of expression (*façon de parler*).²⁸ Ultimately, Stein's criticism concerning idealism indicates a compromise which takes onboard as little idealism as is necessary in order to secure the bond of cognition with the subject and as much realism as is possible in order to ensure the bond of cognition with material breadth and depth.²⁹

As we can see, Stein learned philosophy from the creator of phenomenology. Over time her interests were directed towards the works of St Thomas Aquinas. This was linked to her religious transition and was expressed in the works which she published. The most original input which she had in the development of philosophy seems to be the confrontation and creative connection of elements of the two systems. In her philosophy, which was largely based on the heritage of Aquinas's teachings, Stein remained a phenomenologist to the very end, at least in the widest sense which focuses on things in themselves and comprehends them with complete insight. This method led her to a simple, humble scientific approach which was faithful to the object investigated, and which allowed her to strive for the truth without any prejudices.³⁰

What is the significance of the aforementioned evolution in Stein's way of thinking for spirituality? First and foremost, it is not possible to reject realism and remain in accordance with the dogmatic teachings of the Catholic Church.³¹ The ability to reach the truth, especial-

²⁸ E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, Freiburg im Breisgau 1998, p. 246.

²⁹ B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 176.

³⁰ E. Ströker, *Die Phänomenologin Edith Stein*, "Edith Stein Jahrbuch" 1 (1995), p. 34f.

³¹ I. Różycki, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, vol. I *Rozprawa o Bogu Jedynym*, Kraków 1987, p. 56f.

ly accepting the revealed truth, is a fundamental issue. Modernism, which Stein widely criticized, had for years been undermining trust, also in spiritual experience, as it emphasized its subjectivity. Spiritual experience, as understood by Christians, cannot be merely an experience without a real object.³² It is always subjective in the sense of the uniqueness and individuality of the experiencer, which is why it is subject to objectification and assessment regarding revelation within the framework of spiritual theology. These issues will be discussed in the following chapter concerning the nature of spiritual theology.

³² Experience here is understood as a relation, i.e. any kind of ordering of one thing to something else. M. A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu*, Lublin 1978, p. 329f.



EDITH STEIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE METHODOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

One of the most intriguing topics often discussed in the company of spiritual theologians concerns the role of phenomenology in the analysis of spiritual experience. On the one hand, Fr. A. J. Nowak wrote that phenomenology inclines a person to make his own experiences absolute, creating of them a sole criterion. It is quite simply the temptation of imposing a defined conceptual framework drawn from immanence onto an objective reality which exists outside of the psychic 'I'. This state of affairs may shape the belief that the external world may only be how my psyche experiences it and there can be no other reality.³³ On the other hand, Fr. M. Chmielewski refers to phenomenological personalism, which was supported by Husserl, Scheler, and Stein, among others, and more recently, by John Paul II.³⁴ An example of the use of the methods of phenomenology in spiritual theology proposed by Fr. W. Słomka is the conception of spirituality as a group of attitudes which have an intellectual/cognitive, emotional/evaluative, and so-called behavioural reference to the object.³⁵

³³ A. J. Nowak, *Posłuszeństwo Kościołowi świętemu fundamentem formacji kapłańskiej w świetle Jana Pawła II posynodalnej adhortacji apostołskiej "Pastores dabo vobis"*, "Roczniki Teologiczne" 42 (1995) 5, p. 57.

³⁴ M. Chmielewski, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej*, Lublin 1999, p. 185.

³⁵ W. Słomka, *Teologia duchowości wśród innych dyscyplin teologicznych*, in: *Veritatem facientes*, red. J. Nagórny, J. Wróbel, Lublin 1997, p. 405f.

Representatives of the second group are not concerned with the acceptance of phenomenology as a system possessing equal rights to personalism, which could bring spiritual theology to a kind of phenomenology of spiritual occurrences. It is rather more about using it to describe and identify spiritual experience. Phenomenology as an initial science begins by investigating what it is before taking any kind of position; what is experienced personally with one's own eyes, and what can be observed directly and pre-reflectively. This is concerned with the direct, primary contact with the object of investigation.³⁶ Phenomenology is the science of phenomena, that is, things that appear in the consciousness, which are directly given and only in the way which they are given. Investigating individual phenomena inquires into its essence, which becomes metaphysics. It is therefore a science of essences, which is an eidetic science. By recognising the essence and essential relations, phenomenology is able to establish objectively valid statements, and so it is free from the danger of skepticism and relativism. Moreover, it is interested in the processes involved in the awareness of the subject when it performs perception of the essence of the phenomena under investigation, and is therefore the science of the pure consciousness.³⁷ Phenomenology uses the descriptive method and an investigation (eidetic seeing) which is free from all prejudice, using pure intuition, which means direct cognition. This 'what' and 'how' having been given, and observed in the investigation (eidetic seeing), should then be described through the direct concepts which have to be taken from this investigation. It must be remembered at this point that what was observed and described in this way can only be thus understood and verified. This method also in-

³⁶ M. Chmielewski, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 185.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

cludes eidetic seeing and the analysis of the essence i.e. a procedure passing from individual phenomena to the essence, depending on abstraction, ideation or eidetic reduction. The variation and comparison of unchangeable elements technique is used here. The next stage is transcendental reduction which is the exclusion, but not the negation, of assumptions of the existence of the real world and the real existence of the state of things or an object included in each of the judgments. Constitutive analysis is a supplementary method, which depends on the systematic explication of how, through the essence of phenomena, all real and possible systems of consciousness are outlined and, at the same time, what the possible states of beings are, in accordance with the Eidetic Laws.³⁸

Elements of this scientific method are closer to what Fr. S. Kamiński calls enrichment of natural knowledge by the truth of the Revelation, where cognitive reality is interpreted in the light of natural knowledge, but at the final stage of conclusions it appeals to Revelation, rather than to rationalisation of Revelation depending on the philosophical research of some aspect of Christian life.³⁹ In the terminology of S. C. Napiórkowski, this is rather more concerned with a bottom-up approach than a top-down method. The latter leads to theology understood as humanisation and rationalisation of revelation. Bottom-up theology evolves from man's situation as he attempts to illuminate it with the truth of revelation. It is, therefore, the enrichment of natural knowledge by the truth of revelation.⁴⁰ This means that a significant element in this method is the spiritual experience. As it was mentioned before, spiritual theology accepts cognitive realism as an epistemolog-

³⁸ Ibid., p. 186f.

³⁹ S. Kamiński, *Metodologiczna osobliwość poznania teologicznego*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 35 (1987) 2, pp. 81–96.

⁴⁰ S. C. Napiórkowski, *Jak uprawiać teologię*, Wrocław 1991, pp. 63–65.

ical fundament, and it does not resign from the verification and objectivisation of experience in the light of revelation and the teaching of the Church.⁴¹ Both these elements can be found as examples in the definition of spiritual theology formulated by Ch. A. Bernard:

Spiritual theology is a discipline of theology which, based on the truth of revelation, investigates the spiritual experience, describes its development, and enables its structures and laws to be learned.⁴²

Theological issues depicted in such a way find interesting points of reference in Stein's academic works. Of course, it should be remembered that Stein was first and foremost a philosopher and it may be assumed that, when asked about strictly theological matters, she would, in the modesty which was so typical of her, underline her lack of competence in this area. However, the vast extent of her interests and the wealth of works and writings which she left us seem to justify the attempt to find answers for the methodological issues which are of interest. The key concepts in which this legacy may help us are: experience, cognitive realism, intuition and objectivization, and verification in the light of revelation.

R. Körner criticized German philosophical-theological literature accusing it of frequently treating mysticism as an element lying outside the sphere of natural rationalism. He saw one of the reasons for this state of affairs in the fear of expressing the spiritual states with frankness and clarity.⁴³ It is difficult to agree with this accusation when taking into consideration the works of the most important phenomenologists dealing with the subject of religious experience.

⁴¹ M. Chmielewski, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 189.

⁴² Ch. A. Bernard, *Wprowadzenie do teologii duchowości*, Kraków 1996, p. 43.

⁴³ R. Körner, *Mystik – Quelle der Vernunft. Die Ratio auf dem Weg der Vereinigung mit Gott bei Johannes vom Kreuz*, Leipzig 1990, p. 1.

Phenomenology, by rejecting the traditional narrow horizon and all prejudices in thinking and by rediscovering the sphere of values, led many of those who supported this method of research to Christianity.⁴⁴ This is because the phenomenological method seems to exhibit a motivating force on the consciousness, through which it becomes possible to open up to religious experience. This opening up may, but does not have to be, used in order to address religious/philosophical questions.⁴⁵ Within the phenomenological movement it is indeed possible to name some spectacular conversions: Adolf and Anna Reinach, Gerda Walter, Siegfried Hamburger, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Max Scheler, and, of course, Edith Stein.⁴⁶

In Stein's opinion, the creator of phenomenology himself, E. Husserl, was open to all forms of experience. In June 1918, Stein related a visit she had paid to the 'Master' with M. Heidegger, where they had gone on a religious-philosophical walk.⁴⁷ An attempt to reconstruct the course of the walk suggests that Husserl talked about the desire to free religious sources through phenomenology. The creator of phenomenology wanted to rediscover the original religious dimension in life. He intended, through reference to the Christian mystics, to return to the source of religious experience.⁴⁸ In Stein's memoirs we can read about how the second leading figure in phenomenology, Max

⁴⁴ W. Herbstrith, *Edith Stein – Gestalt des Widerstands im Nationalsozialismus*, in: *Glaube als Widerstandskraft*, Hg. G. Fuchs, Frankfurt am Main 1986, p. 70.

⁴⁵ B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁶ B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie und die Wesensgesetzlichkeit des religiösen Erlebnisses bei Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, in: *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 85.

⁴⁸ U. Dobhan, *Einführung*, in: E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, Freiburg im Breisgau 2003, p. XII f.

Scheler, also opened her spirit up to religious experience. Not without reason was it instilled in her to focus on all things without prejudice.⁴⁹ At the same time, Stein also came across the phenomenological works of religious experiences by A. Reinach.⁵⁰ And, of course, the autobiography of St Teresa of Avila, which was a deciding factor in her conversion to Catholicism.⁵¹ For Stein, this book was particularly intriguing due to the fact that it was written by a believer who related her experiences with God.⁵² It is possible to risk saying that for Stein, St Teresa's drawing on those experiences and directly applying the descriptions 'taken' from the conceptual views, were a kind of phenomenological insight into the religious experience. It is quite likely that the writings of St John of the Cross did not make such a great impression on Stein at this time, given that the Mystical Doctor and Doctor of the Church used the Thomist system of concepts which, when compared to the works of St Teresa of Avila, did not impart such directness. Giving herself humbly to the works of God, Stein came to the faith which, in accordance with her profound phenomenological accounts, is an act of the whole person. It does not treat the 'object' with a certain distance, but constitutes the unity of cognition, love and action.⁵³ Such a take on the basic religious act indicates a fundamental concurrence

⁴⁹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 210f.

⁵⁰ R. Ingarden, *O badaniach filozoficznych Edith Stein*, in: *Edyta Stein, O zagadnieniu wczucia*, Kraków 1988, p. 160.

⁵¹ L. Börsig-Hover, *Der Weg in den Karmel – Edith Steins Vortragstätigkeit in den Jahren 1928 bis 1933 und der Auftrag von Erzabt Raphael Walzer*, in: *Ein Leben für die Wahrheit. Zur geistigen Gestalt Edith Steins*, Hg L. Börsig-Hover, Fridingen a.D. 1991, p. 83f.

⁵² U. T. Manshausen, *Die Biographie der Edith Stein. Beispiel einer Mystagogie*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, teologia 23, Frankfurt am Main 1984, pp. 51, 57–59.

⁵³ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, Louvain 1962, p. 188.

with the aforementioned conception of spirituality proposed by Fr. Słomka, as a group of attitudes referring to the object: intellectual/cognitive, emotional/evaluative, and the so-called behavioural.

As the previous chapter mentioned, in later years the comparison between phenomenology and Thomism led Stein to creative synthesis. It can be presumed that Thomistic philosophy was so attractive to her because, like phenomenology, it saw in natural experience a point of departure for all thinking that goes beyond this experience.⁵⁴ At this stage, one of the main motives of her research became searching for the possibilities to get to know God in different ways.⁵⁵ Initially this was by way of faith and philosophical deductions. However, as early as in *Potency and Act*, faith became divided into ordinary and extraordinary, that is, mystical and experiential.⁵⁶ The last point is discussed further in *Ways to Know God*. In this book, Stein listed the natural knowing of God, faith as the 'ordinary' way of the supernatural knowing of God, and the supernatural experience as an extraordinary way of the supernatural knowing of God.⁵⁷ This subject will be discussed later in the book.

It is sufficient to say at this point that Stein, without entering into the intricacies of a critical review of biblical content, perceptively differentiates revelation, inspiration, awareness of having been sent, and the real experience of God.⁵⁸ According to her, the vivid language

⁵⁴ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 1986, p. 309.

⁵⁵ B. Beckmann, *Einführung*, in: *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, Freiburg im Breisgau 2003, p. 18f.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁷ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

used in the Bible is enriched in relation to the natural cognition of God and to faith, thanks to revelations and visions. The most important, however, was to be touched by God inwardly, without words or images. Since during this personal encounter an intimate knowledge of God takes place, which then provides the opportunity to form an image according to the original, as he who has the most correct understanding of the vivid language is the one who has experiential knowledge of God. Here we meet with the next, significant phenomenological assumption which reminds us that what we grasp and describe visually may only be understood and investigated in this attitude. However, Stein admits that it is possible to reach a certain understanding on the basis of faith and even a natural cognition of God.⁵⁹ Essentially, what she means here is that it is possible, whilst reading the Holy Bible, to be touched internally, to feel the presence of God. Then the Bible and its human author disappear and God Himself speaks. It is at this moment that the experiential knowledge of God occurs, described by Stein as the fulfillment of faith.⁶⁰ The dependency of knowledge on experience should be food for thought for each theologian. This motif also appears in *The Science of the Cross*, where Stein, whilst writing about faith, claims that understanding it does not mean that a hard and fast definition can be established, since it must be a progressive motion. This knowledge must seek various expressions for faith, inasmuch as it is possible to grasp it, because, as St John of the Cross said, it is only in the deepest contemplation that it could possibly become clear to us what faith is.⁶¹ It is even possible to propound the theory that Stein would agree with Karl Rahner when he wrote that the Christian

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 49f.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 50–52.

⁶¹ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 92f.

of the future will either be a mystic, meaning a person experiencing his own faith, or will not exist at all.⁶²

The experience mentioned above is a process which takes place in the cognitively active subject. The aforementioned justifiable criticism of phenomenology understood as transcendental idealism seems to be, in the eyes of Fr. Nowak, concerned with the extreme epistemological assumptions, which not only prevent judgment on the objective existence of the cognitive reality, but oppose it. A departure from ontological deliberations in favour of exclusively understood cognitive theory is dangerous for theology. The Holy Father, John Paul II, warned us about modern philosophy which forgot that the being is supposed to be the object of investigation and instead focused on human understanding. Rather than making use of the human capacity to know the truth, it prefers to emphasize its limitations and conditions which lead the way to agnosticism, relativism, and skepticism.⁶³ Struggling with this issue was one of Stein's most important tasks. At this point, it suffices to say that she acknowledged the possibility of knowing the objective truth. Stein saw the guarantee for this in the Revelation.

The originality of Stein's theory is that she took into consideration the truths of faith as not exclusively elements which verify and prompt philosophical topics. Both considerations of the truths of faith were concerned with the dependence of philosophy on faith and theology, which were used as external conditions of its realisation. This is characterised by Christian philosophy in a Thomistic sense, but not the Christian philosophy which accepts revealed truths in its content. However, when philosophy comes up against questions which it cannot answer with its own means, and takes on board the solution of the doc-

⁶² K. Rahner, *Frömmigkeit früher und heute*, in: *Schriften zur Theologie* 7. *Zur Theologie des geistlichen Lebens*, Köln 1971, p. 22.

⁶³ John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, no. 5.

trine of the faith, then, according to Stein, we are dealing with Christian philosophy which uses faith as the source of knowledge. In this case, it is no longer pure and autonomous philosophy, but neither does it have any basis on which it can be called theology.⁶⁴ It is significant that, after working on philosophical anthropology, Stein prepared a separate paper on the science of man which was based on the Catholic doctrine of faith. This theological anthropology is almost in its entirety a collection of quotations from the compendium of Catholic dogma: H. Denzinger, C. Bannwart, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*.⁶⁵ On the one hand, it is evidence of a certain lack of confidence and comfort in the field of theology, but on the other hand, it does actually show that Stein managed to separate philosophy from theology.⁶⁶ She was also very capable of differentiating the doctrine of faith from the theological approach.⁶⁷ In this sense, according to Stein, the doctrine of faith as a dogma did not allow a shadow of a doubt.⁶⁸

The above contemplations clearly indicate that Stein was open to the new perspectives of the bottom-up theological method, which enriches human experience through revelation. The question of the religious experience became the main subject of her scientific research. In order to reach the essence of what is experienced, she applied the phenomenological intuition method. In contrast to the modernism which

⁶⁴ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 25f.

⁶⁵ L. Gelber, *Einleitung*, in: E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, Freiburg im Breisgau 1994, pp. 6–8.

⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 468.

⁶⁸ E. Stein, *Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie*, ESW 6, Louvain 1962, p. 134.

was much talked about at that time and unlike Husserl's idealism, Stein was convinced about cognitive realism, which made it possible to reach, in religious experience, reality independent of the cognitive subject. At the same time, she saw the ultimate criterion for the verification of all truth in revelation. Stein's way of dealing with this may confirm the spiritual theologians' belief that investigation and description of the spiritual experience with the use of elements of phenomenology does not constitute a threat to the truth of revelation, since that truth is the ultimate criterion of the verification of the described experience. It is also worth remembering what the Holy Father, St John Paul II, wrote about the subject of philosophical investigation in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*. In his opinion, in practice, there has often been the temptation to identify just one chosen thread with the whole of philosophy. The Pope saw here a peculiar 'philosophical pride' which would like to present its own partial and imperfect view as the complete reading of all reality.⁶⁹ Insofar as the comment has reference to phenomenology, it also has to be addressed to Neo-Scholasticism, and in principle to every other stream of philosophy. On the other hand, as there is a profound bond which ties theological work to the philosophical search for truth, the Magisterium's duty is therefore to discern and promote philosophical thinking which is not at odds with faith.⁷⁰

St John Paul II brought attention to the positive signs resurging in philosophical thinking in the culture of Christian inspiration. Not only the Thomistic and Neo-Thomistic revival belong to these, but also the works of Catholic theologians who, whilst addressing more contemporary threads of thought and using their own methodology, created philosophical works of great influence and lasting value.

⁶⁹ John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, no. 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 63.

Some devised syntheses so remarkable that they stood comparison with the great systems of idealism. Others established the epistemological foundations for a new consideration of faith in the light of a renewed understanding of moral consciousness; others again produced a philosophy which, starting with an analysis of immanence, opened the way to the transcendent; and there were finally those who sought to combine the demands of faith with the perspective of phenomenological method.⁷¹

An indication of the fruitful relationship between philosophy and the word of God was seen by the Holy Father in the courageous search pursued by Edith Stein. Her achievements and those of others were mentioned in the Pope's encyclical in which he did not have the intention of endorsing every aspect of their thought, but simply to offer significant examples of a process of philosophical enquiry which was enriched by engaging the data of faith.⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid., no. 58f.

⁷² Ibid., no. 74, 3; W. Zyzak, *Znaczenie dorobku naukowego Edyty Stein dla metodologii teologii duchowości katolickiej*, "Bielsko-Żywieckie Studia Teologiczne" 8 (2007), pp. 277–297.



STEIN'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL VISION

Contemplation on the subject of Christian spirituality must make reference to the integral truth of man, in other words, to the real anthropological concept, which posits the relationship of man to God.⁷³ Stein was aware of this since she wrote to Roman Ingarden in 1917 that it was not possible, in her opinion, to complete an analysis of a person without facing questions related to God.⁷⁴ Conversely, it is difficult to speak about spiritual experience without describing the subject that has this experience. The conundrum which constantly recurs in her intellectual endeavours is the issue of human nature, the structure and functioning of a person.⁷⁵ If we follow her thought process from the beginning to the very end, then we can claim that the human being is the central, pervading topic which, like a thread, entwines all her works.⁷⁶

⁷³ Z. Targoński, *Przesłanki antropologiczne duchowości*, in: *Teologia duchowości katolickiej*, ed. W. Słomka, Lublin 1993, p. 85.

⁷⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 46f.

⁷⁵ R. Ingarden, *O badaniach filozoficznych Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 170.

⁷⁶ M. C. Baseheart, *Edith Stein's philosophy of person*, in: *Carmelite Studies 4. Edith Stein Symposium*, ed. J. Sullivan, Washington 1987, p. 35; R. Vonhögen, *Die menschliche Person bei Edith Stein*, in *Ein Leben für die Wahrheit. Zur geistigen Gestalt Edith Steins*, op. cit., p. 176.

In Stein's first book, which was also her doctoral thesis, she mentioned the elements which make up a human being from the phenomenological point of view: pure 'I', pure consciousness, body (*Leib*), spirit, and soul. In Stein's pre-Christian way of thinking the soul was understood as intrinsically connected to the body, however, she later resigned from this approach.⁷⁷ Under the influence of her own experiences and the works of Jadwiga Conrad-Martius, Stein the soul ceased to be distinctly preconditioned by the body, and was presented in closer relationships with the spirit. According to Ingarden, the mighty endeavour which Stein performed in order to figure out the complicated structure of the human person was not satisfactory.⁷⁸ However, Ingarden appears to only refer to the philosophical works of Stein, the Carmelite. Nevertheless, we know that during her religious development, the phenomenological analysis which itemised the 'I', stream of consciousness, soul, body, and spirit was no longer sufficient for her, and led her to metaphysics, placing man in relation to God, who is a Person in the highest degree.⁷⁹ At this point it is necessary to look for the most holistic approach to Stein's study of humans. A human understood in this way can reach fulfillment in a joyful relationship with God.

As I have already mentioned, anthropological issues were always at the centre of Stein's interests. In her earlier phenomenological works, when researching human nature, she used her intuition as a reduction to the essence of objects. According to Husserl, intuition is the contemplation of all individual things, taking into consideration what they

⁷⁷ R. Ingarden, *O badaniach filozoficznych Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 177f; C. Wąs, *Ewolucja myśli filozoficznej Edyty Stein*, in: *Szukając prawdy. Edyta Stein w kulturze polskiej*, red. A. Czarniecka-Stefańska, Wrocław 1998, p. 30.

⁷⁸ R. Ingarden, *O badaniach filozoficznych Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 179.

⁷⁹ R. Vonhögen, *Die menschliche Person bei Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 193f.

have in common. Husserl himself appeared to recognize this anthropological interest which Stein held, calling her approach 'eidetic psychology' used in the framework of 'universal ontology'.⁸⁰ Although in her later works, neither a constitution of consciousness, nor empathy, which had previously been important to her, continued to play a significant methodical role, they are still, nevertheless, counted as works of realistic phenomenology. On the other hand, based on the reception of metaphysics as seen by Aquinas, Stein's philosophical anthropology may be considered a link in the chain of Catholic education.⁸¹ In this respect, from the methodological point of view, the teaching of the Church on the subject of the human person was also significant, constituting at the same time a foundation for her theological anthropology.

According to Stein, man is neither an animal nor an angel, since he is both the former and the latter in union.⁸² The human soul is rational, in other words it is a spirit. Being the form of the body is its lowest assignment as it has its own, higher existence. The unified whole of the body and the soul constitute a person.⁸³ For Stein, in the same way as for Aquinas or Boethius, a person was an individual substance of rational nature.⁸⁴ Both the body and the soul of a person possess a personal shape in which 'I' lives, is aware of itself, looks at the world, and is free, and the strength of that freedom may mold both the body and the soul. The 'I' forms the spiritual-corporal being and life of a person.⁸⁵ Stein believed that the personal unity of the body and soul expressed

⁸⁰ B. Beckmann-Zöller, *Einführung*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. XXXIII.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. XXXIVf.

⁸² E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 343.

⁸³ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 40n.

⁸⁴ B. Beckmann-Zöller, *Einführung*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. XXX.

⁸⁵ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 92.

itself in the formula: *anima forma corporis*. On the basis of Aquinas' *individuum de ratione materiae* rule, Stein formulated her elements of somatic anthropology which concentrated on the body. From this it can be seen that not only the spiritual form expresses itself externally, but the external corporeality molds the internal development.⁸⁶ Stein wrote that the more perfectly developed the organism is as such, the better it is as a foundation, expression, and tool for the spiritual-personal soul of an individual. Thus, she is of the opinion that spiritual life may develop without problems if the body functions well. This, however, is a basic condition for making spiritual development possible. In an essential way, formation is carried out through a spiritual soul. Stein was obviously aware of the fact that a healthy, well-trained, beautiful, body could be 'without a soul' and conversely, a sick and weak one could be extremely spiritual.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, this does not change the fundamental bonds of the body and soul, which can be seen in Stein's understanding, especially in the acts which encompass the whole person. It is not possible to overestimate this holistic, thoroughly biblical approach to man which does not neglect the significance of the body in spirituality.

In line with Aquinas's teaching, Stein conceptualised the structure of the created world as levels of material things, plants, animals, man, and pure spirits, where attributes of the lower levels remain on the higher levels, not including pure spirits due to their incorporeality. This means that man constitutes a particular keystone for her as a material 'thing,' plant, animal, and spirit in one being at the same time.⁸⁸ She explained that human individuality is not firstly a plant, then an animal,

⁸⁶ B. Beckmann-Zöller, *Einführung*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. XXXII.

⁸⁷ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 88f.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

and then a person, but from the very beginning of the existence, a real person, despite the fact that what is specifically human emerges in succession in later stages of development. The spiritual soul also exists from the very beginning. Any other perspective would not, in her opinion, be in agreement with the doctrines of original sin and the Immaculate Conception. On the basis of the essence of the spirit Stein understood the fact that the soul may take root in the spiritual world and even live in it outside the body. That the soul begins its existence in a material body may, in her opinion, only be claimed and not deduced from the essence of the material or spirit. Stein wrote that this is one of the points where natural understanding lets us down and only a leap in the transcendence makes the unfathomable fathomable.⁸⁹

Along with the Christian attitude, it appears that Stein accepted, as the Catholic faith dictates, the possibility of the soul's existing without a body. In support of Aquinas, she explains that only the soul is substance.⁹⁰ Therefore the fact that the soul can leave the body actually exists, and then the body ceases to be a living body (*Leib*) and a simply material corpse (*Körper*) decays. That is why, according to Stein, a physical body without a soul is not substance. Thus, Stein was able to maintain the substantial unity of man.⁹¹ In Stein's opinion, folklore (*Volks Glaube*) both ancient and modern, confers a life of shade on disassociated souls, and assigns them a yearning for their body. This, as she further explains, expresses the belief that it is possible to separate the soul from the body, but at the same time it shows that such a disassociation is not in accordance with nature.⁹² However, in Stein's opinion, this does not change the fact that one of the features

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 132f.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 95.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 98.

⁹² E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, op. cit., p. 162.

of the human soul is that it has its own sense of life which makes it possible for it to separate from the body.⁹³

According to the Aristotelian/Thomistic concept, man is defined as a species of the genus 'animal'. It is an organism like a plant or an animal, but its internal life is not limited to an animal's life. The human soul is, in a new sense, open to the inside and the outside.⁹⁴ Thanks to this, it is capable of such acts as, for example, faith, hope, and love. Stein's opinion was that what marked man as a man, in other words, the free, conscious, and personal spirituality, makes a person's essence a specific *genus* in the framework of which the different *species* can be differentiated, namely those of men and women and other types such as: race and nationality, and in the end, individuals.⁹⁵ She well understood that contemplating an isolated human individual was abstract. His existence is existing in the world and his life is life in a community.⁹⁶ In her best philosophical approach man is: a material body; a living being, bestowed with a soul; a microcosm; a spiritual, historical, social, and cultural creation.⁹⁷ As we know, that philosophical anthropology was complemented by theological anthropology, included in the work *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie* where Stein presented, based on the teachings of the Church, human nature in a form common for all people.⁹⁸ In this work she elaborated the original state of man, the fall into original sin, and the Redemption which has been

⁹³ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 341.

⁹⁴ E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, op. cit., p. 236.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁹⁶ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 134.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31.

⁹⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., pp. 15–25.

merited for us by God-man. These facts from the history of redemption obviously have a significant meaning for understanding the experience of spirituality by man. The most important anthropological issue here is concerned with the functioning of the spiritual soul.

The main central subject of research for Stein was study of the soul.⁹⁹ In her later theological-pedagogical works, she dealt with the construction and functioning of the soul in an Aristotelian-scholastic sense.¹⁰⁰ Undoubtedly, the work of her godmother was an inspiration in this area. In one of the letters from 1935, when describing the functioning of the soul, she cited the contemplations of Jadwiga Conrad-Martius in the book, *Metaphysische Gespräche*.¹⁰¹ This influence was extensively developed by Angela Bello.¹⁰² In this approach, we can speak about the soul as a principle of life in the case of plants, animals, and man.¹⁰³ Stein presented the essence of the soul in accordance with Aquinas's scholastic psychology. In his way of thinking, the soul, being the form of the body, is something simple (not complex) and spiritual (non-material). All sensory and spiritual life is anchored in it, as are the sources which serve to maintain the body: the faculties of sensory perception, and spiritual faculties (intellect and will). The abilities of the soul are abilities for something specific, in other words for acts and states. Initially, potency is in the realm of mere abilities, but this can proceed to acts, and then, thanks to a certain *habitus*, can obtain perfection.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ B. Beckmann, *Einleitung*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. XIII f.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XVIII.

¹⁰¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 137.

¹⁰² A. A. Bello, *Edith Stein und Hedwig Conrad-Martius: eine menschliche und intellektuelle Begegnung*, in: *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 26–27. *Studien zur Philosophie von Edith Stein*, München 1993, p. 271 f.

¹⁰³ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 38 f.

¹⁰⁴ E. Stein, *Die Typen der Psychologie und ihre Bedeutung für die Pädagogik*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 10.

With regard to the unity of the soul, traditional metaphysical psychology differentiates a lower and higher part, that is, the spirit and sensual perception. This horizontal line is intercepted by a vertical one since these parts are divided into cognitive and appetitive faculties. Reason is based on senses and will arises from the lowest appetite. According to Aquinas, the spiritual faculties of reason and will, contrary to the lower faculties, are not in themselves bound to a specific bodily organ. Nevertheless, man is a sensual–spiritual being, whose soul is anchored in the body, and higher faculties operate on the basis of material supplied by the lower. The external world is experienced firstly by the senses, but then, in order to be understandable, the agitation of the senses has to be pervaded by the light of reason.¹⁰⁵ On the basis of a sensual life, which emerges from both the body and the soul, a spiritual state arises as a function of the intellect, will, and heart (*Gemüt*), which the external world accepts and confronts.¹⁰⁶ Through its vegetal and sensitive parts, the human soul is indeed connected to the body, but its spiritual powers are not directly and inextricably bound to it.¹⁰⁷ Stein called the spirit, ordering sensory material in its intentional life, and through this ordering process looking on the objective world, reason or intellect. She expressed sensory observations as the lowest activity of the intellect. Since the soul may, in her opinion, reflect and abstract, it is therefore simultaneously, reason and will.¹⁰⁸

In Stein's eyes, spiritual life is a certain dynamism and process of development. The life of the soul is a spiritual life, in other words, cognition, sensation, and desire. Thanks to this, the soul opens itself

¹⁰⁵ E. Stein, *Der Intellekt und die Intellektuellen*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 145f.

¹⁰⁶ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 54f.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

to another spiritual existence from which its powers flow and by which the soul may be carried, especially in the case of the infinite Spirit of God, which provides its strength regardless of its natural power.¹⁰⁹ The development of the soul is performed by the activity of its faculties on appropriate materials. Thus, the senses are responsible for accepting impressions, the mind for thoughts, the will for decisions, while the heart responds to value.¹¹⁰ When writing about the general division of act and potency in the intellect, *Gemüt*, and will, Stein perceived the intellect as the external acceptance of the world, *Gemüt* an internal confrontation with it, and will as a reaching beyond oneself into an external world.¹¹¹ In the spiritual formation of man, Stein recognised the huge role of the conscience as potency, habitus, and act which accepts and answers the spiritual appeal.¹¹² Within the spiritual development of man, she distinguished two cases in which either man is changed by degrees and the earlier fundamental state still remains in the general, altered picture, or nothing permanent remains, and we are then faced with a different being, not merely a transformed one. Stein illustrates the first case by the conversion of Saul to Paul, where, in his service to the Gospel, it was possible to recognise zeal for the Law of Moses.¹¹³

As a result of the aforementioned contemplations on the subject of the faculties of the soul, it can be seen that Stein, just like Aquinas, did not generally deem memory to be a proprietary, basic faculty

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 128.

¹¹⁰ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 88f.

¹¹¹ E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, op. cit., p. 131.

¹¹² E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 91.

¹¹³ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 73f.

of the soul with intellect and will. Aquinas divided the memory into sensual and spiritual, i.e. subordinate to the higher and lower cognitive faculties. Meanwhile in the writings of Sts Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross we can see a three-way division, which hails back to St Augustine (see. *De Trinitate* X) and includes memory.¹¹⁴ Stein adopted this division towards the end of her life when she was writing *The Science of the Cross*. In this work she presented St John's scholastic psychology with the sense perception faculty and the spiritual faculty of the soul, which were divided into the cognitive and appetitive. According to Stein, including memory as the third spiritual faculty does not make a great difference in regard to Aquinas' teachings, as it does not concern the actual division of the soul, but the different ways of working and focusing one spiritual power in different directions.¹¹⁵ For theologians, however, this three-way division is of great significance as it enables the union of the soul with God to be described thanks to the three theological virtues. Finally, the main sense of depicting the construction of the soul in such a way was seen by Stein in the fact that God was dwelling in it, and she saw prayer as the main gate leading to its interior. This is, of course, not the only task of the soul. As a spirit and image of the Spirit of God, it has to become acquainted with and accept the entire created world with love. That is why, with reference to the teachings of St Teresa of Avila, Stein claimed that individual mansions of the soul correspond to the gradual building of the world. Stein actually named a few possible ways which could, in her opinion, lead to the interior of the soul, but in the face of a stronger and stronger outline of psy-

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 401; Thomas von Aquino, *Untersuchungen über die wahrheit (Quaestiones disputatae de veritate)*, trans. by E. Stein, vol. 1, Freiburg im Breisgau 1952, p. 278.

¹¹⁵ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 93f.

chology without a soul, she contemplated whether, in fact, prayer was not the only correct way to get to know the soul.¹¹⁶ In Stein's works we can see a wide range of concepts of the soul from an initially, not specifically Christian, approach to its essence,¹¹⁷ to showing the nature of the soul in the light of faith on the basis of Aquinas' teachings and the definition of the Magisterium.¹¹⁸ The functioning of man understood in such a way enables the observance of religious evolution shown by Stein's experiences. Particularly inspiring is the approach to the three faculties of the soul: reason, will, and memory, in relation to the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love. Without doubt, interest in the relation of faith to reason is the most prevailing topic in Stein's writings.

¹¹⁶ E. Stein, *Die Seelenburg*, ESW 6, Louvain 1962, p. 62f.

¹¹⁷ E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, op. cit., p. 145.

¹¹⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., pp. 18–21.



THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
ON THE PATH OF FAITH

One of the subjects which returns most frequently in Edith Stein's writings is that of knowing God. Initially, as already mentioned, we can find in her work *Was ist Philosophie?*, and likewise in the works of St Thomas Aquinas, two paths: one of faith and one of philosophical inference. However, in the writings *Potenz und Akt* she describes three ways: the natural way of knowing, and the way of faith, which is divided into ordinary and extraordinary, i.e. mystical.¹¹⁹ The latter was widely discussed in the thesis about the ways of knowing God by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite: *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis*. In this book, Stein differentiated the natural way of knowing God, faith, as the 'ordinary' way of the supernatural knowing of God, and the supernatural experience as the extraordinary way of the supernatural knowing of God.¹²⁰ Stein elaborated here three paths on the foundation of 'three kinds' of speaking about God which have different aims as they are addressed to different listeners. First of all, using natural theology, she discussed the evidence that God exists, which provides

¹¹⁹ B. Beckmann, *Einführung*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 12.

¹²⁰ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 38; B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 233.

help with problems related to faith, and focuses on people who are susceptible to doubts. In this case, the natural intellect of the teacher is directed towards the natural intellect of the pupil. The next kind of speaking about God is the proclaiming of the faith, in other words, proclaiming what God has revealed. The purpose here is to accept the faith and order one's life in accordance with its rules. Finally, the third kind is symbolic theology, which expresses experience in a new sense, i.e. mysterious contact with a supernatural light.¹²¹ These three paths, natural intellect, faith, and mystical experience are, according to Stein, complementary components of the human experience of God and the subject for further analysis.¹²²

Stein believed that the natural way of knowing God starts when the natural intellect, without the help of instruction from positive theology and the Bible, is able to come closer to God. Since, as Stein writes, man finds within himself, and in the world surrounding him, many signs referring to something which is above everything and on which everything depends. Seeking the existence of God is part of human nature. Stein looked for this natural way of knowing God through Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and later through St John of the Cross. This concerned natural cognition, which is beyond man, gained by way of sensual experience. In Stein's early works, the natural way of knowing God always proceeded by becoming acquainted with the internal processes, which is similar to the thinking of St Augustine. She also dealt with *a priori* proof of the existence of God.¹²³

Stein was a philosopher and she greatly valued the role of natural intellect. However, she considered that acquired philosophical

¹²¹ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 70.

¹²² A. Ales Bello, *Edith Stein. La passione per la verità*, Padova 1998, pp. 107–109.

¹²³ B. Beckmann, *Einführung*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 15.

knowledge was insufficient, since ‘proof’ of the existence of God cannot provide the certainty which is characteristic of faith. For her, faith was a gift of grace and of Christ himself which, when it comes, saves lives. This was a result of her own personal experience and not the usual metaphysical system.¹²⁴ Obviously, when speaking about faith in a colloquial way, we do not necessarily think about religious faith. Sometimes we treat it as taking a stance on a given subject (assent or dissent), which classically entails doubt, opinion, science, and faith.¹²⁵ As early as in *Natur, Freiheit, Gnade* Stein wished to differentiate between these forms of theoretically taking a stance (belief) and faith in the sense of *fides*. Her contemplations on this subject were most likely written down before she became acquainted with Aquinas’ teachings. However in the first article of Question XIV in *De veritate*, which Stein translated, the Angelic Doctor dealt with this very subject. Aquinas wrote here about the activity of the mind, in which assent or dissent is reached. Here he found a field of faith, as we believe in that which is true and we do not believe in that which is false.¹²⁶ Stein attempted to show the difference between faith in the sense of taking a stance (*belief*) and religious faith (*fides*). The latter, for her, is not necessarily only about a theoretical foundation, but about an act which is comprised of knowledge, love, and deed.¹²⁷ According to Stein, faith understood in such terms, belongs only to God.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ F. V. Tommasi, “...verschieden Sprachen redeten...”. Ein Dialog zwischen Phänomenologie und mittelalterlicher Scholastik im Werk Edith Steins, in *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, op. cit., p. 126f.

¹²⁵ J. Pieper, *Über den Glauben. Ein philosophischer Traktat*, München 1961, p. 20.

¹²⁶ Thomas von Aquino, *Untersuchungen über die wahrheit (Quaestiones disputatae de veritate)*, op. cit., p. 1.

¹²⁷ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 188.

¹²⁸ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 108f.

Placing faith in a religious context, Stein indicated its different meanings from *habitus* of faith, through the act of faith to what we actually believe in, i.e. the revealed truth.¹²⁹ Stein made use of the classic definition of faith, as found in the catechism, defining it as a supernatural virtue thanks to which, by divine inspiration and the help of God's grace, we can regard what God has revealed to us and what is taught through the Church as true – not because of an internal, material truth, which we could become aware of through natural intellect, but as a result of the authority of God's revelation, which can neither deceive nor be deceived.¹³⁰ In an analysis of faith, based on Aquinas' *De veritate* (question 14, act 7), Stein distinguished between faith as a virtue (*fides, qua creditur*) and what we believe in, in other words, the revealed truth (*fides, quae creditur*) and also the activation of the virtue, the act of faith (*credere*). In living faith, she specified the acceptance of the truth of faith in view of the authority of God, i.e. trusting God (*credere Deo*), believing that God exists (*credere Deum*) and turning towards God in faith, in other words striving towards Him, 'belief unto God' (*zu Gott hin glauben*) which Aquinas called *credere in Deum*. For Stein, faith is a grace, which means participating in Divine life, and therefore constitutes the beginning of eternal life. By accepting faith on the grounds of the testimony of God one may receive cognition, which is not understanding (*ohne einzusehen*), as the truths of faith are not at all obvious in themselves (*einleuchtend*), unlike the essential truths of intellect or the facts of sensual perception.¹³¹

¹²⁹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 202.

¹³⁰ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 28f; *Catechismus Catholicus*. Roma 1933, Pro adultis q 515, p. 242.

¹³¹ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 28.

Stein portrays the roles of freedom and grace in the act of faith, which are exceptionally significant and difficult to balance on the basis of Aquinas' teachings. She recalled that, whilst the Church speaks about the duty of faith and calls it a virtue, by which revealed truth is freely accepted, Aquinas, on the other hand, when describing faith as consent of the will to certain judgments of God, claimed that this consent is not blind, as it has its foundation in the enlightenment and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, grace and freedom function together in the act of faith. The help of grace, which makes faith possible, depends on proffering the truth and the strengthening of the intellect to accept faith, and also on imparting a strong will. In order for the act of faith to be perfect, consent *liberum arbitrium* is also required. Due to the fact that faith cannot compete with cognition and love in the *visio beatifica*, consent in faith is not as obvious and faultless as in glory, and may be brushed aside by other reasons in the intellect and will. That is why the possibility that man may lose faith and traverse to unbelief always exists *in statu viae*.¹³²

Stein clearly differentiated the subjective side of faith, in other words the individual acceptance of divine truth, from the objective aspect in the form of the revealed truth which is secured by Tradition and the Magisterium.¹³³ Within this division, it is worth recalling the distinction between faith as a virtue (*fides, qua creditur*) and what that act is focused on (*fides quae creditur*). In faith the revelation is acknowledged as true and one believes in what God revealed because He can neither deceive nor be deceived.¹³⁴ Here we are entering the territory of the cognitive sources of theology, the so-called

¹³² E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 72f.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

loci theologici, in which we mainly include the Magisterium, which guards and explains the revelation, the Holy Bible and Tradition, and also the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, theologians, liturgy, and canon law.¹³⁵

Above all, Stein emphasized the role of the Church as a guarantor of the truth of faith. In her opinion, Christ did not leave people orphaned, but sent them his Spirit which teaches all truth. The Church of which Christ is the foundation is led by His Spirit. In this Church he speaks in a human voice through the mouths of those whom He has chosen to represent Him.¹³⁶ This is where the commitment to belief in the teaching of the Church comes from. According to Stein, the scope of required faith covers what was contained in God's word in written form, what was passed on verbally, and what was presented for belief in a solemn proclamation by the Church, or by the common and universal Magisterium, as being revealed by God.¹³⁷

In accordance with the aforementioned fact, apart from the documents from the Second Vatican Council and the teachings of the Pope, which she often quoted in various contexts, Stein frequently reached for the Bible, especially in more theological works. Besides the obvious use of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures in theological texts, we can also find a slightly more surprising way of contemplating fragments of the Bible in Stein's philosophical works. In her largest philosophical work, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, when writing about the Name of God, Stein moved away from citing purely intellectual arguments and moved more in the direction

¹³⁵ K. Rahner, H. Vorgrimler, *Kleines Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1976, p. 264.

¹³⁶ E. Stein, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*, ESW 15, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, p. 204.

¹³⁷ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 182.

of analyzing God's actual statements about himself in the Scriptures.¹³⁸ This occurred as she was convinced that, although faith is beyond reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between them since the same God has revealed mysteries, infused faith, and bestowed the light of reason on the human spirit. Therefore, God cannot disclaim himself, and the truth can never contradict itself. If this sometimes seems to be the case, in Stein's opinion, either the truths of faith are not understood in the same way that the Church understands, or common opinions are considered the statement of reason (science). For Stein, each opinion which was contradictory to the truth of faith was merely a falsehood. That is why she agreed with the Canon law which condemned teachings which were contrary to faith. Admittedly, the Church does not prohibit lay science from using its own rules and methods, but it keeps guard so that they do not countenance any mistakes which are contrary to the light of God and go beyond their own borders and limitations.¹³⁹

Stein's educational interests induced her to define faith not only from the dogmatic point of view, but also in moral and spiritual terms. She emphasized the importance of grace in education; that is why she wrote so much on the subject of the significance of the sacraments and prayer. Different forms of the life of prayer can be perceived as a measure of how deep a person's faith is, so Stein consulted the most mature description of the development of the life of prayer in the works of St Teresa of Avila. Teresa quickly understood that prayer is the highest attainment to which man's spirit is capable, and she attempted to help others experience the successive stages from vocal

¹³⁸ H. B. Gerl-Falkovitz, *Endliches und ewiges Sein: Der Mensch als Abbild der Dreifaltigkeit*, "Teresianum" 50 (1999), p. 257-276.

¹³⁹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 185.

prayer, through meditation, affective prayer of quiet and simplicity, to the threshold of the mystical prayer in which the soul is deprived of autonomous activity and becomes a vessel for receiving grace.¹⁴⁰ This subject will be further discussed later in the book as we are encroaching on the third way which Stein wrote about, namely the mystical experience of God.

In one of the letters which Stein wrote in 1940, she mentioned the need to strive towards pure love in relation to God. In order to do this, she believed that it is necessary to try with all one's might to mortify the senses, set the memory free from all images of the world, strip the mind of its natural activities, turn a direct gaze to God, and give up our own free will to the will of God. Stein was aware that without Divine help, it is not possible to achieve this goal, but man himself should, in her opinion, do everything which it is in his power to do.¹⁴¹ In its natural acts, the human spirit is connected to the senses, but its focus should turn to the Creator and not the creatures. In this light, Stein stated that the spirit must be educated in such a way as to recognize God alone, and not to be pleased by anything but Him. This is initially possible when the natural faculties are presented with something that attracts and satisfies more strongly than creation. Faith directs the intellect to the Creator who has called all things into existence and is Himself infinitely bigger, more sublime, and more worthy of love than all things put together. Faith teaches the understanding about God's attributes, about what He has done for mankind and what mankind should do for Him in return. In this respect, faith means what has been presented to us for believing, in other words, the truths as *fides*

¹⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jesus*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 52f.

¹⁴¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 440f.

quae creditur which have been revealed and proclaimed by the Church in their entirety. If reason accepts what it is shown and what it would not be able to learn through its own endeavours, then it takes the first step in the dark night of faith. Here we are dealing with *fides quae creditur*, which is the conscious activity of the spirit and the constant attitude *habitus* with the virtue of faith. It consists of the beliefs that we are already familiar with, that God exists (*credere Deum*) along with accepting what God teaches through the Church (*credere Deo*). With this faith the spirit is lifted above its natural activity, but is not yet detached from it.¹⁴²

In the new world which has been opened by faith, the natural faculties of the spirit receive plenty of new material for their activities. During meditation, the spirit inwardly acquires the content of faith. In higher forms of reflection the spirit deeply penetrates the truths of faith, contemplates them in dialogue with each other, develops trains of thought, and discovers their internal connections. If, in addition to this, the Holy Spirit lifts the human spirit, it seems to it that it receives enlightenment through God's revealed truths. Then it no longer needs words and meditation in order to know and love God.¹⁴³ It is sufficient for it to enter into prayer and it is with God. It is here that we can find in Stein's reflections an interesting interpretation of the third element of the act of faith, which is something completely new in comparison to previous descriptions. She called this state of the spirit acquired contemplation, which is the result of one's own activities inspired and sustained by multifold grace. This acquired contemplation, i.e. the peaceful and loving surrender to God, is also a form of faith, namely entrusting oneself to God (*credere in Deum – in Gott hineinglauben*), faithful devotion to Him. If it happens that one's

¹⁴² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 95f.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

own will is surrendered to the will of God then this state constitutes the peak of what can be attained in a life of faith based on a person's own activity.¹⁴⁴

Man's attempts at a union with God would have come to naught if God himself had not taken the initiative. Stein wrote in one of her letters that prayer of quiet is an act of God.¹⁴⁵ She knew that at the beginning of the mystical life God indulges the soul with much joy and gladness in spiritual exercises.¹⁴⁶ Then, however, the joy which righteous exercise brings is taken away in order to try the soul. In this state, the soul is convinced that it has lost all spiritual goodness and has been abandoned by God.¹⁴⁷ In the passive night, the more profound darkness of faith causes the soul to escape beyond all the detailed knowledge which could be grasped conceptually, towards the simple discernment of the one truth.¹⁴⁸

For Stein, all three ways of knowing God were a form of meeting, which had a certain quality of fulfillment. Therefore, according to her, faith has a fulfilling character in the presence of the natural cognition of God in the same way as the mystical experience complements faith.¹⁴⁹ All three ways of knowing God also constitute the development of the three kinds of God's dwelling in the soul which were described by St John of the Cross: through essence, through

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 97f.

¹⁴⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 443f.

¹⁴⁶ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 42f; Jan od Krzyża, *Noc ciemna*, I 8–10, in: *Dziela*, Kraków 1986, pp. 421–429.

¹⁴⁸ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁴⁹ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 48f.

grace, and through spiritual affection.¹⁵⁰ According to Stein, elevation to the knowing of God empirically, in a sense, a breakthrough in the life of faith. Yet, on the other hand, it is not so much a breakthrough in that the previous experiences are not crossed out, but that they are supplemented in the new way of cognition. This same God in whose presence one previously blindly believed is the one whose presence is experienced. This is, however, a fleeting fulfillment, like a foretaste of seeing God in the light of glory.¹⁵¹ This subject requires further development in the chapter about mystical prayer.

In summing up this chapter, it must be said that the evolution of religious experience in Stein's eyes can be seen as spiritual growth in the theological virtues, especially in faith. An analysis of her works shows faith from a wide range of various view points, from biographical through philosophical and pedagogical to theological, especially dogmatic and mystical.¹⁵² Essentially, Stein saw faith in the context of a certain dynamism which constantly seeks fulfillment, starting from the natural knowing of God, through the grace of faith up to the personal, empirical knowing of God in the mystical experience, which announces seeing Him in glory.¹⁵³ This perspective justifies the approach to faith with reference to the three ways of knowing God, which was drawn from the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite corresponding to the sanjuanist element of the presence of God

¹⁵⁰ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 148.

¹⁵¹ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., pp. 50–52.

¹⁵² W. Zyzak, *L'évolution de l'expérience religieuse (sur le chemin de la foi) dans la vie de Sainte Thérèse Bénédicte de la Croix (Edith Stein)*, "Carmel", revue trimestrielle de spiritualité chrétienne, 125 (2007), pp. 77–92.

¹⁵³ W. Zyzak, *Wiara jako jedna z dróg poznania Boga w ujęciu świętej Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, in *Wiara w doświadczeniu świętych Karmelu*, red. J. Gogola, Kraków 2014, pp. 63–83.

in the soul through essence, grace, and spiritual affection. As we have seen in Stein's writings, this approach is associated with the original interpretation of the three moments in faith, which traditional scholastic theology defines as *credere Deum*, *credero Deo* and *credere in Deum*. Such a development of faith, which is related to the maturing of hope and love, leads to deeper and deeper prayer, and a more complete union with God. This very union, according to Stein, means eventually arriving on the mystical path, always from the perspective of Christ's cross. The elements of Stein's spiritual heritage, which have been mentioned above, will be developed in further chapters of the book.



THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS

In Edith Stein's life and works, becoming acquainted with the most important divine truths, which flow forth from the union with God, is combined with suffering, and in some ways focuses on the symbol of the Cross.¹⁵⁴ The deepest basis of this account can be found in a fragment of the letter of St. Paul which she cites:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God [...]. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor 1: 17–25).¹⁵⁵

The wisdom of the Cross was the result of Stein's long term work with divine grace. In the life of this daughter of the Jewish nation and profound intellectualist we can detect a 'demand for signs' and a 'searching

¹⁵⁴ W. Zyzak, *Prawda a cierpienie w życiu i pismach Świętej Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, in *Oblicza prawdy. Edyta Stein – s. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża*, red. J. Machnac, Wrocław 2010, pp. 115–132.

¹⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 15.

for (human) wisdom, before God allowed her to discover the truth of the Crucified. In retrospect, Stein could have written that, if a person is really concerned with seeking the truth, and not just simply gathering specific facts, he is closer to God, who is the truth, and because of this he is closer to his deepest core than he even realizes.¹⁵⁶ In response to Roman Ingarden's accusations regarding faith, Stein wrote that, before her eyes had been opened, she had spoken in the same way and would not have been swayed by theoretical discussions. However, if he were seriously seeking the truth in religious matters, in other words God, and not just evidence of religious experiences, then without a doubt he would find some way.¹⁵⁷ In her opinion, this way leads from faith to observance and not the other way round.¹⁵⁸ On this path which Stein trod, experiencing suffering was of great significance. It was one of the factors which helped her to accept the grace of faith. Faith, in turn, led her to the complete truth, which is Christ crucified. In order to have the best possible participation in this, man has to unify with God on the path which Stein indicated as the way of the cross.

As has already been mentioned, the Cross and suffering played a significant role in Stein's spiritual development. After a happy childhood, we can see a serious crisis in her outlook on life during her adolescence and youth. We could say that it was the time of peculiar positive disintegration which, thanks to the faithful and intensive seeking of the truth, led her to accept the Catholic faith.¹⁵⁹ It is not possible at this point to omit the specific encounter with suffering which Stein experienced during World War I whilst working for the Red

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 136.

¹⁵⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., s. 193f.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁵⁹ M. A. Neyer OCD, *Einführung*, in E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. XVI.

Cross. Fulfilling her role in the military hospital for infectious diseases in Hranice, she wholeheartedly devoted herself to the sick. The sight of the suffering patients and possibly the immoral behavior of the medical personnel was certainly food for much thought.¹⁶⁰ Besides, the constant struggle with the issue of death had accompanied Stein since her early years. There had been a few accounts of suicide in her family and she saw the reason for this as a lack of awareness of the prospect of eternal life.¹⁶¹

While studying, the source of an emotional crisis was centred round the difficulties concerning her doctoral degree. For the first time in her life she was faced with something which was impossible to overcome by mere will. As a consequence she was unable to sleep and was weary of life.¹⁶² At this time she was also affected by depression, which was intensified by excessive sensitivity and a sense of loneliness.¹⁶³ Her internal crisis can be best illustrated by an event which occurred one night when she was almost asphyxiated by carbon monoxide. Upon awakening, she regretted that she had been rescued as her life meant so little to her.¹⁶⁴ From about this time we can see analyses of the experience of security (*Geborgenheit*) in God, which appear to have an autobiographic quality. Stein wrote about that experience which

¹⁶⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 43; E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 264, pp. 270–272, 277, 295; J. Seremak, *Droga nawrócenia Edyty Stein, in Odkrywanie Boga. Święta Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża Edyta Stein (1891–1942)*, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁶¹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 52–54.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁶³ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., pp. 40, 123; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 53; E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 168f.

¹⁶⁴ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 168.

engulfs us in those moments of doubt, when the intellect cannot see any way out, and when we do not have a single person in the world who would be able to, or wish to, advise and help us. When we think that we are falling into the abyss, it is then that we feel the 'hand of God' which lifts us and does not allow us to fall.¹⁶⁵ This whole process found its reflection in the letters to Roman Ingarden in which Stein positively assessed her feeling of powerlessness which helped her cure herself of the naïve and unlimited trust in her own strength. Some events in life 'brought her to her knees', but they also gave her the power to, once again, with gratitude, accept her existence. That is why she could speak of re-birth (*Wiedergeburt*) in the deepest sense. She admitted that over the previous few years she had lived much more than she philosophized. The former conflicts became of no importance once she started to live life to the fullest with the suffering and joy which the earthly world does not know.¹⁶⁶

The above sets the role of Stein's life experiences in the process of opening up to the Christian faith in a new light. Among the factors which had an impact on her spiritual path, the experience of World War I and the internal crisis related to recognising one's own limitations appear to have equally as much significance as her experience with Judaism, the influence of the phenomenological method, contact with Conrad-Martius, Max Scheler, and the Reinach family, and also the autobiography of St Teresa of Avila.¹⁶⁷ With regard to suffering, it is also worth emphasizing at this point the tremendous influence which Adolf Reinach's widow had, whose attitude of total

¹⁶⁵ E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, op. cit., p. 170f.

¹⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., pp. 71, 106, 143, 188f.

¹⁶⁷ A. U. Müller, *Grundzüge der Religionsphilosophie Edith Steins*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, p. 87.

faith in the face of the loss of her husband showed Stein for the first time the power flowing from the Cross.¹⁶⁸

Stein's life after baptism was not free from suffering either. The nationalistic repression which she met with could be considered an external stimulus which motivated her to undertake the next significant step on the path to finding the truth of her life. Just before entering the Carmelite Order, she told the sisters herself that from the moment of her baptism, the thought of the order had never once left her, and that she had always been aware that the Lord had prepared something for her which could only be found and accomplished there.¹⁶⁹ Entering the Carmelite Order was, of course, a decision based on faith, but the four unsuccessful attempts at a habilitation, the lack of prospects for academic work, and the persecution of the Jews marked the moment to implement the plan which had been originally conceived during her conversion.¹⁷⁰

The truth of the calling which Stein wished to fulfill in the Carmelite community was closely connected to the Cross and suffering. In one of her writings, she described the way she imagined religious life. In her opinion, there is such a thing as the call to suffering with Christ,

¹⁶⁸ L. Börsig-Hover, *Der Weg in den Karmel – Edith Steins Vortragstätigkeit in den Jahren 1928 bis 1933 und der Auftrag von Erzabt Raphael Walzer*, op. cit., p. 78f; T. R. Posselt, *Edith Stein, Lebensbild einer Philosophin und Karmelitin*, Nürnberg 1957, p. 49f; M. Petermeier, *Die religiöse Entwicklung der Edith Stein. Eine Untersuchung zur Korrelation von Lebens – und Glaubensgeschichte*, Elementa Theologiae. Arbeiten zur Theologie und Religionspädagogik, vol. 10, Frankfurt am Main 1998, p. 136; Ch. Feldmann, *Liebe, die das Leben kostet. Edith Stein – Jüdin, Philosophin, Ordensfrau*, Wien 1987, p. 38f.

¹⁶⁹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 353.

¹⁷⁰ B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 157; M. Petermeier, *Die religiöse Entwicklung der Edith Stein. Eine Untersuchung zur Korrelation von Lebens – und Glaubensgeschichte*, op. cit., p. 196f.

which is incorporated in the great work of Redemption. According to her, this was the fundamental way of thinking for all religious life, especially the Carmelite.¹⁷¹ She believed that suffering constituted the most tried and tested way to union with God.¹⁷² For her, religious life from the very beginning was the way of the Cross in union with one's nation. From the very moment when she heard about the persecution of the Jews, she understood that God was once again placing a heavy hand on His people and the fate of this nation was also her fate.¹⁷³ Whilst praying during mass, she told the Saviour that she knew that it was His Cross that was being placed on the Jewish nation, and that most of them did not understand this, but those who did would have to take it up willingly in the name of all. That is why Stein wholeheartedly wanted God to show her how to do it. When the mass finished, she was certain that she had been heard, but she did not yet know what the carrying of this cross was to involve.¹⁷⁴ That thought must have stayed constantly with her as the Cross was part of her name within the Carmelite order.

The Cross finally took the shape of martyrdom in her life. The specific preparation for this was the spiritual path of meditation on the works of St John of the Cross. Initially, it seemed to her that she would not be able to keep pace with the books. However, in April 1942, whilst working on *The Science of the Cross* after a period of difficulties, she once again felt the flow of power to continue with her work.¹⁷⁵ Her final years were marked with contemplation, seeking the union of the soul

¹⁷¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 254.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

¹⁷³ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 346.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 347f.

¹⁷⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., pp. 124, 104, 542.

with God, through the Cross.¹⁷⁶ Ezequiel Rojo connects Stein's writing of her last work, *The Science of the Cross*, with personal night experiences. He is of the opinion that the knowledge of the mysticism of St John of the Cross helped her to carry the Cross to the very end.¹⁷⁷ Stein wrote that Christ gave his life so as to open the gates of eternal life to mankind, but in order to gain eternal life, man has to relinquish the earthly life. In order to rise from the dead with Christ, it is necessary to die with Him a death of suffering and perseverance and/or the bloody death of a martyr.¹⁷⁸ Stein experienced both these forms of death which led her to the fullness of truth in eternity.

It is not strange then that reflections on the mystery of salvation, which took place in the suffering of the Cross, can be found in Stein's writings. The Cross is the symbol of redemptive suffering. Stein wrote that between the Cross and suffering there is no direct similarity, but neither does it concern a freely imposed relation of the symbol. The significance of the Cross came about on the basis of its history. The Cross is not a normal 'object of nature', but a 'tool' which has been made and used by people for a very specific purpose. As a tool, it has played a role of incomparable significance in history. Due to its evident shape it clearly indicates the meaning which is connected to it. It is therefore a sign, but a sign whose meaning and significance has not been attached artificially, since that meaning belongs intrinsically to the Cross on the basis of its efficacy and history. Its visible shape indicates the association of the meaning in which the Cross is found. That is why Stein called the Cross a symbol (*Wahrzeichen*).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ U. T. Manshausen, *Die Biographie der Edith Stein. Beispiel einer Mystagogie*, op. cit., pp. 78–80.

¹⁷⁷ E. García Rojo, *Edith Stein. Existencia y pensamiento*, Madrid 1998, p. 175.

¹⁷⁸ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31f.

It is worth noticing here, within this word is the adjective ‘*wahr*’, which means something ‘true’, indicating the truth. Stein wrote many times about the Cross, emphasising the various truths which can be found within it. She spoke about the Cross as a sign of salvation and as a symbol of faith. She also compared holy vows to the nails fastening one to the Cross and contemplated the rewarding value of suffering in union with Christ.¹⁸⁰ In the last few months of her life, she accepted the meaning of the Cross as a key for interpreting the life and works of St John of the Cross.¹⁸¹

According to Stein, through His suffering and death, Christ expiated the sins of all men and by this wiped out the inherited sin which encumbered the descendants of Adam. However, in this act which was performed for all, only those who belong to the Redeemer can participate. Stein wrote that this belonging can be achieved by faith in Him, by accepting His gifts, and by trusting in His promises, as well as by keeping His commandments.¹⁸² The saints show by example how a living faith means that the teaching of the faith becomes a way of life which subsequently shapes everything else. Stein called this holy realism, which causes the content of the faith to be accepted in an appropriate way by the soul. If a saint’s soul accepts the truths of faith in this way, those truths will come to constitute the deposit of knowledge within that saint’s soul. If the internal form of the soul becomes a mystery

¹⁸⁰ E. Stein, *Kreuzesliebe. Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 122f; E. Stein, *Kreuzerhöhung. 14. 09. 1939. Ave Crux, Spes unica*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 124n; E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14. 09. 1940*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 130f; E. Stein, *Kreuzerhebung 14. 09. 1941*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 134.

¹⁸¹ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., pp. 5–46.

¹⁸² E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 86.

of the Cross, then we are faced with the science of the Cross.¹⁸³ When writing about the science of the Cross, Stein was not thinking about the theoretical aspect, but the living, genuine, and acting faith which, when it takes root in the soul, grows and imparts a defined character. From this lively form and strength in the depths of the soul comes a way of life and a picture of the world and God.¹⁸⁴

One of the consequences of the science of the cross, namely the truth of how suffering can bring reward, is very dear indeed to Stein. The last chapter of this book will deal with this subject. At this point, it is sufficient to say that, for Stein, the Cross was the symbol of everything burdensome and so unpleasant for human nature that taking it up is like facing death. According to Stein, Christ's pupil should take up the cross everyday.¹⁸⁵ In her opinion, '*scientia Crucis*' can only be gained through the profound experience of the Cross and that is why, from the very outset, our Saint Teresa Benedicta said from the heart, '*Ave, Crux, spes unica!*'¹⁸⁶ Accepting the Cross with complete faith and love lifts the soul into the bosom of the Holy Trinity.¹⁸⁷ This is how Stein thought when she indicated that communion with God – The Whole Truth – was the final horizon of human suffering accepted in the union with the Crucified. Just by glancing at the contents of the book *The Science of the Cross*, it can be seen that Stein, expressing the life and works of the Mystical Doctor in the key of the Cross, saw the process leading to the union with God first as the 'way of the cross' in the night, then as

¹⁸³ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁶ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 511.

¹⁸⁷ E. Stein, *Kreuzerhöhung*. 14. 09. 1939. *Ave Crux, Spes unica*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 126.

the 'crucifixion and death' in the dark night of the soul, and finally, as the 'resurrection and glory' in the experience of union.¹⁸⁸

In the life of man, seeking the truth has a fundamental importance, especially if it pertains to the truth about God and the meaning of life. As the Second Vatican Council teaches: when the foundation of God and the hope of life eternal are lacking, the dignity of man, as can be seen these days, is severely lacerated, and the puzzle of life and death, guilt and suffering remain unsolved, resulting in man being frequently thrown into despair.¹⁸⁹ In faith and in non-faith the stake is our whole existence, because on it depends our winning or losing our life.¹⁹⁰ The Christian faith lives in the hope of resurrection and the beatific vision of God. This is the goal of mankind, and is the reason why we live, work, and suffer. The joys of human life are like sparks of eternal happiness.¹⁹¹ For Stein, too, the fundamental truth was the truth about God, not as a theoretical issue, but as an existential encounter with the Saviour, to whom the path of suffering leads. Stein found the key to complete faith in the mystical union with God, to whom the path of following Christ in His agony and glory leads. Taking Stein's works into consideration, if our contemplations up to this point have shown a phenomenological analysis of the spiritual experiences, verified in the light of revealed truths, indicating that, thanks to grace, man is able to unite with God through the Cross on the path of theological virtues, then in our further contemplation we should show how this process of union flows from divine filiation and becomes visible in prayer, especially mystical prayer.

¹⁸⁸ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., pp. VII-IX.

¹⁸⁹ Vatican Council II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern World* *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 21.

¹⁹⁰ W. Kasper, *Glaube: ein Geschenk zum Weitergeben*, Ostfildern 1984, p. 23n.

¹⁹¹ K. Rahner, K. Weger, *Was sollen wir noch glauben?*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1979, p. 14.



DIVINE FILIATION

In the previous chapter the process of the rising of the science of the Cross in a person's soul was discussed. In her last work, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, which was her most important for spiritual theology, Stein expressed this truth in the following words:

When we speak of a *science of the cross*, this is not to be understood in the usual meaning of *science*; we are not dealing merely with a theory, [...] Science of the Cross is a well-recognized truth – a theology of the cross – a living, real, and effective truth. It is buried in the soul like a seed that takes root there and grows, making a distinct impression on the soul, determining what it does and what it omits, and, by shining outwardly, it is recognized. In this sense one speaks of a science of the saints and we speak of a science of the cross. From this living form and strength in one's innermost depths, a perspective of life arises, the image one has of God and of the world, and therefore one can find an expression for it in a mode of thinking, in a theory.¹⁹²

According to Stein, the Cross, just like spiritual reality in its entirety, can be accepted with a childlike, saintly, or artistic approach. We have reason to believe that just like in the case of many saints, especially John of the Cross, also in Stein's life, three realisms were intertwined: the childlike, artistic, and holy realisms, preparing fertile soil

¹⁹² E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, trans. by J. Koeppel O.C.D., Washington D.C. 2002, p. 9f.

for the message of the Cross, so that it is able to grow into the science of the cross.

Let's start with the realism of the child. In *The Science of the Cross*, Stein wrote:

The realism of the child receives and responds to impressions with unimpaired vigour and vitality and with uninhibited simplicity. Indeed the response naturally will in no way always be reasonable. There is insufficient maturity of insight. Besides, as soon as knowledge becomes active, there is no lack of interior as well as exterior sources of illusion and error which lead into the wrong ways. Appropriate environmental influences can prevent mistakes. The soul of a child is soft and impressionable. Whatever influence enters there can easily form it for a lifetime. When the facts of salvation history are introduced in early childhood and in an appropriate form, this may easily lay a foundation for a saintly life.¹⁹³

Although we know that the truth of faith touched Stein's soul when she reached maturity in terms of understanding, it seems possible, when looking at her life and works, that Christ may well have entered her heart thanks to the specific realism of the child which is open to internal and external impulses and is constantly seeking the truth. In the autobiography *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, which she wrote as a mature woman in Carmel, it can be seen that Stein had a happy, safe childhood which formed the basis for the development of her soul in her younger years. She was open to goodness and beauty. She grew up in a healthy religious atmosphere, with loving parents and a happy group of siblings.¹⁹⁴ The early death of her father could have slowly prepared the foundations for seeking another Father in Heaven and entrusting herself to Him in the spiritual childhood.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹⁴ A. Jaegerschmidt, *Edith Stein. Ein Lebensbild*, "Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio" 5 (1981), p. 466.

As a doctor, Stein delved into the theological depths of the concept of filiation. In the light of faith she saw that the union of both natures in Christ is the foundation for the union of people with God,¹⁹⁵ which means divine filiation (*Gotteskindschaft*). In order to explain this idea, Stein used three symbols. First of all, she spoke about being one with God. God became man so that people could become children of God. One of us severed the connection of divine filiation and that is why one of us had to reestablish it. He became not only one of us, but one with us. He came to be the mysterious Body with us, He our Head and we His members. Hence, Stein proposed that we place our hand in the hands of the Divine Child and say our ‘yes’ in answer to His encouragement to imitate Him, and then His Godly life will be able to reach us without hindrance. The union with God brings forth the second element: the mutual unity of people in God. That is why our human love is a measure of God’s love. If God is within us, and He is love, then we cannot live in any other way than to love our neighbours. The third sign of Divine filiation seems to be the most important in Stein’s life: To be a child of God means to allow God to lead you by the hand (*an Gottes Hand gehen*), to carry out His will, and to place all concerns and hopes in His hands, not worrying about yourself or the future anymore. That is what the freedom and joy of being a child of God is all about. As it can be seen from a letter written to Adelgundis Jaegerschmidt in 1931, the third sign was especially important for Stein.¹⁹⁶ In answer to the objection that in her paper on the subject of raising girls, there was too much of a religious element, she said:

If I had not wanted to speak about the supernatural, I would not have climbed onto any soapbox at all. In fact, I always have one, simple truth to announce:

¹⁹⁵ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*, ESW 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 1986, p. 475.

¹⁹⁶ E. Otto, *Welt, Person, Gott. Eine Untersuchung zur theologischen Grundlage der Mystik bei Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 172.

how it is possible to start living when holding God's hand (*an der Hand des Herrn zu leben*).¹⁹⁷

Holding hands is a sign of trust and conjures up an image of a child learning to walk.

Did Stein draw on the teachings of St Therese of the Child Jesus (of Lisieux) in her realism of a child of God? We know that she read *The Story of a Soul* and upon meeting with Jaegerschmidt's critical opinion, mentioned above, she expressed her joy over St Therese's mindset. She was impressed that man's life was shaped only and exclusively by the love of God to the very end, and, knowing nothing greater, she expressed the desire to experience as much of it as possible in her life and in the lives of her nearest and dearest.¹⁹⁸ Such a testimony endorses the search for a profound relationship in the ways of thinking of both of these Carmelites. Especially as Hans Urs von Balthasar, whilst indicating the characteristics of the 'Little Way' in three points, highlighted the same elements. The 'Little Way' is so named because it enjoins one always to remember only about the next step which is necessary to be taken at a given moment. No grand plans for tomorrow, but that grain which is required of me today, at this very hour and minute. Secondly, in the 'Little Way' there is no separation or contradistinction of the love of God and the love of a neighbour. This kind of distinction never even entered the head of Therese of the Child Jesus, as both loves had been one inseparable Christian love for her from early childhood. From here it is only one step to the third element, which is unswerving trust. Therese of the Child Jesus moves confidently and somewhat boldly from unswerving love to unswerving hope.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ A. Jaegerschmidt, *Edith Stein. Ein Lebensbild*, op. cit., p. 474.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ H. U. von Balthasar, *W pełni wiary*, przekł. J. Fenrychowa, Kraków 1991, pp. 558–561.

The similarity is even more striking as Stein accentuated the ecclesiological concept of the Body of Christ with His Head and members as in the way of St Therese of the Child Jesus. Some authors are of the opinion that *Manuscript B* is an ecclesiological tract whose ideas are significantly ahead of the theological awareness of the First Vatican Council at the time, which emphasized the worldly and hierarchical dimension of the Church. When referring to the teaching of St Paul, Teresa defined the Church primarily as a living, supernatural organism. And although the mystery of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ was not Teresa's discovery, it was, nonetheless, authoritatively remembered in Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, in 1943, nearly half a century after her death, and also by the Second Vatican Council.²⁰⁰

The similarity of the attitudes of both of these Carmelites can also be seen in what constitutes the essence of the charism of the 'little way of spiritual childhood'. Of course, the symbols 'little flower', 'little bird', and 'little child' do not indicate mediocrity and the symbol of a lift (elevator) does not endorse passivity of action. The astute book, *The Story of a Soul*, is astounding insomuch as a young girl discovered the deep theological truth about the absolute transcendence of God in relation to creation and the total inadequacy of man in being able to answer the calling to partake in the life of God. In the works of St John of the Cross, which she read, this truth was expressed in theological terms. This was how Stein also viewed it when she wrote that there is a huge disproportion between the natural capabilities of man and his calling to union with God. In *The Science of the Cross* we read:

Our goal is union with God, our way that of the crucified Christ, our becoming one with Him takes place when we are crucified. The only proportionate means

²⁰⁰ M. Chmielewski, "W Sercu Kościoła" – z *Kościola i dla Kościoła*, in: *W Sercu Kościoła będą Miłością*, red. W. Słomka, Kraków 1998, p. 54f.

to arrive at this union is faith. This will now be demonstrated by showing that no other real or imagined thing is capable of affecting it.²⁰¹

St Therese of the Child Jesus understood this truth in a similar way, expressing the experience of that chasm which existed between her great desire and her human incapacity, and emphasized the necessity of finding a proportional means by which, despite the experience of littleness, and even thanks to that recognized and accepted littleness, her desires could be satisfied. This proportional measure appears to be unbounded trust in Merciful Love.²⁰²

The realism of the child understood in this way, through the complete trust which is open to a Godly life, becomes Holy realism. Stein wrote:

The example of the saints demonstrates how things should actually be: where there is genuine, lively faith, there the doctrine of faith and the 'tremendous deeds' of God are the content of life. All else steps aside for it and is determined by it. This is *holy realism*: the original inner receptivity of the soul reborn in the Holy Spirit. Whatever the soul encounters is received in an appropriate manner and with corresponding depth and finds in the soul a living, mobile, docile energy that allows itself to be easily and joyfully led and molded by that which it has received, unhampered by any mistaken inhibitions and rigidity.²⁰³

Spiritual development in its entirety is based on this holy realism up to the highest level which is union with God. The co-operation of man is especially significant in this case as he reacts to the workings of the Lord in a rational and free way. It should be mentioned that, in comparison to the evident imprints of the ways of God on the soul

²⁰¹ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 65.

²⁰² W. Słomka, *Charyzmat św. Teresy z Lisieux a powszechne powołanie do świętości*, in: *W Sercu Kościoła będą Miłością*, op. cit., pp. 24–26.

²⁰³ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 10f.

of the Mystic from Lisieux, Stein's spiritual way, especially in the further levels of its development, remains a mystery to us. She was very discrete. Nonetheless, we do have an insight into her profound knowledge of the truths of spiritual life. We are able to follow exactly her path from childhood religiosity, which was instilled in a traditional Jewish family, through a period of searching agnosticism, to meetings with people who helped her to find Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church.²⁰⁴ We know that on entering the community of the Church, Stein developed a deep life of prayer steeped in the sacraments. Despite this, she was conscious of difficulties and a need for constant balancing between nothingness and Fullness. She was also aware of the gulf between the so-called good Catholic who fulfills all his obligations, reads the right newspaper, and votes correctly in elections, but apart from that, does whatever he enjoys the most, and lives by the grace of God in childish simplicity, with the humility of a tax collector. At this stage, the need to experience the truths of faith were at the forefront, ahead of intellectual contemplations.²⁰⁵

Stein's later life in Carmel was devoted to contemplation directed towards the union of the soul with God. Her search for the truth transpired into the desire of a simple gaze encompassing the wisdom of God. In this act of union, participation in the Divine Life is attained. In her calling, Stein wished that everybody might stand before God (*für alle vor Gott zu stehen*). This reconciling suffering on behalf of others comes from a profound understanding of the mystery of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ. This subject will be further discussed later on. At this point, however, it must suffice to say that Stein, both in recorded acts of consecration and in her testament, wished to lay

²⁰⁴ U. T. Manshausen, *Die Biographie der Edith Stein. Beispiel einer Mystagogie*, op. cit., pp. 27–61.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 61–72.

down her life for the salvation of others.²⁰⁶ Whilst writing *The Science of the Cross*, Stein knew that theory must go hand in hand with life. In one of her letters written in Echt and addressed to the Abbess, she wrote that *Scientia crucis* may be acquired when one soundly experiences the Cross. She experienced this most completely in a martyr's death.²⁰⁷ It is possible to clarify Stein's last days in her own words:

If the soul wishes to share in Christ's life, it must pass through death on the cross with Him: like Him it must crucify its own nature through a life of mortification and self-denial, and surrender itself to be crucified in suffering and death, as God may ordain or permit it. The more perfect this active and passive crucifixion may be, the more intimate will be the union with the Crucified and therefore the richer the participation in the Divine life.²⁰⁸

There is no evidence which would allow us to directly examine the state of Stein's soul in her last days, however, being acquainted with her life and works, it is difficult to imagine a different scene for her meeting with God than the one cited above, which she wrote herself. In a special Church Decree on 26th January 1987, Pope John Paul II stated that Teresa Benedicta of the Cross had practiced theological and cardinal virtues in a heroic manner and had suffered a martyr's death.²⁰⁹ Her saintliness was confirmed by her beatification and canonisation.

To complete the foregoing approach it is worth recalling one more realism which Stein described in the context of the works of St John

²⁰⁶ G. L. Müller, *Das Kreuz in Auschwitz. Gedanken zum Martyrium von Edith Stein*, "Christliche Innerlichkeit". Sondernummer: *Edith Stein. Teresia Benedicta a Cruce OCD*, 1987, p. 173.

²⁰⁷ U. T. Manshausen, *Die Biographie der Edith Stein. Beispiel einer Mystagogie*, op. cit., pp. 72–77.

²⁰⁸ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 32f.

²⁰⁹ S. T. Fernández, *Zur Heiligsprechung von Edith Stein*, "Edith Stein Jahrbuch" 6 (2000), p. 433.

of the Cross. This concerns artistic realism. In *The Science of the Cross*, she writes about how a third factor had to be taken into account in John's case. Namely that he had an artistic nature which meant that the characteristic realism of an artist had to be reckoned with. Stein left us with the most profound thoughts on the mutual relationship between artistic realism, and the realism of the child and holy realism. This is concerned with the particular behaviour of an artist in that he transforms anything that causes an internal stirring and which demands to be expressed exteriorly into an image which is not restricted in itself to a range of expression or visual arts. This is how any artistic expression is to be understood, including the poetic and musical. In addition to this, every authentic work of art is a symbol, regardless of whether the artist is symbolist or naturalist, whether or not it is the creator's intention. The symbol expresses that which

comes from that infinite fullness of meaning, into which every bit of human knowledge is projected, to grasp something positive and speak of it in such a manner that it mysteriously suggests the whole fullness of meaning, which for all human knowledge is inexhaustible. Understood in this way, all genuine art is a revelation and all artistic creation is a sacred service.²¹⁰

This is how Stein treated her work. In her extensive literary output we can find both religious and lay poetry, translations from foreign languages in which the beauty of her mother tongue is distinctively unveiled, and also deep philosophical contemplations on the subject of transcendentals, especially beauty.²¹¹ We owe her the accurate interpretation of pictures and symbols, e.g. nights,²¹² the Cross, or the Bride,

²¹⁰ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 12.

²¹¹ A. Bejas, *Vom Seienden als solchen zum Sinn des Seins. Die Transzendentalienlehre bei Edith Stein und Thomas von Aquin*, Frankfurt am Mein 1994, pp. 97–106.

²¹² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., pp. 31–41.

in the works of St John of the Cross.²¹³ However, it should be noted that her works await thorough elaboration from the point of view of form.

The truth however remains that in the pre-disposition of an artist lays the danger that he could be content in the construction of the image, as though no further responsibilities exist beyond it. We can see this clearly by the example of portrayals of the cross. It is most unlikely that there is a believing artist who has not felt the need to portray Christ either on the cross or carrying the cross. But the crucified Christ requires from the artist more than just a portrayal of the image. Inasmuch as He both makes Himself and allows Himself to be made into His image, He demands that the artist must follow Him, just like everybody else must. The expression of the image externally may sometimes be a hindrance to shaping oneself internally, but it should really serve personal development. Only with the external expression, can the spiritual image be fully formed and interiorly compatible with it. Thus, if no obstacle is placed in the path, the external image becomes an internal form for the artist, which spurs him into action, that is, in imitating Christ. Even the internal expression, the one which the artist himself has created, may serve him as a continual new stimulus for shaping himself in this spirit. That is why Stein also believed that it is beneficial to honour the Crucified in images, and to fashion them in such a way that encourages devotion to Him. Nevertheless, living images are worth more than those made of wood or stone.²¹⁴ In my opinion, Stein's works and her entire spiritual heritage are still so very popular due to the fact that in her life, the realism of the artist was based on the realism of the child, and, moreover, was subordinated to holy realism. Stein discovered the stance of spiritual childhood within herself, which led her to holiness. At the same time, her works

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 201–213.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

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are not only a source for disseminating truth and goodness, but are also a beauty in themselves. In this respect, Stein joins the very best examples of Christian spiritual creativity beginning from the Fathers of the Church.



THE LIFE OF PRAYER

Describing spiritual life in the perspective of this holy Carmelite is not possible without an explanation about prayer as, according to Pope St Pius X, the stages of prayer correspond to stages in internal life and conform to the grades of prayer taught by St Teresa of Avila who for Stein was the greatest authority in this area.²¹⁵ Prayer played a key role in the works of the German Carmelite. Initially, it had a personal dimension which included observing family members deep in prayer and Jewish liturgical traditions.²¹⁶ Later a crisis arose and precipitated a completely conscious and voluntary abandonment of prayer.²¹⁷ From this experience, Stein is known to have stated that in her period of atheism, searching for the truth was her only prayer.²¹⁸ In Stein's writings, we can find a whole array of evidence which indicates that in the period when the spirit was maturing, the prayers of those people who were important to her had an influence on her gradual conversion to Catholicism.²¹⁹ Stein especially remembered an event which

²¹⁵ Letter to the Carmelite General 7 March 1914. See A. Royo Marin, *Teologia della perfezione cristiana*, Roma 1961, p. 771.

²¹⁶ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 7, 43–46, 52–54.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²¹⁸ J. I. Adamska, *Błogosławiona Edyta Stein*, Kraków 1988, p. 231.

²¹⁹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 139, 159, 279.

took place in Frankfurt in 1916 when she went into the Cathedral of St. Bartholomew for a few minutes with Pauline Reinach. Whilst they were inside in utter silence, a woman entered with a basket and knelt down for a short while to pray in one of the pews. This was something completely new for Stein. One only went to the synagogue or to the Protestant churches for a service. However, here somebody came to an empty church in the middle of doing the daily chores for a kind of confidential prayer. This experience stayed in Stein's mind for a long time.²²⁰

After her baptism, Stein continually deepened her prayer. Some of her pupils in Speyer confessed that, due to seeing her daily as she knelt during the Holy Mass, they recognized in her approach what it means to harmonise life and faith. Beyond liturgical services, Stein often prayed motionless for hours on end in the church. She said the breviary and the choral prayers with the sisters.²²¹ Also later in Münster she tried to go to the chapel as often as she could. On special days of prayer she spent many hours there.²²² Every time she participated in the mass, it was with great devotion. She sometimes asked for the key to the chapel to spend the night in adoration. She was engulfed by the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.²²³ As the Dominican sister, Agnella Stadtmüller, testified, Stein especially worshiped during the Incarnation, Corpus Christi, Easter, and some of the Marian Feast Days. Of the prayers, she preferred adoration before the tabernacle. Liturgy and the Holy Bible were

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 332.

²²¹ M. Petermeier, *Die religiöse Entwicklung der Edith Stein. Eine Untersuchung zur Korrelation von Lebens- und Glaubensgeschichte*, op. cit., p. 167.

²²² Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Canonizationis Servae Dei Teresiae Benedictae a Cruce Positio Super Causae Introductione*, Roma 1983, p. 52.

²²³ Ibid., p. 53.

her daily bread. She especially prayed for the vocation of the clergy and religious.²²⁴

Whilst praying on 30th April 1933, Edith became aware that it was God's will that she should join the Carmelite Order.²²⁵ Her life in the Order was filled with prayer. She was convinced that the calling of the Carmelite nuns was to stand before the face of the living God.²²⁶ Each of the sisters had prayer petitions for the common good along with others which were particularly entrusted to them. Stein declared that although the sisters did not find anything extraordinary in themselves, they were ascribed exceptional holiness and the power of prayer. Stein actually witnessed that the Lord willingly helped those who turned to the sisters with prayer petitions and supplications. She saw this as a reward for the trust of those who came to the sisters with requests, and also for the sacrifice of the life laid down by the Carmelite sisters.²²⁷ From the daily schedule which Stein presented, we can see that most of her time was spent in prayer.²²⁸ As soon as she crossed the threshold into the cloister, the rhythm of her life in Carmel was determined by the order of the day and the calendar of holy days.²²⁹ At this point it is necessary to emphasise her exceptional worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.²³⁰ According to the accounts of the sisters, long hours of choral prayers did not tire her, and both in Cologne and Echt she distinguished herself by her particular Eucharistic piety and deep

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

²²⁵ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 351f.

²²⁶ E. Stein, *Über Geschichte und Geist des Karmel*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 2.

²²⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, op. cit., p. 80.

²²⁸ Ibid., pp. 38, 55f.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 310.

concentration on prayer.²³¹ When Stein entered Carmel, she took with her all the prayer intentions which had been entrusted to her, and whilst praying she tried to help her nearest and dearest as well as all those who turned to her for help.²³² It was also in prayer that she discovered her specific calling to carry the Cross.²³³ In the end that Cross was the persecution and martyrdom accepted in the spirit of prayer. One of the last letters which she wrote on the way to the camp testifies to her deep prayer.²³⁴

Stein's experiences came to fruition in her profound understanding of prayer. In her opinion, prayer is an accessible path for all people, drawn from the grace of God.²³⁵ In one of her articles, Stein wrote that a return to the original calling can be achieved by returning to the relationship of a child with God and which was offered to us by Christ's redemptive act. In the New Testament, man performs his tasks in the work of salvation through a personal bond with Christ through faith. This faith clings to Him as the path to salvation and consequently, through Him, to the revealed truths and means to salvation which He offers. Further, through hope, which, by the power of trust, awaits the life promised by Him, and through love which seeks all possible ways to approach Him. Man attempts to get to know Him better and more deeply by contemplating His life and words, and by striving for internal union with Him in the Eucharist. Man shares Christ's mystical life by experiencing the Church year and the liturgy of the Church

²³¹ Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Canonizationis Servae Dei Teresiae Benedictae a Cruce Positio Super Causae Introductione*, op. cit., p. 55.

²³² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, op. cit., pp. 135f., 274, 277.

²³³ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 347f.

²³⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, op. cit., p. 584.

²³⁵ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 107f.

along with Him.²³⁶ Here the most important elements of Christian piety have been described. It is worth remembering that for the Stein, the most important authority on the subject of prayer was St Theresa of Avila, who tried to help others in experiencing her subsequent grades of prayer, from vocal prayer, through meditation, and prayers of quiet and simplicity, to the border of mystical prayer, where the soul is purged of the activities of its own faculties and becomes a vessel for receiving mercy.²³⁷ Stein often referred to the well-known Teresian comparison of the soul to an interior castle, especially in *Die Seelenburg*, which is an appendix to the work, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*.²³⁸ Stein, recognizing a need for external apostolic activity, realised that the most important decisions are made whilst praying.²³⁹ That is why she encouraged steadfast prayer and surrendering oneself to the activity of grace.²⁴⁰ She also wrote about the necessity of intercessory prayers for the needs of loved ones.²⁴¹

Stein wrote a small piece called *Das Gebet der Kirche*, which is of great significance concerning the fundamental division of prayer. The book deals with the issue of prayer with regard to the liturgy

²³⁶ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur- und Gnadenordnung*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 70f.

²³⁷ E. Stein, *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jesus*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 52f; E. Stein, *Eine Meisterin der Erziehungs- und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jesus*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 95f.

²³⁸ E. Stein, *Die Seelenburg*, ESW 6, op. cit., pp. 39–67; Teresa od Jezusa, *Twierdza wewnątrzna*, in *Dziela*, vol. 2, Kraków 1987, pp. 221–446.

²³⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 285f; S. Praškiewicz, *Ideal misyjny św. Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, in: *Uderz o kamień a wytryśnie mądrość. Rzecz o Edycie Stein*, Kraków 2002, p. 62.

²⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 188f.

²⁴¹ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 160f.

and to the Eucharist, moving onto prayer as a private conversation with God, it then discusses prayer as an expression of internal life in action.²⁴² These divisions were not intended to set internal 'subjective' prayer, which is free from traditional forms, against the liturgical prayer of the Church as the 'objective' form. In her opinion, each and every genuine prayer is a prayer of the Church. Therefore, the boundless devotion to God in a constant mystical union was, for Stein, the highest grade of prayer, from which comes the sacrificial surrender to the apostolate in the Church.²⁴³ Due to the fact that prayer, especially the Eucharist, encompasses and sanctifies all work, Stein wrote about 'a single liturgy' for all life constituting *ora et labora* as *opus Dei*.²⁴⁴ It should be noted that, for Stein, the key to understanding the prayer of the Church was the liturgical and private prayer of Christ.²⁴⁵

The particular emphasis on liturgy, especially Eucharistic, in Stein's works is clearly noticeable. The Church, liturgy, the Eucharist, and prayer were a comprehensive whole for her.²⁴⁶ That is why she often mentioned special moments in the liturgical year. According to Stein, the Church in the liturgy enables a believer to follow the entire path of the Lord on a yearly basis.²⁴⁷ Eucharistic piety was especially im-

²⁴² E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 10.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 22f.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13f.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15f.

²⁴⁶ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁴⁷ E. Stein, *Notzeit und Bildung*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 138f; E. Stein, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*, ESW 15, op. cit., p. 196; E. Stein, *Die Bestimmung der Frau*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 46; E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, op. cit., ESGA 18, , p. 12; E. Stein, *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 2.

portant for Stein and took the form of daily mass and communion which should be the real centre of all life.²⁴⁸ Stein wrote about the Eucharistic truths of faith: the presence of the Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament, the daily renewing of the Sacrifice of the Cross on the altar, and the Saviour's desire to unite with each soul in Holy Communion. In the article, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, she discussed the meaning of these basic truths of faith regarding the Eucharist for the entire educational process in faith.²⁴⁹ If faith in the Eucharistic truth is attained and incarnate in practice, a significant pedagogical act occurs, whereby man interacts with God, and this interaction leads to salvation. If man decides to follow the path of salvation which has been envisaged for him, then he opens up internally to grace which becomes efficacious. This may transpire through enlightenment of the mind, rendering the previously accepted truths of faith understandable and fruitful. It may be the invigorating love of a deeper knowledge of God. Knowing oneself free from delusions may also occur, which causes genuine repentance and which indicates new tasks that are only possible to achieve thanks to the opening up of new resources of strength and courage.

For somebody who has experienced this many times in their Eucharistic practice, the Eucharistic truths will not be merely ordinary tasks for him whose sense is understandable and whose demands are fulfilled externally; they will become a living reality in him, molding his entire life. The Eucharistic life will become the centre of his whole life, and he will do with his life what the Lord requires of him.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 57.

²⁴⁹ E. Stein, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 64.

²⁵⁰ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 165f.

Therefore, through taking Communion in full faith, man becomes transformed and filled with the life of God.²⁵¹ Every person who participates with faith in the Holy Mass is cleansed with the blood of the Lamb and spiritually renewed. The more often union in the Eucharist takes place, the stronger and more internal it becomes.²⁵² If it is true that Eucharistic life leads to formation in Christ's likeness, it must be visible in the behaviour and actions of certain people. If, on the evidence of the life of an exemplary Christian, it is possible to show that through desiring the Eucharist the love of Christ grows, then it is a solid cause for faith in this truth.²⁵³ As having an appropriate approach to people is only possible thanks to knowing and loving God, Stein recommends constantly spending time with God, and the best way to do this is in the form of the Eucharistic life.²⁵⁴ She wrote:

whoever seeks to consult with the Eucharistic God, whoever lets himself be purified by the sanctifying power coming from the sacrifice at the altar offering himself to the Lord in this sacrifice, whoever receives the Lord in his soul's innermost depth in Holy Communion cannot but be drawn ever more deeply and powerfully into the flow of divine life... When we entrust all the troubles of our earthly existence to the divine heart, we are relieved of them. Then our soul is free to participate in divine life. Then we walk by the side of the Saviour on the path that He travelled ... and with the eyes of faith we penetrate into the secret depths of His hidden life within the pale of the godhead... The invitation to this transformation in God's hand is given to us by God himself in the liturgy of the Church.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 10f.

²⁵² E. Stein, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 64.

²⁵³ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 164f.

²⁵⁴ E. Stein, *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 14f.

²⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe* [Essays on Woman], trans. by F. M. Oben, Washington D.C. ICS Publications 1996, p. 55.

Thus, Stein exhibited the internal bond of the Holy Mass and *Divinum Officium*.²⁵⁶ She described the sacrament of the Eucharist in the context of the whole liturgical life. She also mentioned that knowing Latin was absolutely necessary in order to consciously participate in the prayers and singing. In this regard, for her, the liturgy was an important element of dogmatic formation, as experiencing the solemn confessions found in the *Gloria, Credo*, or the preface was accompanied by understanding the content therein. She also admired the beauty of Gregorian chant and claimed that there was no means more effective for religious education than the liturgy in dual form – the Holy mass and choral prayer.²⁵⁷

In formal terms, prayer can be divided into vocal, meditative and contemplative. Much has already been said on the subject of vocal prayer. We know that Stein was delighted with Gregorian chant.²⁵⁸ Apart from that, she not only prayed intensely, but also drafted many prayers upon the request of the Carmelite sisters.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, it seems that most of the time which she spent at Carmel was dedicated to meditation. In her opinion, meditation on the historical Jesus is intertwined with the experience of the Eucharistic Christ, whose closeness helps to permeate the truth of the Holy Bible.²⁶⁰ She wrote that

when we see the Saviour with the eyes of faith, as the Scriptures portray Him, then our desire to receive Him in the bread of life increases. The Eucharistic bread, on the other hand, awakens our desire to get to know the Lord in the writ-

²⁵⁶ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 146.

²⁵⁷ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 60f.

²⁵⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 29f.

²⁵⁹ E. Stein, *Gedichte und Gebet aus dem Nachlaß*, München 1981.

²⁶⁰ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 55f.

ten word of the Holy Scriptures and strengthens our spirit in order to attain a better understanding²⁶¹

It is no coincidence that Stein prepared herself for the most important events in the religious life at retreats filled with meditation on the Bible and classic Carmelite works.²⁶² Moreover, she notably developed topics concerning spirituality based on the Scriptures and on the works of Sts Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross.²⁶³

These influences can be clearly observed in the reflections relating to contemplative prayer. Stein wrote that during meditation the spirit assimilates the content of the faith internally. In a higher form of reflection, the spirit penetrates deeply into the revealed truths by way of the mind, contemplates them in internal dialogue, develops trains of thought, and discovers their internal relationships. If, in addition to this, the Holy Spirit uplifts the human spirit, it appears to him that he has received instruction through divine revelation. Then words or reflections are no longer required to recognize and love God.²⁶⁴ Stein named this condition of the spirit 'acquired contemplation', as a fruit of one's animated actions and sustained by manifold grace. This acquired contemplation, in other words a peaceful and loving self-surrender in the presence of God, is also a form of faith, namely *credere in Deum* turning to God in faith (*in Gott hineinglauben*), surrendering oneself to Him in complete faith. If one's own free will is surrendered to the will of God, this condition constitutes the highest

²⁶¹ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben und Epiphanie*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 150.

²⁶² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, op. cit., pp. 44f., 78f., 104, 142, 257f., 465.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁶⁴ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 96.

peak which man himself is able to attain in the life of faith. Thus, by analysing the human effort in the active night of the soul, Stein reached the threshold of mystical life.²⁶⁵ However, the strivings of man to unite with God would not come to much if God himself did not take the initiative. Stein wrote in one of her letters that prayer of quiet (*Ruhe*) is the work of the Lord, and that man is not able to enter into it by himself.²⁶⁶

Stein reiterated the thoughts of John of the Cross saying that on the path of spiritual development, one meets a border which leads from meditation (*Betrachtung*) to contemplation (*Beschauung*).²⁶⁷ So at a certain point on the path of the development of prayer God removes the joy which comes from piety in order to test man. In accordance with the teachings of John of the Cross, Stein named three characteristics which make it possible to ascertain that in the difficulties one suffers it is the purifying dryness of the dark night at work and not the result of neglect. These three characteristics are: finding no pleasure in creation, total fear and concern when thinking of God, and, as a result of the lack of joy in the things of God, the conviction that one no longer serves Him adequately, but is regressing on the path of development, experiencing an inability to meditate despite all the efforts of the internal sense of imagination.²⁶⁸ The dark night of the soul leads to genuine union with God.²⁶⁹ In its deeper darkness, faith makes it possible to advance and go beyond all conceptually intelligible particularised knowledge to the simple comprehension

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97f.

²⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, op. cit., p. 443f.

²⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42f; Jan od Krzyża, *Noc ciemna*, I 8–10, op. cit., pp. 421–429.

²⁶⁹ A. Bejas, *Edith Stein – Von der Phänomenologie zur Mystik. Eine Biographie der Gnade*, op. cit., p. 101f.

of the one truth.²⁷⁰ This is contemplation, in other words, a general, loving knowledge which does not allow differentiation and does not particularise. In contemplation, the faculties of the soul are united and passively accept what God shares.²⁷¹ To describe mystic contemplation Stein used a term coined by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who called it 'a ray of darkness'. Only the dark and general understanding suits the unfathomable God. It is neither the usual acceptance of the message of faith which is heard nor the common turning to God who is known from what has been heard about Him, but internally being touched, the experience of God who has the power to free the soul from all creation, lift it up, and at the same time immerse it in love.²⁷² The aforementioned descriptions of mystical prayer give rise to the question about the possibility of attaining the highest levels of union with God, and about the actual experience of them in the case of Stein herself.

²⁷⁰ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁷¹ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 56f.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 100f.



THE CALL TO MYSTICISM

As has already been mentioned, St John of the Cross differentiated three ways in which God dwells in the soul, namely through essence, through grace, and through spiritual feeling, which Stein understood as a molding union in perfect love. Teresa of Avila also agreed with him about God, as the Creator sustaining everything in existence. In this way God lives in every human soul, and He is able, by his strength to give new birth in the soul through sanctifying grace.²⁷³ The Trinitarian life of grace may take place in the soul without it being aware of God's dwelling there. Stein believed that only a small number of chosen people experience the triune God within them. For most people, it is faith that leads them to the knowledge of this divine indwelling. Living faith is the firm conviction that God exists, the acknowledgement that everything which has been revealed by God is true, and the loving readiness to give oneself up to God's will. Faith, as a supernatural knowledge of God, which He has infused in us, is the beginning of eternal life. Therefore in Stein's opinion, faith is only the beginning and should lead to union with God and to eternal life.²⁷⁴ Hecker aptly noted that the juxtaposition in one of the opening

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 139f; Jan od Krzyża, *Pieśń duchowa*, 11, 3, in *Dzieła*, Kraków 1986, p. 571f; Teresa od Jezusa, *Twierdza wewnętrzna*, V, 1, 10, op. cit., p. 298.

²⁷⁴ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 14of.

paragraphs of *The Science of the Cross*, of faith and contemplation alongside death and resurrection, corresponds to the reality of what is experienced in contemplation, i.e. the passing through the Cross towards resurrection.²⁷⁵

When considering the difference between a life of grace and union in love, it is worth noting that Teresa of Avila clearly separated the two conditions, whilst for St John of the Cross union in love was a higher grade of union by grace.²⁷⁶ Stein suspected that St John, as a precaution, wished to incontestably distinguish his teaching from that of the illuminati and so portrayed the mystical path as extremely closely connected to the normal path of grace.²⁷⁷ Nonetheless, after a more detailed investigation, Stein stated that both St Theresa and St John noted three ways of divine indwelling which were not only different grades, but also different types.²⁷⁸ The first type of divine presence is the same for all creatures and requires only subordination to the power of God. If this presence is accepted, it is indwelling through grace. Where the *amor* of creatures meets the *caritas* of the Creator, a union on the path of the active and passive might gradually occur. Through active purification, the human will becomes more and more subordinated to God's will, but in such a way that His will is not perceived, but is accepted in blind faith. This, according to Stein, is only a difference in the grade. In passive purification

²⁷⁵ H. Hecker, *Phänomenologie des Christlichen bei Edith Stein*, Würzburg 1995, p. 360; E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., pp. 151, 155.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141. In this sense, disputing with G. B. Scaramellim, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange claimed that: "[...] mystic life [...] is not something so very extraordinary like seeing and revealing, but something higher than the normal way to holiness". R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trzy okresy życia wewnętrznego. Wstęp do życia w niebie*, vol. 1, Poznań 1960, p. 17.

²⁷⁷ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 145.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

the divine will penetrates more and more into human will and can be felt as a present reality. This is not only a difference in the grade but also a different type of indwelling than through grace.²⁷⁹ In her work *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins* [*Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt to an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*] Stein wrote that mystical grace, in an experiential way, gives the same as faith teaches us, that is, the dwelling of God in the soul. He who is led by the truths of faith seeks God, and retreats from the senses and imagery of the memory and from natural cognitive activity, and that of the will, to the empty loneliness of his own interior, to dwell there in the darkness of faith in the simple silent gaze of the soul towards God, who is hidden, but present. He remains in profound peace until the Lord changes faith into viewing.²⁸⁰

When writing about revelations and inspiration, Stein stated that in this case we are dealing with something which goes beyond the natural knowing of God and beyond faith, although it is not always a personal, experiential knowledge of God. This kind of knowing occurs only when an internal certainty exists that God Himself is present in the interior of the soul. The perception of the presence of God as the root of mystical experience establishes the possibility of growing to know Him more and more completely. This personal encounter was named by Stein as knowing God in the real sense. However, the indirect forms of recognition should be, in her opinion, understood as something different to faith, a supernatural experience. According to Stein, all forms of supernatural experience, especially personally knowing God, relate to the faith, as in the natural sphere, one's own experience relates to ordinary knowledge based on instruc-

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 148.

²⁸⁰ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 407f.

tion. What we have here is the fulfillment of something which, until this time, has been only intellectually comprehended, without one's own original knowledge. However, even a personal meeting is not the final accomplishment since it indicates an even more adequate fulfillment beyond itself in the higher grades of mystical experience and finally in *visio beatifica*.²⁸¹

If we accept that Christian mysticism is the conscious experience of a personal union with God, Who is first to take the initiative and gives it in an indeterminable way, then besides the conscious experience of the presence of God in the soul, special attention should be paid to the free initiative of God who does not exclude the human effort which is necessary for working with His grace.²⁸² First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the dimension of divine grace and the uncontrollability of the mystical experience. In his description about the experiences of Camille Crowet, Henri Carrafel suggests that God bestowed upon her the feeling of His presence whilst she was still an atheist. This allows the issue of mystical experience to be placed in a wider context, which is expressed in the statement by St John that, 'τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ' (John 3:8). Indeed, 'the wind (spirit) blows wherever it pleases'. Therefore it is necessary to agree with Jacques Maritain's claim that a natural mystical contemplation does not exist, and that it is necessary to accept the theory about the presence of divine grace beyond the visible affiliation to the Church which could be the basis of mystical experience even beyond Christianity.²⁸³

²⁸¹ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 47f.

²⁸² J. Machniak, *Mistyczny wymiar duchowości chrześcijańskiej*, in: *Teologia duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 316.

²⁸³ W. Słomka, *Mistyczne doświadczenie religijne*, Homo Meditans, vol. 4, Lublin 1986, pp. 104, 111.

Certain comments on this subject can be found in Stein's life and works. It was perfectly clear to her that God leads man through his specific paths of life and there is not an awful lot which we can do for ourselves compared to what God has done for us. The most important thing is to give oneself up to grace without resistance.²⁸⁴ On the basis of what has already been mentioned, namely the three ways of divine dwelling in the soul which were proffered by St John of the Cross – through His essence, through grace, and through spiritual feeling – Stein leads us through acquired contemplation, in other words, the threshold of mystical life as the highest peak which man himself is able to attain in the life of faith, towards the experience of the indwelling of God in the soul.²⁸⁵ When we speak about mysticism, we mean the special way of experiencing God. At this point it is impossible not to repeat Stein's well-known depiction where she compared faith to a condition in which many good things have been heard about someone; that someone proved his goodness in deeds which caused gratitude and an increase in the desire to meet him personally. However, the grace of meeting can only be bestowed in the third type of knowing. In the mystical type of divine indwelling, God grants a personal meeting by touching the depths of the soul.²⁸⁶ The journey from the natural knowing of God to the supernatural experience may be, according to Stein, compared to becoming acquainted with someone personally after having previously been aware of their existence due to the effects of their work. For this journey, faith can build a bridge. However, in a key opinion for us, Stein noted

²⁸⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 188f.

²⁸⁵ Jan od Krzyża, *Pieśń duchowa*, 11, 3, op. cit., p. 571f; E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 97f; E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 407f.

²⁸⁶ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 148.

that if one can imagine this journey without the mediation of faith, in other words, as a granting of grace accepted by someone who does not believe, this goes together with different kinds of fulfillment, and, as a whole, it is more like an internal shock and transformation since faith is infused together with the experience. All these kinds of knowledge about God are mutually connected tendencies that go beyond themselves to the next stage. This does not mean that the natural way of knowing God and faith must precede supernatural experiences, but that they intrinsically search for God and the possibility of being transformed and found in each new way of knowing Him.²⁸⁷

Similarly, in *The Science of the Cross*, Stein wrote that when St John of the Cross mentioned contemplation, he was thinking about the fact that God himself can grant the soul the dark, loving knowledge of himself, even if the soul had not previously practiced meditation. He could quite unexpectedly, grant it love and infused contemplation. However, this does not occur without any relation to faith. As a rule this contemplation is granted to souls who are prepared for it through a living faith. If, however, a non-believer receives it, the content of the faith would help him to recognise by Whom he had been touched.²⁸⁸ Thus, normal touch in the innermost part of the soul does not necessarily have to be preceded by divine indwelling through grace. It could be offered to somebody who does not have any faith at all in order to rouse him and prepare him for receiving sanctifying grace. It may also serve as a means to make a tool out of a non-believer in order to realise a certain goal. It also relates to particular illuminations.

²⁸⁷ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 48f.

²⁸⁸ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 152; Jan od Krzyża, *Pieśń duchowa. Prolog*, 2, op. cit., p. 524; Jan od Krzyża, *Droga na górę Karmel*, II 10, 4, in *Dziela*, op. cit., p. 202.

On the other hand, union, as a mutual surrender, cannot transpire without faith and love, in other words, without sanctifying grace. Here, Stein adds immediately that if it were to take place in a soul which is not in the state of grace, then the union would have to coincide with the gift of sanctifying grace at the very start which would require perfect contrition as a prerequisite.²⁸⁹

In light of the above, it is worth asking the question as to what extent Edith's reflections are of an autobiographical nature. When writing about Stein as a mystic, her life in Carmel most often springs to mind.²⁹⁰ Yet, her reflections on the subject of atheism are thought-provoking. One situation is when someone has not yet accepted the revealed truth, and the other is obstinacy, fundamentally denying the existence of God.²⁹¹ In her opinion, the proclamation of faith reaches many who do not accept it. This could be caused by natural reasons, but there are also cases where a mysterious inability lies at the heart of the matter. The hour of grace has not yet come. However, in contemplation, the soul meets God himself who gathers it up.²⁹² The question is, what did it look like in the life of Stein herself? To what situation is she referring when she wrote that the world of faith suddenly stood before her (*die Welt des Glaubens stand plötzlich vor mir*)?²⁹³ From among many different factors which had an influence on her conversion,

²⁸⁹ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 149f.

²⁹⁰ D. Wider, *Kontemplacja objawieniem się Boga w milczeniu w ujęciu bł. Teresy Benedykty*, in: *Odkrywanie Boga. Święta Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża Edyta Stein (1891–1942)*, op. cit., p. 85f; E. García Rojo, *Edith Stein. Existencia y pensamiento*, op. cit., p. 175; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 465.

²⁹¹ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 71f.

²⁹² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 153f.

²⁹³ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 210f.

Stein highlighted life events, and gradual development, which meant that she lived much more than she philosophised (*viel mehr gelebt als philosophiert*), and at the end of which she was able to speak about rebirth (*Wiedergeburt*).²⁹⁴ Stein was very discrete in her descriptions of her experiences, but in my opinion, in order for a person, who not long before had been an atheist, to read the autobiography of Teresa of Avila and then proclaim that ‘it is true’, must have experienced something which corresponded to the experiences described in that book.²⁹⁵

At this point I would like to draw particular attention to one of Stein’s very early works, namely *Introduction to Philosophy*. This manuscript was started in direct conjunction with the publication of her doctoral thesis in 1917 and was written at the latest in 1921, which was before her baptism.²⁹⁶ In this text we are struck by the contemplation which has already been cited on the subject of security (*Geborgenheit*). Stein wrote about this experience which engulfs us in those very moments of doubt, when the intellect cannot see any way out, and when we do not have a single person in the world who would be able or willing to advise and help us. In this feeling of safety we become conscious of the existence of spiritual strength, which no external experiences teach us about. When we think that we are falling into the abyss, we feel the ‘hand of God’ which lifts us and does not allow us to fall. And not only His existence is apparent for us in this experience, but also what He is. His essence becomes visible for us in His ultimate emanation:

²⁹⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., pp. 106, 143, 188f.

²⁹⁵ R. Leuven, *Heil im Unheil*, ESW 10, Freiburg im Breisgau 1983, p. 42.

²⁹⁶ M. Linszen, *Vorwort*, in E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESW 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 1991, p. 5; C. M. Wulf, *Rekonstruktion und Neudatierung einiger früherer Werke Edith Steins*, op. cit., p. 256f; C. M. Wulf, *Hinführung: Bedeutung und Werkgestalt von Edith Steins “Einführung in die Philosophie”*, in E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, op. cit., p. XXVI.

a strength which sustains us when all human strength lets us down, which gives us new life when it seems to us that we have died inside, which strengthens our will when we are threatened with paralysis. This strength belongs to some omnipotent being. The trust which allows us to embrace some of the sense of our lives, even when human intellect is not able to ascertain it, teaches us to recognize His wisdom. The certainty that this sense is redemptive, that all things, even those that are the most difficult, serve our redemption in the end; and further, that the highest being shows us mercy when people give up on us. The fact that He does not know any evilness displays His total goodness. This path, according to Stein, is not the only one which leads to God, but this almost personal text amongst all the philosophical ones allows us to assume that this was her path.²⁹⁷ Similarly, in another text from this period we can read that resting quietly in God is something totally new and one of a kind. This is compared to the inactivity which is caused by a lack of life force, which is nothing more than the silence of death. A feeling of safety (*Geborgenseins*) now replaces it, which is divested of worries and responsibilities and obligations to act.

And if I give in to this feeling, a new life gradually begins to fill me and without any volitional tension it starts to drive me to some kind of activity.

This refreshing influx is seen as the influence of some action and pure power which is not mine, does not place any demands on my strengths, and becomes effective within me. The one condition for this spiritual rebirth seems to be the ability to receive it.²⁹⁸

Here, we clearly have an experience of safety and shelter (*Geborgenheitserlebnisses*), which constitutes a particular divine experience

²⁹⁷ E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, op. cit., p. 170f.

²⁹⁸ E. Stein, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften. Psychische Kausalität*, "Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung" 5, Halle a. d. S. 1922, p. 76.

in a period of Stein's life when she still considered herself to be an atheist.²⁹⁹ From this moment, the thought of a life of contemplation in Carmel never left her, and in her years of life in the world she was mainly interested in deepening her bond with God.³⁰⁰ If Stein's example confirms the theory that God is free in discernibly giving himself to the soul regardless of its state of life and even its religious orientation, then it is true that we have here an exceptional situation. Essentially, in the case of mystical life, we are faced with certain subjective conditions which prepare a person to accept the conscious experience of God. This is the realm of mysticism in which seeking knowledge is silent and transpires into a silent desire of amorous union. Of course, in all of the experiences God remains a hidden God. In other words, one can only speak of indirect knowledge which, however, is a supernatural experience and is different from faith. Such mystical knowledge is experienced by very few. This rarity, along with the fact that not everyone has a religious experience, indicates the aspect of freedom of God and man.³⁰¹

If mysticism is the realisation of two freedoms and is related to the experience of God Who is not at our disposal, as such an experience constitutes an unmerited gift, then it is indeed necessary to speak about it in the category of a calling. Finally, in order to fully present Stein's teachings on this subject, it is imperative to look into the sanjuanist reflections in *The Science of the Cross*, where she wrote that the spiritual and even the divine can reveal itself in nature.³⁰² Even though in the last chapter of Stein's work we can find a state-

²⁹⁹ B. Beckmann, *Einführung*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 14f.

³⁰⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 164f. 139; E. Stein an Ottilie Küchenhoff, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 251.

³⁰¹ B. Beckmann, *Einführung*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 19f.

³⁰² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 34.

ment which is in accordance with her previous works, namely, that all creation has a certain relationship with God and bears a slight trace of Him in itself, there is nonetheless no resemblance of the essence between God and His creation. That is why, although the world tells us about God, and on this basis we are able to recognize His existence, on the path to the union with Him we still have to free ourselves from the world.³⁰³ Only when the soul is granted the infused knowledge of God and He becomes everything to the soul, i.e. the Good of all goods, will an image of His perfection be found in all creatures. Each of these wonderful perfections is God, and all of them together are God. Coming to know God in such a way displays a wonderful new world to the soul.³⁰⁴ This is confirmed, for instance, by Franciscan belief, that the mystical approach to creation which is full of faith allows God to be reached through this creation. With regard to the foregoing analyses of mystical life which Stein conducted, they may have a meaning not only for people who have been called to a life of contemplation, but also to each and every Christian also living in the world. As Pietro Brugnoli wrote, a person who is embraced by God in love can love and use the world in a pure way. He is able to be genuinely effectively and affectively involved, whilst remaining 'detached' on account of the greatest love of Christ. This is not an escape from the world though, but a stance transcending it in the love of Christ.³⁰⁵

Particularly since the Second Vatican Council, the incarnational spirituality of lay people is not an escape from the world, but submer-
sion in it, with the desire to change it in accordance with God's plan. This does not mean that the laity has to forget about transcendence

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 53f.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 204f.

³⁰⁵ P. Brugnoli, *La spiritualità dei laici*, Brescia 1965, pp. 179–191.

and distance with regards to the world. However, this distance is not a lack of interest, but a way of getting closer from the perspective of redemption. This concerns daily mysticism, which is a contemplative approach to the daily reality of life, paying due attention to the theological life whose master is St John of the Cross and his spiritual daughter, Teresa Benedicta.³⁰⁶ In the light of the reflections above, one may risk saying that not only does the common vocation to holiness exist, but also a vocation to mysticism. The life and works of Edith Stein appear to advocate such a possibility. This can be confirmed by the instances of other well-known lay women and mystics of the 20th century such as Gemma Galgani (1878–1903), Marthe Robin (1902–1981), Camille Crowet (1900–1971), Madeleine Delbrèl (1904–1964), and Jeanne Schmitz-Rouly (1891–1979).³⁰⁷ It appears that as early as in a letter which John of the Cross wrote to a lay woman, Joanna de Pedraza, he interpreted her spiritual state as the dark night.³⁰⁸ It is exactly the mystical heritage of Carmel which is met with such interest and success in the lives of many lay people. On Polish soil this is testified to by the mystical experiences of a member of the Third Carmelite Order, Kunegunda Siwiec.³⁰⁹ The life and works of Edith Stein also deepen this interest.³¹⁰

³⁰⁶ C. García, *Espiritualidad de los laicos*, Burgos 2004, p. 169f.

³⁰⁷ F.-M. Léthel, *La communion aimante à la Passion de Jésus: sainte Gemma Galgani*, “Carmel” 3 (1999) 93, pp. 3–16; J. Boufflet, *Marthe Robin ou la toute-petitesse en Dieu*, “Carmel” 3 (1999) 93, pp. 27–38 ; P. Verdeyen, *Une lettre inédite de Camille C.*, “Carmel” 3 (1999) 93, pp. 41–48 ; J.-Ph. Houdret, *Un témoin de l’Évangile en notre temps: Madeleine Delbrèl*, “Carmel” 3 (1999) 93, pp. 51–57; M. H. de Longchamp, *Le bonheur d’aimer Dieu: Jeanne Schmitz-Rouly*, “Carmel” 3 (1999) 93, pp. 73–85.

³⁰⁸ Jan od Krzyża, *List 19*, in *Dziela*, op. cit., p. 829.

³⁰⁹ J. W. Gogola, *Mistycy i mistyka Karmelu*, Kraków 2007, pp. 379–391.

³¹⁰ W. Zyzak, *Glaube und Mystik bei Edith Stein*, “Geist und Leben” 4 (2005), pp. 280–295.



MYSTICAL SYMBOLISM

The analyses of the mystical experience from the previous chapter indicate not only the directness, passivity, spontaneity, and certainty of the divine presence in the soul, but also its incommunicability. As a natural consequence of this, there is a specific language for mysticism which mainly uses symbols. To the most important symbols of Christian mysticism belongs the cloud, which is comprehensively described in the anonymous work *The Cloud of unknowing*, which reveals God, and veils Him at the same time.³¹¹ In Stein's case it is worth drawing attention to the metaphor of light and dark, which is particularly evident in the understanding of dawn and dusk. In German, *Dämmerung* means both the passage from day to night and from night to day (*Übargang vom Tag zur Nacht, von der Nacht zum Tag*). It therefore seems that the accent is not only on the dynamic transformation, but also on the state between the light of the day and the darkness of the night, described by the word *Halbdunkel*.³¹² In actual fact, in Stein's works, *Dämmerung* is definitely used in the dynamic sense,

³¹¹ M. Chmielewski, A. Szewciw, I. Werbiński, *Obłok*, in: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, red. M. Chmielewski, Lublin–Kraków 2002, p. 593f.

³¹² *Dämmerung*, in: *Duden. Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, Mannheim 2003, p. 349.

however it portrays the original German meaning, which English articulates as ‘dawn’ and ‘dusk’.³¹³

In Stein’s works we come into contact with the entire wealth of Christian tradition incorporating spiritual reality in the metaphor of light and dark. A fragment of the commentary to the works of the Spanish mystic, St John of the Cross, may serve as an example and a starting point for our reflections. Here Stein stated:

Just as the cosmic night is not equally dark for its duration, so the mystic night has its divisions of time and corresponding intensities. The submersion of the world of senses is like the oncoming of night when mere *twilight* (*Dämmerlicht*) is all that remains of the day’s brightness. Faith, on the contrary, is the *midnight darkness* because here not only are the senses inactive, but the knowledge from natural understanding is eliminated. The *dawn* (*Morgendämmerung*) of the new day of eternity, however, breaks into her night when the soul finds God.³¹⁴

The fragment which has been quoted here reveals the different planes of understanding light and dark, day and night, and, as a consequence, dawn and dusk as well. The first understanding is connected to the cosmic dusk. This is, however, a type of metaphor which serves to describe the dusk or twilight of life which leads to a new day of eternity, and also the dusk of various stages of human experience and knowledge which eventually lead to a meeting with God in eternity. Below four fundamental meanings of the word ‘twilight’ in Stein’s works will be briefly discussed: the twilight of day, the twilight of life, the twilight of world-view, and the twilight of the light of understanding.

The twilight of day appears in Stein’s works in the context of an analysis of the process of the falling of the cosmic night. Stein comments on the poetry of St John of the Cross saying that the prevailing symbol

³¹³ W. Zyzak, *Zmierzch w pismach Edyty Stein*, in: *O zmierzchu myśli różne*, red. B. Tomalak, Bielsko-Biała 2014, pp. 26–35.

³¹⁴ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 46.

here is the night. What she had in mind was that in his *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night*, night constitutes the culminating point, whereas in *The Spiritual Canticle* and *Living Flame of Love*, which speak mainly about the condition of the soul after the night has gone, its echo can still be heard.³¹⁵ Stein writes firstly about the cosmic night which is a consequence of the twilight of day. She comes to the conclusion from John's poetry that he was especially sensitive to the cosmic night, to all the hues and shades. She imagined a Mystical Doctor who spent entire nights at a window with a view out onto the faraway landscape or out into the open. In her opinion, John described the night in words that no other bard had previously used.³¹⁶ In order to confirm Stein's statement, it suffices to quote one verse from *The Dark Night*:

O guiding night; O night more lovely than the dawn, O night that hast united
The Lover with His beloved and changed her in her lover.³¹⁷

The fascination of the night was nothing alien to Stein either, as witnesses of her life emphasized the fact that she had a preference for nightly prayer.³¹⁸

This having been said, it raises the question as to which elements of night were particularly interesting for Stein. The dynamic variability of the cosmic night with its periods and grades has already been noted. The falling of night depends on the gradual disappearance of the twilight until the darkness of midnight whence dawn begins, foretelling the beginning of a new day. Stein performed a deep analysis of this process making use of the inspiration not only of St John

³¹⁵ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 38.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³¹⁷ John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, in: *The collected works of St John of the Cross*, vol. II, trans. by D. Lewis, New York 2007, p. 2.

³¹⁸ Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Canonizationis Servae Dei Teresiae Benedictae a Cruce Positio Super Causae Introductione*, op. cit., p. 53.

of the Cross, but also of Thomas Aquinas. While she was translating *De veritate*, she encountered a reflection on the subject of the nature of light and darkness, which she continued in *The Science of the Cross* portraying it as a somewhat subjective aspect of twilight. This touches on the relationship between light and the sense of sight and seeing. In a certain sense, light is a visible subject and in another sense it is not. In as much as everything can be seen only with light, light itself can be called visible.³¹⁹ Analogically, for Stein, night as a natural phenomenon, being contrary to light, covers us and all things. It is not an object in the true meaning of the word; it does not stand before us and has no support within itself. Neither is it an image, if such a thing is understood to be a visible object. It is invisible and shapeless. But nevertheless we perceive it. Indeed it is nearer to us than all things and forms; it is significantly closer to our being. Whilst light illuminates things and shows them with their visible qualities, the night devours them and seems to devour us too. It is not possible to say that what melts into the night is nothing, as it still remains, exists, but is indefinable, invisible, and shapeless, just as the night; or shadowy, ghostlike and therefore threatening. It is not just the dangers hidden in the night that threaten our very being, but that night itself enters into us robbing us of our ability to use our senses, limiting our movements, debilitating us, increasing loneliness, and making us more shadowy and ghostlike.³²⁰ Even so, for a full picture of night it should be noted that it has two countenances for Stein: it may be a dark night, a blinding threat; or a beautiful night bathed in the glow of the moon, lightened with a pleasant, gentle light. It does not devour things, but allows them to show their nocturnal countenance. Everything that is

³¹⁹ Thomas von Aquino, *Untersuchungen über die Wahrheit (Quaestiones disputatae de veritate)*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1955, p. 26.

³²⁰ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 86f.

hard, sharp and glaring is muted and gentle, as they are never seen in broad daylight. Voices are also heard which are usually muted by the normal day-to-day noise.³²¹

Such an image of twilight and night for Stein constituted material used for depicting human experiences. The falling of night had not only a vital significance for her, but also a mental-spiritual one. The cosmic night works in man like “something” which we call “night” in the figurative sense.³²²

In attempting to show the relation between the cosmic night and everything else, which we call night in the figurative sense, Stein concentrated primarily on the mystic night, which will be dealt with at the end of the chapter. At this point, however, it is necessary to note the similarities and differences of both realities. The mystic night does not intrude on man from the outside like the cosmic night, but has its source in the soul and pertains exclusively to it. Both of them possess an element which arouses fear, but in both cases a certain nocturnal light exists which presents a new perspective on the world. It is worth looking at a further fragment of Stein’s contemplation in order to indicate the relationship of both nights. Here she writes:

Obviously, it is not a matter of a relation of signs here, nothing stipulated arbitrarily from beyond, nor are we dealing with a casual and historically produced connection as with an emblem. There is an extensive *agreement in content* that permits the use, here and there, of the same name. When one speaks of the *image* of night one surely wished to say that name, first of all, belongs to the cosmic night and from there it is transferred to the mystic night in order to become acquainted with something unknown and inaccessible through something commonly known and familiar that it resembles. But one cannot speak of a *relationship of likeness*; one is not a copy of the other. Rather one must think of it as a relationship of *symbolic expression* such as commonly exists between

³²¹ Ibid., p. 87.

³²² Ibid., p. 32.

the *sensory* and the *spiritual*. So facial features and expressions can express spiritual character and spiritual life, just as the spiritual and even the divine can reveal itself in nature. There exists an original mutuality and an objective correspondence that enables the sensory to reveal knowledge of the spiritual. Of the relationship of the image, only the similarity remains – a similarity, however, in which what is mutually ‘alike’ is not actually comprehensible but can only be indicated through certain corresponding features. What distinguishes this similarity from the image-relationship is not only that there is a lack of replication but also that we are not dealing with the structures that have definite outlines. Here there is also a contrast to mimicry: a very decided facial alteration that an artist can copy with a pencil or brush corresponds to an equally decided spiritual happening. Night, however, the cosmic as well as the mystic, is something shapeless and something comprehensive whose fullness of meaning can only be indicated and not exhausted.³²³

Stein believed that the above embraced exactly what both nights have in common. There is something intangible in both cases, but something clear enough to which both nights can relate and one can serve to explain the other. This is neither by an arbitrary choice nor a strict comparison, but in the ‘symbolic experience’ which finds primitive bonds and thanks to this, finds the necessary ways to depict something which is conceptually unutterable. For that reason, the concept of a symbol is significant in Stein’s reflections on the subject of the cosmic night and its various functions. Whilst explaining this, she used a particular play on words where a ‘visible shape’ becomes conceptualised as a symbol (*Sinn-bild*), i.e. an image (*Bild*) and meaning (*Sinn*).³²⁴ This should be seen in the context of analogy of being, according to which between God and creation and, in a broader sense, between spiritual and sensory reality, there is a certain similarity (*si-*

³²³ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 42f.

³²⁴ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 41f.

militudo) without forgetting, however, about the greater dissimilarity (*maior dissimilitudo*).³²⁵

For Stein, the cosmic night which robs man of his ability to use the senses, limits the movements, debilitates him, increases loneliness, and is something like a foretaste of death.³²⁶ A foretaste of death is in some ways another name for dusk. It must be emphasized that the subject of the night of death was ever present in Stein's life and works. First of all this concerned the experience of the death of near and dear ones, although Stein claimed that in Jewish culture just the thought itself that the time was drawing near for a family member to pass away was considered heartless.³²⁷ Having said that, death often came unexpectedly, even in the tragic form of a suicide, and Stein struggled internally with the sense of this.³²⁸ In the imagery Stein used, it may be said that the twilight of life ended in the dark night. Despite this, over time and with the Christian faith, this darkness was brightened with the radiance of the truth of the resurrection. In the difficult times of the Nazi persecution, Stein felt the need to plead with God for a fatherland, both earthly and eternal for her loved ones.³²⁹ It is worth noting that the last news ever received from this Martyr of Auschwitz was a small chit which was handed over on the 7th August 1942 on her way to the camp. The thought which she wrote down on this small piece of paper was that she was on the way 'ad orientem'. On the one hand this may indicate the direction she was travelling in, i.e. to the east, but on the other hand the depths of the Latin text tell us to think

³²⁵ E. Stein, *Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins*, ESW 18, op. cit., p. 90.

³²⁶ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 32.

³²⁷ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 77.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–54.

³²⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 321.

about a journey towards Christ, Who came to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.³³⁰

Moreover, in Stein's life a relation between the twilight of day, the twilight of life, and the twilight of worldview is noticeable. Death comes in the same way as the cosmic night sets in, and as shadowy moments come into a person's spiritual life. Set in a phenomenological method, Stein would say that these moments were epoché, and previous experiences and points of view could be set off in parentheses, or even abandoned. One may, in the same way as Maria Petermeier, interpret Stein's life in the psychoanalytic terms of Erik Erikson or James Fowler. In this sense it is a religious process of learning and gradually reaching a personal identity.³³¹ At almost every stage in the description of the most important events in her life, Stein used metaphors connected with death. This was very distinct in, for instance, the account of taking the veil in Carmel, where – as she wrote in one of her letters – the funeral bell tolled for Edith, and she was reborn as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.³³² The most frequently used metaphor of death and rebirth is not a digression from the main point of our reflection which is the symbol of twilight, night, and dawn. In point of fact, for Stein, faith as a grace was the light enabling the revealed truths to be understood. Additionally, Stein treated her apostolate as a calling to bring eternal light into the darkness of current times.³³³

At this point the next kind of twilight which Edith dealt with should be introduced. It is the most important and the deepest as-

³³⁰ S. Kaori, "Unterwegs ad orientem": *Das letzte Zeugnis Edith Steins*, in: *Edith Stein. Themen – Bezüge – Dokumente*, op. cit., p. 235.

³³¹ M. Petermeier, *Die religiöse Entwicklung der Edith Stein. Eine Untersuchung zur Korrelation von Lebens- und Glaubensgeschichte*, op. cit., pp. 17, 19, 99, 206.

³³² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 236f.

³³³ E. Stein, *Notzeit und Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 138f.

pect of the mystic's spiritual experience, seen from the point of view of the dusk of the natural light of intellect. The symbolism of night reaches a peak here. At this stage, the final intensification of what started at the outset of the twilight of worldview also comes into the equation. This can be described in both the mystical language of St John's 'night of the spirit' and the psychological terms of positive disintegration which were coined by the world-famous psychiatrist and psychologist, Kazimierz Dąbrowski.³³⁴ As already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, for Stein the description of the cosmic night mainly served to explain the phenomenon related to the mystic night.³³⁵ Stein based her theories on the teachings of St John, in whose writings the symbol of night played a fundamental role, thus demonstrating that the author spoke more like a poet and mystic than like a theologian, even though the theologian rigidly controlled the thoughts and words of the poet.³³⁶

As we already know, for Stein faith constituted the light. Adhering to that symbolism she spoke of disbelief as a blindness of the eyes.³³⁷ A significant dimension in faith understood in this way is entrusting oneself to God, in other words surrendering oneself 'into His hands' without any kind of security from the human side.³³⁸ Paradoxically, in this instance the light of faith turns out to be a dark light, as can be seen in the statement made by Stein when she had to make the decision of entering into the Carmel by herself, in the darkness of faith (*in der*

³³⁴ J. Skawroń, *Noc ducha i dezintegracja pozytywna*, Kraków 2007, p. 7.

³³⁵ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 38.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³³⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 193f.

³³⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 194f.

Dunkelheit des Glaubens).³³⁹ Stein explained the nature of this paradox. In every respect, religious faith was, for her, a divine virtue; a form of participating in the life of God. Although complete participation in divine knowledge and divine life will take place in *visio beatifica* and *in via*, the closest one can come to that in the temporal world is the mystical vision, of which the first stage is, nonetheless, always genuine, living faith. In this faith we acknowledge everything which God has revealed and what the Church teaches us as true, not because of its intrinsic, material truth, which we are able to know by the light of natural understanding, but based on the authority of the revealing God.³⁴⁰ A lack of the bright knowledge of faith is not the only reason for naming it the dark light. For faith always strives beyond all revealed truth. In other words, beyond the truth conceptualised in a way for human understanding in concepts and judgments of reason which are expressed in words and sentences. Faith demands more than singular truths about God; it wants God Himself. Faith wishes to seize God, who cannot be seen. This is the deeper darkness of faith.³⁴¹

In the context of reaching the mystical union with God, various elements of light and dark symbolism are evident in Stein's works. Undertaking the spiritual struggle is the active entry into the dark night.³⁴² The night of faith is darker than the sensory night, as it touches a higher, intellectual part of the soul, making human reason 'blind'. From its definition we know that faith is a sure, but dark, constant attitude of the soul for it is faith that presents to the soul the divinely revealed truths which transcend all the natural light of understanding

³³⁹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 359.

³⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 28f.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³⁴² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 39.

so that the soul may come to believe them. That is why the brightest light bestowed upon a believing soul is darkness for it, because the light of faith, with its overwhelming power, engulfs the light of understanding.³⁴³ The process which the active night began has to be completed in the dark night by God himself.³⁴⁴ Therefore, midnight is the equivalent of the night of the soul, of the night of faith. It is only when dawn breaks that loving knowledge is conveyed, in which the intellect gains a wide expanse for God and His truths. Here, knowledge of God in contemplation is shown as a light, yet loving Him through the will is compared to embers, just like a flame offering both light and warmth.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 47f.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 111.



MARITAL AND FAMILY SPIRITUALITY

Family is a principal cell in human society in which marital, parental, and formal relationships are of utmost importance.³⁴⁶ It is precisely due to the character of these bonds that we speak of a family as: nuclear, single-parent, reconstructed, dysfunctional, or foster.³⁴⁷ As St John Paul II taught, the first task of the family is to live out with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons.³⁴⁸ This is not possible without the spiritual dimension, since God is the source of love, which is the necessary foundation for marriage and family. Spouses joined in the ‘communion of people’ constitute a perfect image of God in the Trinity, and, through the sacrament, their love becomes implanted in that love which joins Christ to the Church.³⁴⁹ This Catholic vision of the family can also be found in the works of Edith Stein.³⁵⁰

The bond which Stein had with her own multi-generational family played an important role, and it is to this that she devoted a signif-

³⁴⁶ W. Okoń, *Słownik pedagogiczny*, Warszawa 1992, p. 177.

³⁴⁷ J. Mastalski, *Chrześcijanin wobec agresji w rodzinie*, Kraków 2006, pp. 31–33.

³⁴⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, 18.

³⁴⁹ J. Misiurek, *Sakramentalny wymiar miłości*, in: *Małżeństwo – przymierze miłości Homo Meditans*, vol. 15, red. J. Misiurek, W. Słomka, Lublin 1995, p. 37.

³⁵⁰ W. Zyzak, *Rodzina w życiu i pismach św. Teresy Benedyktyny od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, in: *Rodzina u świętych Karmelu*, red. J. W. Gogoła OCD, Kraków 2013, pp. 121–142.

icant part of her autobiographical memories which can be found in the book *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie* [*Life in a Jewish Family*].³⁵¹ Marrying and starting a family were important in the plans Stein had for her life. Although in her youth, influenced by feminist ideas, she declared that she would never give up her professional life for the sake of a family, she did secretly consider marrying.³⁵² In the many pieces of advice which she gave to the girls under her tutelage a certain respect for marriage can be seen on the one hand, yet on the other, there is a concern for arousing the call to religious life.³⁵³ Upon entering Carmel, Stein herself emphasised the positive aspect, which is the covenant with Christ in the constant community of love, and not the negative aspect which was resignation from marriage.³⁵⁴ She approached family bonds in a similar way, emphasising the fact that her life in the convent was not a loss for her loved ones, but a profit and source of grace.³⁵⁵

In Stein's eyes, the basis of a family is marriage, in other words a relationship between a man and a woman. In spite of feminist trends, she highlighted the gender difference which concerns both the body and the soul.³⁵⁶ In her opinion, the unity and coherence of a bodily/spiritual structure with the harmonious development of faculties

³⁵¹ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESW 7, Freiburg im Breisgau 1985.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 136.

³⁵³ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESW 8, Freiburg im Breisgau 1998, p. 187, 205f, 208f, 288.

³⁵⁴ R. Por. R. Leuven, *Heil im Unheil*, ESW 10, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

³⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESW 14, Freiburg im Breisgau 1991, p. 235; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1934–1942)*, ESW 9, Freiburg im Breisgau 1977, p. 5.

³⁵⁶ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, pp. 131–133.

is more suitable for women, while for men, it is the intensification of a specific faculty in order to attain the highest achievement. Stein saw these differences given to people in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis in which man and woman are called upon to rule over the earth, i.e. to become acquainted with its riches, to appreciate them, and to transform them creatively. This constituted the fundamental task of man at whose side stands a woman as a companion. Men and women are also called to multiply and bring up children. Due to the fact that the woman is more physically and psychically connected to the child, she thus recognises her fundamental tasks. Man stands at her side as a helper and protector. Lastly, man and woman are to be the image of God and this task should also be fulfilled in a particular way. The woman can fulfill her vocation by the harmonious development of all her faculties, and the man by the stronger development of specific ones which are inherent in him. This all has to be considered both in the context of the common nature of all mankind and in the context of the individual predispositions of each person.³⁵⁷

In her own, theological vision of the human, Stein portrays man and woman from the point of view of the history of salvation. She underlines the original unity of them both, the freedom from sin, suffering, death, and covetousness, and the elevation to the dignity of children of God.³⁵⁸ The gender difference reveals itself in the fact that from the very beginning woman has been called upon to be a companion for man and a mother.³⁵⁹ This means that her specific happiness is participating in the life of another person, whilst men are engulfed in 'their

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 138f.

³⁵⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, op. cit., p. 26f., 35-37.

³⁵⁹ E. Stein, *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, p. 208f.

issues.³⁶⁰ Despite this, they should be “two in one body”. In Stein’s point of view, in accordance with the design of the Creator, the relationship of wife to husband should not be only physical. Woman was meant to be a helper for man. God created them as spiritual, individual beings, called to unite in mutual love. He created woman in a similar, but different form so that she could complement the body and soul of man.³⁶¹ However, as a result of the sin of the first people, there came about a disturbance in the relationships among God, man, offspring, the whole of creation, and even among themselves.³⁶² Only when the Kingdom of God was brought by Christ, was a new order established in relation to gender, by which the effects of sin were eliminated and the original harmony was reintroduced (see Mt 19:1–12; Mk 10:1–12). Apart from emphasizing the indissolubility of marriage, Christ also introduced the ideal of virginity.³⁶³ The culmination of Stein’s teachings about the relationship between men and women is the recollection of the comparison of their bonds to the relationship of Christ and the Church, which was referred to by St Paul (see Eph 5).³⁶⁴

In a synthetical approach, Stein presents the teachings of the Bible on the subject of the relationships between men and women. In her opinion they both have different vocations according to the original order and in the state of fallen nature and redemption. Originally, both together were entrusted with guarding their divine likeness, ruling the earth, and multiplying. After the downfall, the mutual relation of pure community love became warped by covetousness

³⁶⁰ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, p. 3f.

³⁶¹ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., pp. 469–471.

³⁶² E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, p. 21.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 24f.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25f.

and a change in ruling. Man was sentenced to struggle to scratch out a living and woman to suffer pain in childbirth. The promise of redemption is that woman is entrusted with the fight against evil and man will find fulfillment in the future Son of Man. Redemption is for the purpose of rebuilding the original order. Male priority is expressed in the fact that the Saviour came in the form of a man and the female is honoured in that the Saviour was born of a woman who was the gateway for God towards mankind. Adam, as the human prototype, indicated the future God-man, the king of creation, so in the marital partnership every man in the kingdom of God should imitate the loving care which Christ showed for His Church. A woman should honour the image of Christ in her husband by free and loving subordination, and she herself is to be the image of God's mother, which also means that she is to be Christ's image.³⁶⁵

Stein built her conception of marriage based on the Bible, and even before her conversion this view did not deviate very much in essence from what she found later in Christianity. Also in her Jewish family the indissolubility of marriage was an important value.³⁶⁶ Meanwhile, far-reaching changes could be observed in society. Stein noticed youth proclaiming the right to casual sex. The consequences of this were more and more examples of cohabitation which occurred as a result of rejecting moral traditions. In contrast, those who still treated marriage as holy, consciously sought to start a family. Stein saw an effective answer to the new trends in culture in the Catholic vision of marriage as a sacrament whose significant purpose is to bear and raise children. Due to the fact that the ubiquitous discussion on the subjects of sexuality, psychology, pedagogy, and even pathology penetrated into the way children were being raised, Stein believed that these new concepts

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 28f.

³⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESW 7, op. cit., p. 24.

should be confronted with the Catholic outlook. This would involve a serious and exhaustive discussion on what elements of the modern day trends could be reconciled with Catholic faith and morality. Stein recognized a very important assignment in the creation of a basic and authentically Catholic theory of sexuality and marriage.³⁶⁷

Above all, according to Stein, marriage is not only a natural human relationship by which humankind develops, but it is also a sacrament. Sacraments contain grace which they bestow on those who worthily receive them. The first five sacraments serve the spiritual improvement of each person per se, whilst the last two serve to direct and enlarge the whole Church. Thus, through baptism we become reborn spiritually, through confirmation we experience an increase in grace and a strengthening of faith, we are fed by the Eucharist, and if we fall into a state of sin, we are spiritually healed through reconciliation; finally, in anointing of the sick we are healed in the soul and, in so far as it serves, in the flesh as well. Through Holy Orders the Church is directed and develops spiritually, whilst marriage multiplies it physically. In sacramental marriage Stein saw the symbol of the union of Christ and the Church, and she listed, in accordance with the then papal encyclicals, the threefold goodness of marriage, i.e. offspring, fidelity, and indissolubility (*fides, proles, sacramentum*). This eternally binding indissolubility was expressed by the Biblical Adam when he said that Eve was bone of his bone flesh of his flesh. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife (see Gen 2:23; Eph 5:31). Christ underlined this union by saying that man must not separate that which God has joined together (see Mt 19:6). The grace which serves to improve natural love and strengthen the indissolubility of the union was merited for spouses by Christ in His Passion. This was highlighted by St Paul when he encouraged husbands to love

³⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 96f.

their wives as Christ loved the Church for which he gave his life (see Eph 5:25). Marriage is therefore a supernatural union bestowing grace upon the spouses, especially fidelity. The indissolubility of marriage is so strong that even infidelity does not cause the bond to break. Stein reminded that the form of this sacrament is the agreement of the spouses.³⁶⁸ Thanks to this sacrament, parents obtain specific, supernatural characteristics which enable them to fulfill the sublime vocation to bear and raise children.³⁶⁹

When a child is born into the world, the married couple becomes a family. Both God and the parents start working together in the procreation and continue into the nurturing which also perfects the human nature of the parents themselves.³⁷⁰ In dealing with the social nature of man, Stein mentioned the communities of the family, friends, ancestral, national, and religious.³⁷¹ Stein justified being both an individual and a member of a community by the the creation of man in the image of God in the Holy Trinity.³⁷² That is why she discerned a particular trinity everywhere. For example, in the social dimension she listed the trinity of family, tribe, and race.³⁷³ The most important,

³⁶⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 116f., 162f., 165, 172.

³⁶⁹ E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, Freiburg im Breisgau 1990, p. 223.

³⁷⁰ E. Weron, *Teologia życia wewnętrznego ludzi świeckich*, Poznań–Warszawa 1980, p. 115f.

³⁷¹ E. Stein, *Eine Untersuchung über den Staat*, "Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung" vol. 7, Halle a. d. S. 1925, p. 4; E. Stein, *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften. Individuum und Gemeinschaft*, op. cit., p. 175.

³⁷² E. Stein, *Die theoretischen Grundlagen der sozialen Bildungsarbeit*, ESW 16, op. cit., p. 18.

³⁷³ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 249.

however, are her reflections on the subject of the exemplary character of the Holy Trinity for the family. At first, Stein recalled that both Sts Augustine and Thomas Aquinas rejected the idea of searching for the image of God in the multiplicity of people. Thus, the example of the trinity – man, woman, child – did not constitute a direct image of the internal divine life. They treated procreation as a carnal act.³⁷⁴ Yet for our Carmelite, if the union of people led to the birth of a child, and it could be recognised as a free, spiritual act of surrender, it is possible to see the image of the Holy Trinity therein. In actual fact, attempts at such an interpretation can be found in Stein's earlier works when she wrote about the Holy Trinity saying that as the Son comes from the Father, and the Spirit from the both of them, in the same way, a woman comes from man, and from the both of them a child is born.³⁷⁵ In Stein's opinion, this was the most profound source of the dignity of the family.

In accordance with the teachings of the Church, Stein emphasised the great value of marriage. God created all people and called them to eternal happiness, and the union of the genders works together with the creation and the sanctification. On account of this, the union must be something substantial, holy and significant in the building of the Church and its life. In order to complete the picture it should be added that, in Stein's opinion, marriage is not an obligation, as a virginal state constitutes something even higher.³⁷⁶ She also believed that being an image of God does not only occur through marriage and having children. Of course, in Israel child-bearing women, especially if

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 428.

³⁷⁵ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 20.

³⁷⁶ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 173f.

there were sons, were considered blessed, and infertile women were considered cursed. In Psalm 112 a particular manifestation of God's goodness is causing an infertile woman to become a mother. The mother and wife were very highly respected in Israel. Her role was not only to give birth and raise children in the physical sense, but also to bring them up in the fear of God. The struggle with evil was her greatest vocation which is best exemplified by the Mother of that Son, who conquered death and hell. On the cusp of the Testaments a new Eve stands next to a new Adam as the clearest possible proof of the everlasting significance and value of the disparity between the sexes. Mary, however, contrary to the tradition of her people, did not want marriage and maternity for herself. She decided to live a life free of carnal relations. She was obedient to her husband, who was her guardian, but she was not of one body with him, and the sense of their marriage was not the procreation of mankind. An image of virginal purity is evident in the figure of Mary. Both Jesus and Mary are of mankind, but they are free from all the bonds which make the possibility of fulfilling the sense of human life dependent on the union with a second person. For both Jesus and Mary, instead of these bonds they have a union with God. For Christ this is a hypostatic union and for Mary this is through giving up her entire being to be a servant to the Lord.³⁷⁷

The aforementioned concepts of marriage and the family are the basis on which Stein, in her works, indicates the tasks of the parents. In her understanding of the matter, the human vocation is, in a way, already marked in a person's nature, from *esse* should emerge *agere*. The significant dimension of God's appeal also plays a part. The Lord entrusted man and woman with a common vocation (see Gen 1:26–29). Each person should, in his or her way, be an image of God, replenish

³⁷⁷ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., pp. 148–150.

the earth, and subdue it.³⁷⁸ Each of these tasks, set out in a way which takes gender into consideration, interact with each other and has an effect on the functioning of the family.

Nowadays marriage and family is in danger like never before. St John Paul II spoke about the brutality of the media in which eroticism, violence, apologia for divorces, or the anti-social attitudes of young people undermines the basic values of the family and constitute an attack on the true good of man.³⁷⁹ Also, in the interior of the family itself aggressive determinants of attitudes can be seen, mostly in the form of broken homes, problems with alcohol, unemployment, and lack of consequence in the up-bringing of and time for children.³⁸⁰ In each of these problems a form of human immaturity is hidden, in both the mental and spiritual sense. In the case of personality disorders an intensification of these forms is especially visible.³⁸¹ All of these problems occurred in Stein's era, but she had the good fortune to grow up in a large multi-generational family which enjoyed close relationships among family members. The view of the dignity of marriage and the family, which she learnt at home, turned out to be confluent with the ideal which she became acquainted with in the Catholic Church. It is worth mentioning once again that for Stein marriage was an indissoluble union between a man and a woman which, thanks to sacramental grace, was filled with a special strength to sustain mutual love and fidelity, and co-operation with God in the transmission of life and the nurturing of offspring. Within the family, Stein conferred

³⁷⁸ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung*, ESW 5, op. cit., pp. 18–20; See. E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 138f.

³⁷⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, no. 76.

³⁸⁰ J. Mastalski, *Chrześcijanin wobec agresji w rodzinie*, op. cit., pp. 80–152.

³⁸¹ S. Steuden, *Osobowościowe uwarunkowania niepowodzenia w małżeństwie*, in: *Małżeństwo – przymierze miłości*, op. cit., p. 207f.

on both the husband and the wife the rights and obligations connected to being an image of God, i.e. having children, raising them and making their mark on the world through their work. She did, however, emphasise the gender difference and the varied forms of fulfilling these tasks with regard to nature and vocation. In a harmonious family she noted the need of complementarity of both gender and generation. This image of marriage and family is still applicable today. Due to the fact that Stein focused much more attention in her writings on the nature, calling, and spirituality of women than of men, that subject will be dealt with further in the next chapter.



FEMALE SPIRITUALITY

With reference to the Bible, Stein highlighted the fact that God created both man and woman in his image. When male and female nature is fully developed, it portrays the highest attainable likeness to God and the greatest permeation of earthly life by divine life.³⁸² Both men and women are called to such growth. It is only then that they are able to fully and effectively fulfill the vocation which comes from nature. When exploring woman's nature, Stein posited a method of phenomenological 'seeing' and theological reasoning. Joining philosophical and theological thinking, she determined the concept of ideals of humanity, femininity, and individuality.³⁸³

From a philosophical point of view the word *species* seems to be important for Stein in establishing the differences between men and women.³⁸⁴ As a result of scientific analysis, she came to the conclusion that the human develops as a twofold *species* of man and woman. The human being expresses itself in two ways, which means not only that the bodies are built in different ways, and not only are some physiological functions different, but the entire physical life, the relationship of the soul to the body, the relationship of the spirit to sensu-

³⁸² E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁸³ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁸⁴ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, p. 45.

alism and spiritual faculties indicate specific differences. As mentioned previously, the feminine *species* conforms to the unity and content of the entire bodily-spiritual structure, and harmonious development of faculties; whilst for the male, the increase of specific functions for greater accomplishments matters more. The feminine *species*, just like humanity, has a different expression in each individual that fulfills the characteristics of this *species* more or less perfectly each and every time. Due to the fact that men and women have the same basic, human characteristics, some of these come to the forefront in individuals of either gender which is why, according to Stein, some women may exhibit a strong resemblance to the male *species* and vice-versa. This has a certain connection with an individual calling in that if marriage and maternity are the fundamental tasks for women, then some may display particular predispositions for specific accomplishments in a narrow field, for example in the cultural sphere. These natural predispositions in the area of the *species* led Stein towards differentiating the various types of woman.³⁸⁵

The principal for the positive evaluation of the variations which emanate from the difference between the genders can also be applied to the spiritual realm. The theory of the theological foundations of the unity of spirituality and the anthropological foundations of its different forms is accepted.³⁸⁶ In this sense, many criteria differentiating specific spiritualities can be named: ethnical-geographical, doctrinal, ascetical/practical, historical-chronological, and founders of orders. Among these is also the anthropological/psychological which takes into consideration the spiritual difference between men and wom-

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 138f.

³⁸⁶ M. Chmielewski, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 97.

en.³⁸⁷ That is why, in the light of the phenomenological/experiential concept of spirituality, which is a collection of attitudes having an intellectual/cognitive, emotional/evaluative, and behavioural reference to the subject of religious experience, the separation of the spirituality of women from many other forms of spirituality is completely justified. The foundations for such a differentiation are the anthropological/theological presumptions.³⁸⁸ Thus, it is even possible to speak about female mysticism. In their mystical works, the great female mystics of the Church, such as St Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, St Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Avila, and St Therese of Lisieux expressed their feminine nature in a specific way which was eager for union with the Beloved.³⁸⁹ Generally, the mysticism of essence is distinguished from the nuptial mysticism. The first is presented by a stream of German mysticism, whilst the second has the great Spanish mystics of the 16th century as the main point of reference. The latter aspect of nuptial mysticism is especially characteristic for female spirituality as women experience, to a greater extent, the complete love of the bond with Christ.³⁹⁰ It should also be remembered that one of the texts from the Scriptures which is most willingly commented upon by the mystics is the *Song of Solomon* which, among other things, depicts the spiritual and physical beauty of

³⁸⁷ A. G. Matanić, *La spiritualità come scienza. Introduzione metodologico allo studio della vita spirituale cristiana*, seria Spiritualità, vol. 7, Cinisello Balsamo 1990, pp. 47–49.

³⁸⁸ M. Chmielewski, *Duchowość kobiety a jej zadania małżeńsko-rodzinne*, in: *Małżeństwo – przymierze miłości*, op. cit., p. 182f.

³⁸⁹ J. Sánchez de Murillo, *Tiefe und Vielfalt von Frauen und Weiblichkeit. Textauswahl*, “Edith Stein Jahrbuch” 2 (1996), pp. 40–42, 52.

³⁹⁰ G. Moiola, *Mistica cristiana*, in: *Nuovo Dizionario di Spiritualità*, a cura di S. De Fiores, T. Goffi, Roma 1979, p. 988.

women.³⁹¹ For both the male and female mystics, the *Song of Solomon* was a significant book from which they drew concepts and motifs which expressed spiritual experience. By accepting the thesis of the Bride as an individual soul in the relation to the Divine Bride, the identification and expression of one's own individual experiences became possible. It is no surprise that women found it easier to identify with the role of the Bride of God. Male mystics described their experiences in a colder fashion, making relatively less use of symbols derived from eroticism. Some beautiful mystical texts expressing the desire to be united with God can be found in the works of Mechthild of Magdeburg. Her experience expresses the truth that the whole person with the soul, body, and spirit becomes included in the relation with the Son of God and in this way gains an advantage over the angels. It was the female mystics who went through the entire experience of God which was characteristic for the nature of a woman, in which the body and senses did not cause a hindrance, but were, in fact, absolutely necessary. St Teresa of Avila went through a similar experience of God in the body, all the way to the experience of the phenomenon of transverberation. When St John of the Cross wrote about this event, he explained it theoretically and with distance towards the subject. By contrast, Teresa was excited and overjoyed with her experience.³⁹² It is therefore not untoward that Stein both admired the figure of St Teresa of Avila and was inclined towards a specific form of nuptial mysticism which can be found in the works of St John of the Cross.³⁹³

³⁹¹ J. Sánchez de Murillo, *Tiefe und Vielfalt von Frauen und Weiblichkeit. Textauswahl*, op. cit., pp. 33–36.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 125–132.

³⁹³ E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, op. cit., p. 164f; E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., 2003.

We can speak about the mysticism of women on the basis of the fact that if mysticism is a meeting with God which embraces the entire person, it is in its very shape always constituted by the human, either a woman or a man. The female mystics of mediaeval times, being excluded from the priestly office, reverted to filling the office of the prophet, and were mainly visionaries. The characteristic features of their lives were humility and the awareness of indignity, but they knew the value of their femininity, and they knew how to protect it. Of significance for St Hildegard of Bingen was the fact that woman was created not from the earth, but from the body, and that only the first woman and Christ were not created from seed, but were of the body. In her opinion, on the strength of this bond, a virgin wedded to Christ does not need the priestly hierarchy since she is able to participate in everything that belongs to Christ. The little way of St Teresa of Lisieux shows that it is not power, a career, and wealth which are of any genuine value, but littleness, the acceptance of one's own limitations, and poverty. Nevertheless, it must be added that in the field of prayer and spiritual direction, even St. Teresa, the Little Flower, reached a certain sovereignty and confidence of judgment. Over the centuries, female mystics reached a level of authority, not in governing, or even in education, but in spiritual experience.³⁹⁴ Despite the fact that Stein was extremely competent in the academic field, it is noticeable that over time, and together with spiritual maturity, this competence took a back seat in comparison to experiencing the union with God.

Experiencing a bond with God in a specific way is based on particular spiritual predispositions which are characteristic for a given gender. It goes without saying that the fundamental features of the structure of the soul are the same for men and women. The dependence

³⁹⁴ M. Platting, *“Die Gewalt der nackten Minne”*. *Gedanken zur weiblichen Mystik*, “Edith Stein Jahrbuch” 2 (1996), pp. 114–123.

of the soul on the body in which it lives and whose health, to some extent, influences the condition of the soul are applicable to both sexes. On the other hand, the soul gives the body life, movement, form, shape, and spiritual sense. A similar connection occurs in the case of the senses, which join together the spiritual world and bodily existence. Through these the spirit connects with the world, since with the help of the intellect the spirit recognises it, with the help of the will the Spirit shapes it, and in the the heart (*Gemüt*) the spirit accepts it internally and relates to it. As with all individuals, the amount and the relation of these faculties are hugely varied in both men and women. According to Stein, the female soul lives more intensely in all parts of the body and is more present there, whilst internally remaining extremely involved in what is happening therein. There is a certain amount of danger related to this. The deeper the bond of the soul is with the body, the higher the chance of permeation of the body by the soul, but there is also the increased threat of the body's absorbing of the soul.³⁹⁵

Stein is also of a similar opinion in the case of the mutual relationships of the spiritual faculties, of which one may not exist by itself without the others. The intellectual recognition of an object is essential in order for the heart (*Gemüt* – the heart as center of emotions, as opposed to the physical organ) to be able to accept it and internally digest it. The way the feelings work is also important as they are the modes of the will, which regulates and gives direction for the actions of the intellect. Naturally, these strengths are neither equally developed nor divided evenly between the sexes. The strength of a woman lies in the life of the heart (*Gemütsleben*). This organ, which accepts being in its entirety and uniqueness, is in the centre of her existence and focuses the pursuit to develop in wholeness and to help others

³⁹⁵ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESW 5, op. cit., pp. 51–54.

in appropriate development. Due to this, women are naturally better protected than men against unilateral activity and the development of faculties, although as an effect of this they are less capable of achieving the highest accomplishments in a narrow field, which are always bound to a unilateral concentration of all the spiritual powers. In Stein's opinion, women are also more exposed to the dangers of disintegration (*Zersplitterung*). The unilateral construction of the feelings (*Gemüts*) constitutes a great danger for women's nature, although, on the other hand, Stein granted the heart (*Gemüt*) great significance in the whole spiritual organism of the woman. It has a significant cognitive function and is the central place in which the meeting of every being changes into personally taking a stance and activity. However, it cannot perform its tasks without the co-operation of the intellect and will. Without the initial working of the intellect, achieving cognition is not possible. Intellect is the light illuminating the way for the heart, and if it becomes more influential than the intellect, it can dim the light of the intellect, leading to a distortion in the picture of the world, individual things, and events, which can drive the will into erroneous action. The actions of the heart require control of the intellect and conduct of the will.³⁹⁶

By virtue of the above, it emerges that the attitude of women is basically guided toward what is vital, personal (*das Lebendig – Persönliche*), and all-encompassing (*das Ganze*). Their natural, veritably maternal aspiration is to guard, nourish, and support development. What is lifeless, or material, only interests her inasmuch as it can serve what is alive and related to the person. That is why all kinds of abstraction are naturally alien for her. What is vital and of the person constitutes a specific whole, and as such becomes guarded and ad-

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 54f; J. Kudasiewicz, *Chrystus odwołuje się do "serca"*, in Jan Paweł II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do "serca". O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała*, Lublin 1987, p. 141.

vanced. There is no tendency to support one part at the cost of the others, for example, the spirit at the cost of the body, or one spiritual faculty at the cost of another. This practical stance also conforms to the theoretical, natural way of recognition, which is not so much conceptually disarticulating as it is contemplative and experiential, oriented towards concrete reality. These natural endowments enable a woman to be a caregiver and educator for her own children and for other people whom she meets.³⁹⁷ In Stein's eyes femininity expresses a spirit which is profound, concentrated and multi-layered, enduring and capable of suffering, constantly seeking, and introspective while at the same time being retrospective.³⁹⁸ Spiritual bearings which are typical for women are the personal sustenance of life and embracing all its manifestations in their entirety, getting to know them intuitively and empathetically.³⁹⁹

The feminine vocation emerges from the very nature of a woman. The analysis of the Holy Bible which Stein carried out on this subject is not only valuable and innovative, but pertinent, in spite of its being performed without historical/critical exegesis tools. Stein's mental agility is proved by the fact that as a result of deep reflection on the Word of God she found the courage to differentiate that which was, in her opinion,

³⁹⁷ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 3f; C. Maccise, J. Ch. Chalmers, *Verlieren, um zu gewinnen*, in: "Wandle den Weg dem Glanze zu". *Dokumentation zur Heiligensprechung von Edith Stein am 11. Oktober 1998 in Rom*, Speyer 1999, p. 46; John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, no. 30.

³⁹⁸ A. Szychta, *Kobieta wobec powołania Bożego*, in: *Św. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża (Edyta Stein). Kobieta i Karmelitanka Bosa – patronką Europy*, Poznań 2001, p. 16.

³⁹⁹ A. Grzegorzczuk, *Nauka Edyty Stein o kobiecie wobec współczesnych tendencji feministycznych*, in: *Św. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża (Edyta Stein). Kobieta i Karmelitanka Bosa – patronką Europy*, op. cit., p. 38.

preconditioned historically, from obligatory rules which were universally and eternally binding. For Stein, the measure for the latter was the original will of God.⁴⁰⁰ She also indicated that the Bible itself shows that men and women have a different calling according to the original order, the order of the fallen nature of man, and the redemptive order. As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, both were originally entrusted with guarding their own likeness to God, subduing the earth, and multiplying (Gen 1). In governing the earth, the woman stands at the man's side, whilst in nurturing offspring it is the other way round. Likewise, guarding the image of God in themselves is carried out in ways which are gender specific. The precedence of man intimated in the earlier creation (Gen 2) was not initially revealed. After the fall (Gen 3), the mutual relationship within the pure community of love was distorted by covetousness and changed to the relationship of command. Man was sentenced to struggle to scratch out a living, and woman to suffer pain in childbirth. The promise of redemption is that woman is entrusted with the fight against evil, and that man will find fulfillment in the future Son of Man.⁴⁰¹

Nature and the vocation of women condition an appropriate formation. We already know that Stein considered the heart (*das Gemüt*) to be the centre of female spirituality. Thus, she believed that the shaping of the heart (*Gemütsbildung*) should be at the centre of the formation of a woman. The heart expresses itself in feelings like joy and sadness, in moods like high spirits and depression, in taking a stance like wonderment and indignation, and in disposition like loving or hateful. They all indicate the attitude of the person to the world and to them-

⁴⁰⁰ H. B. Gerl, *Edith Stein und die Frauenfrage*, in: *Edith Stein. Leben, Philosophie, Vollendung*, Hg. L. Elders, Kempten 1991, p. 156.

⁴⁰¹ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 28f.

selves. If anybody wants to arouse the heart and set it in motion, he must come up against something that sets it going. According to Stein, the things that are able to move the heart are human fate, and actions which have been experienced on a personal level or presented in history and poetry, as well as truth and esthetical categories, primarily beauty. She also mentioned the school subjects which particularly mold the heart which are religion, history, the mother tongue, and foreign languages. In every motion of the heart lies an evaluative moment. The heart conceives everything as either positive or negative for a person and in itself. Thus, the heart may judge if something is correct or false, appropriate or inappropriate. This is concerned with arousing joy in the heart when something is genuinely beautiful and good, and aversion to things which are tawdry and common. The appropriate approach on the educator's part is very important here as rapture brings about rapture. Leading the heart to strike the correct position is simultaneously a means to educating it to be able to differentiate. It is not possible to show only the good and the beautiful because the life of a maturing girl also encounters negative things. It is therefore necessary to teach her to differentiate between what is positive and what is negative and to adopt an appropriate stance.⁴⁰²

According to Stein, the best way to mold a heart is to experience attitudes together, for a person to grow up in a world of values depends greatly on the effects of self-imposed and also unwanted impacts from the environment. This means that it is of utmost importance that the formation is in the hands of people whose hearts have been molded in an appropriate way. This also involves a certain risk, as the feelings and attitudes of the heart are 'infectious' and are easily passed from one soul to another; however this is only as pure states which do not include openness to proposed values and do not find any place

⁴⁰² E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 60f.

in the interested soul. Then no form is achieved, only a deceptive pretence. That is why nurturing should lead to genuine feeling, rejecting the guise of reality which is unattainable without the appropriate education of the intellect. The position of the heart itself must lead to recognizing values, and, in order to do this, the heart and intellect work together in a specific way. If a person understands why something is called beautiful and good, then he will not merely adopt the bearings of others. Apart from the critical analysis of the intellect, practical experience is also required to be able to differentiate between what is correct and what is incorrect. The motions of the heart are a driving force which mobilise a person into action. He, who is interested in the arts, will give up his own comfort to sample it. He who truly loves his neighbour will not walk by indifferent to the needs of his brother.⁴⁰³

To love without knowing the subject and the purpose of this love is insufficient for a woman. Therefore, the intellect needs to be forced into action. Needless to say, training the mind cannot be carried out at the cost of the heart. According to Stein, this would be making the aim from the means. However, the goal is not that everything which could shape the intellect is to be included in teaching. The minimum input should reap the maximum output. Moreover, as both a theoretical and a practical intellect exist, the spiritual strengths should be trained more in line with particular tasks than theoretical problems. Stein wrote that this approach is more suitable for a woman's nature as she is usually more set on particular details than on the abstract.⁴⁰⁴ It is not the intention of the author to assess the contemporary status of Stein's concepts on the formation of a woman, however, it seems that the shrewdest of her opinions is that genuine female formation

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p. 62f.

⁴⁰⁴ E. Stein, *Grundlagen der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, p. 82.

should not only include the intellect, but also the whole person with the heart and will at the forefront.⁴⁰⁵ It should also be pointed out that Stein paid a great service in highlighting the necessity of the training of the intellect in formation programs at girls' schools. However, attention should be drawn to the central role which religious instruction played in Stein's theory of education.⁴⁰⁶ This will be dealt with later in the book.

In summarizing this chapter, it can be seen that the contemporary discussion on the place and role of women in society is dominated by various interpretations of concepts which sometimes arouse much emotion: feminism, emancipation, discrimination. The radical opinions of some feminists negating the gender difference or accentuating a feminine supremacy over masculinity cause social chaos.⁴⁰⁷ In this tangle of various opinions, it is worthwhile to reach for the valuable, and in many ways still up-to-date, works of Edith Stein, who neither fell into the extreme negation of the gender difference, nor the exaggerated emphasis of the value of women at the cost of masculinity. She highlighted the specific characteristics of the female nature which feminists from the start quickly and willingly abandon.⁴⁰⁸ In Stein's teachings, we notice a significant moment in which a man and woman are united. The foundation of this union is love in the sense of *agape* and knowledge of the Cross, which offers the only possibility to over-

⁴⁰⁵ Teresa a Matre Dei et Ss. Vultu, *Edith Stein. Auf der Suche nach Gott*, Kevelaer 1963, p. 103.

⁴⁰⁶ H. B. Gerl, *Edith Stein und die Frauenfrage*, op. cit., p. 167f.

⁴⁰⁷ R. Bardzik, *Obraz kobiety u Edyty Stein i dzisiaj*, in: *Szukając prawdy. Edyta Stein w kulturze polskiej*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁴⁰⁸ W. Zyzak, *Kobieta według Edyty Stein, świętej siostry Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża*, Kraków 2002.

come all injustice and inequality.⁴⁰⁹ With regard to this, it is not difficult to agree with Pope John Paul II that modern day feminism finds its roots in a lack of genuine respect for women. On the other hand, respect for women, fascination at the whole mystery of womanhood, and finally the nuptial love of Christ found in the Redemption are all elements of faith and the life of the Church which have never been completely hidden. Regarding this, the Holy Father noted that the authentic theology of the woman is being reborn and that her spiritual beauty and particular genius are being rediscovered.⁴¹⁰ In this sense we can speak about the new feminism which was promoted by St John Paul II and understood it as a return to the roots. Such feminism is largely in line with the teachings of Edith Stein which were set forth at the beginning of the last century.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ A. Grzegorzcyk, *Nauka Edyty Stein o kobiecie wobec współczesnych tendencji feministycznych*, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴¹⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Przekroczyć próg nadziei*, Lublin 1994, p. 159.

⁴¹¹ A. Grzegorzcyk, *Nauka Edyty Stein o kobiecie wobec współczesnych tendencji feministycznych*, op. cit., p. 49.

Jan Paweł II, *Przekroczyć próg nadziei*, op. cit., pp. 55, 59.



PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY

Since ancient times, Christianity has differentiated three states of life. They are that for married people (*coniugati*), whose spirituality has been discussed in the previous chapter; that for consecrated celibate people (*continentes*), who will be discussed in the next chapter; and that for the clergy (*pastores*), whose spirituality, and Stein's outlook on it, is the subject of this part of the book.⁴¹² At the beginning, it should be emphasised that the meaning of the term 'priesthood' in Stein's writings differs from the term as used in the Old Testament, and through the priesthood of Christ to references to the pagan priesthood as in the case of *Ifigenia* in the works of Goethe.⁴¹³ We are obviously most interested in the New Testament priesthood, although it should be remembered that Stein had a Jewish up-bringing and as a Christian constantly returned to the roots of the Old Testament. She associated priesthood most strongly with sacrifice,⁴¹⁴ and wrote that everyone

⁴¹² J. Gaudemet, *Les laïcs dans les premiers siècles de l'Église*, "Revue Catholique Internationale Communio" 12 (1987) 1, pp. 67–69; Y. Congar, *Laïc et Laïcité*, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 9, Paris 1976, col. 82f.

⁴¹³ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, op. cit., p. 83; W. Zyzak, *Kapłaństwo w pismach św. Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, in *Kapłaństwo u świętych Karmelu*, red. J. W. Gogola, Kraków 2011, pp. 149–170.

⁴¹⁴ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 43–46; E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14.09.1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 127–129.

has to suffer and die, but through the bond with Jesus Christ, suffering and death take on a redemptive character.⁴¹⁵ With regard to these spiritual sacrifices we can speak about the baptismal priesthood after the Second Vatican Council, but at the time when Stein was writing, the truth about the kingly mission of all the faithful had all but been forgotten.⁴¹⁶

From the Council of Trent, the dignity of the ministerial priesthood was underlined above all. As a Catholic, and even more so as a Carmelite nun, Stein learnt love and respect for the sacrament of Holy Orders. Her role model was St Teresa Margaret of the Sacred Heart, about whom Stein wrote that she was full of holy reverence towards the clergy.⁴¹⁷ She also made use of the wisdom and aid of many priests, especially her spiritual guide, Father Schwind, whom she wrote about in a published obituary, describing his merits and service.⁴¹⁸ Whilst she was acquiring the spirit of Carmel, she wrote about the original community which had been established by St Teresa of Avila, in which the main task of the sisters was to exercise the virtues, prayer, and renunciation for the glorification of God and His Church, for the redemption of souls, and for help for the priests struggling with the great errors of those times.⁴¹⁹ Even whilst she was living in the world, and later as a nun, she prayed for the calling of priests and religious. As she believed that there was nothing more beautiful in the world than

⁴¹⁵ E. Stein, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*, ESW 15, op. cit., p. 203f.

⁴¹⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 14.

⁴¹⁷ E. Stein, *Die heilige Teresia Margareta vom Herzen Jesu*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 96f.

⁴¹⁸ E. Stein, *Nachruf für Herrn Prälat Joseph Schwind, Generalvikar in Speyer, gestorben am 17. September, während er im Dom Beichte hörte*, "Korrespondenz des Priestergerebetsvereins im theol. Konvikt zu Innsbruck" 62 (1927) 1.

⁴¹⁹ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, pp. 66–69.

the workings of grace in the soul, she was glad to be able to take part in this as a *causa secunda*.⁴²⁰ Apart from this, she was also interested in the theory of sacramental priesthood, and references to this topic can be found in many of her works. As it has already been noted, her contemplations often hail back to the traditions of the Old Covenant. On the basis of the letter to the Hebrews, which was credited to St Paul, Stein wrote that as a result of the weakness and insufficiency of the Old Testament Levitical priesthood, a priest from the order of Melchizedek had to come (see Gen 14:18; Heb 7:11).⁴²¹ Seeing how in both Testaments sacrifice is inseparably related to priesthood, the Church, which received the Eucharist, needed a visible clergy in which the priesthood of the Old Covenant was transformed (Heb 7: 12f).⁴²²

Stein wrote about the nature of the ministerial priesthood in her theological anthropology in which she broadly relied on the compendium of the teachings of the Church: *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, by H. Denzinger and C. Bannwart. The edition which she used was most probably from the year 1928. Using this as a source, she presented the sacrament of Holy Orders in the context of the other sacraments. Sacraments contain grace which they bestow on those who worthily receive them. The first five sacraments serve the spiritual improvement of each person per se, whilst the last two, according to Stein, serve to direct and enlarge the whole Church. Thus, the Church is directed and de-

⁴²⁰ *Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, Canonizationis Servae Dei Teresiae Benedictae a Cruce Positio Super Causae Introductione*, op. cit., p. 51; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESW 8, op. cit., p. 321; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1934–1942)*, ESW 9, op. cit., p. 85f.

⁴²¹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 151.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

velops spiritually through the priesthood, whilst marriage increases it physically.⁴²³

In Stein's works we can read that Holy Orders (*ordinatio*) is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. She considered it important to mention that in the sacrament of ordination an indelible sacred character is impressed, which means that someone who has been ordained cannot return to being a lay person. Another consequence of the indelible character is the fact that Holy Orders is given only once and cannot be repeated. According to Stein this permanently differentiates the priest from all the other faithful. The statement that someone may think that all Christians are priests of the New Testament, or that they have been endowed by the same spiritual attribute, can be considered justifiable, but this loses track of the baptismal priesthood and both ignores the hierarchy of the Church and opposes the teaching of St Paul when he said that not every person is an apostle, prophet, or teacher (see 1Cor 12:29). To the hierarchical order Stein primarily credited the bishops and their subordinate priests.⁴²⁴ It is worth adding that the Second Vatican Council, when recollecting the common priesthood of all God's people, noted that the ministerial priesthood differs from the common priesthood of the faithful not only in degree, but also in essence (see LG 10) by which it articulated more accurately the intention of the Council of Trent. We should also bear in mind that although emphasis is placed on the hierarchical structure of the Church in these arguments, Stein's favourite picture was nevertheless The Body of Christ.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Ibid., p. 116f.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., p. 156f.

⁴²⁵ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 184f.

Due to this fact, it should be noted that Stein presented teachings about the priesthood in close association with ecclesiology, and primarily with the relationship to the sacrament of the Eucharist because, in her opinion, they were so interrelated that it was impossible to understand one without taking the others into consideration.⁴²⁶ Christ, established as a priest in the order of Melchizedek, offered his Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine as a sacrifice to his Father, and gave them to the apostles who then became priests of the New Covenant. Since Christ giving himself up on the cross as a sacrifice for the Father wished for His priesthood to continue, at the Last Supper he told the Apostles and their successors to celebrate this sacrifice in remembrance of Him. A new Passover was established which is made by the priests in the Church in visible signs for the remembrance of His transition from this world to the Father. This is a 'pure sacrifice' (Mal 1:11), which cannot be defiled by any indignity or malice on the part of those who make it.⁴²⁷

With regard to the Eucharist, Stein described different levels of ordination in the ministry. She wrote about the tonsure as a sign of being initiated into the clerical state and about the distinguishable levels of ordination of the priesthood, diaconate, subdiaconate, acolyte, exorcists, lectors, and the ostiary as it was at that time.⁴²⁸ From today's perspective, this division is purely of historic interest, but Stein's writings about the laying on of hands when a priest or deacon is ordained is still practiced these days.⁴²⁹ Also, in contemporary times, the form of ordination is comprised of the words of the bishop, who is the or-

⁴²⁶ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 151.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156–158.

dinary minister of the sacrament. The perception of the substance of the sacrament has changed. Stein wrote that it is what is conveyed, which in the case of priests, is the chalice of wine and the paten with bread. It should be remembered that in the Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Orders *Sacramentum Ordinis* in 1948, Pope Pius XII established that the matter of the sacred orders is the laying on of hands by a bishop and the form is the appropriate words of the preface. From this moment onwards the teaching of the Church has been that during the rites of ordination the Spirit of the Father and Son descend upon the candidate and assigns them by the laying of the bishop's hands, bestowing special graces and likening them to Christ, the Head and Pastor of the Church.⁴³⁰

In the text which Stein refers to, the hierarchy is distinguished from the mass of the faithful by the active part it plays in offering sacrifice in accordance with the level of ordination. This involves consecration, administering communion, bringing gifts, lighting candles, reading texts, and looking after the house of God. On the subject of the exorcist, Stein stated that casting out an evil spirit distances the unholy from the church and prevents its interference in holy activities. Reading and explaining liturgical texts and explaining the meaning of the sacrifice is reserved for priests. So, starting from the sacrifice we should, according to Stein, understand the office of teaching. Christ Himself is the sacrificial offering, whilst the priest, as established by the words of Christ, is to be His visible substitute. In this way, the sacrificial service of the hierarchy is the co-participation in the sacrificial offering of the Lord himself. Due to the fact that these sacrificial activities make it possible for all the faithful to become one with Christ, the Church as a faithful whole and the mystical Body of Christ is an offering

⁴³⁰ Ibid., p. 159f.

community.⁴³¹ These last words, more than emphasizing the active participation of the priest in offering the sacrifice, bring us closer to the modern-day concept which speaks of the active participation (*actuosa participatio*) of all the faithful in the liturgy (see SC 14; 30; 48; 50; 114).⁴³²

In order to confirm the significant bond between the priesthood and the sacrifice as Stein saw it, her writings on the subject of the exemplary priest, St John of the Cross should be cited. In her opinion, to die on the Cross with Christ in order to rise from the dead with Him is, especially for the priest, a reality which is experienced in the celebration of the Holy Mass, which is a renewal of the Sacrifice on the Cross. If someone makes a sacrifice with living faith, then the same things happen in him and for him which previously happened on Calvary. According to Stein, St John of the Cross was a living example of this. Before the Holy Mass which was to be carried out in September 1567 in the Monastery of Santa Ana in Medina del Campo, St John was overcome by a holy fear of the priestly dignity, so that it was only obedience to his superiors that enabled him to conquer his doubts. At the beginning of the mass the thoughts of his unworthiness were so strong and the desire to be completely pure in order to be able to touch the Most Holy was so much ardent that he asked God to protect him against any mortal sin. He wanted to feel pain and remorse for any misdemeanors he might commit if God were not there to help him, but without committing them. According to the account, during the transubstantiation he understood that God had granted him what he had asked for. As a reaction to this, Stein wrote that to feel suffering even though one is free from sin, surely constitutes a genu-

⁴³¹ Ibid., p. 161.

⁴³² W. Kasper, *Berufung und Sendung des Laien in Kirche und Welt. Geschichtliche und systematische Perspektiven*, "Stimmen der Zeit" 205 (1987), p. 585.

ine union with the immaculate Lamb in the mystery of Gethsemane and Golgotha. Sensitivity to the magnitude of the mystery of the Holy Mass never diminished for St John. Stein recollected that in Baeza he once left the altar in sheer wonderment without finishing the service, and in Caravaca he was seen during the Mass with bright rays emanating from the Host. He himself admitted that he sometimes resigned from the Holy Mass, as his character was too weak to endure excessive heavenly consolation.⁴³³ These reflections underlining the affinity of the priesthood to the Eucharist lead us towards the requirements of the life and spirituality of the priesthood.

Stein was sure that clergymen need prayer. An example for her in this sphere was her patron St Teresa of Avila whose intention was to pray ceaselessly for priests.⁴³⁴ Unfortunately, as Stein wrote, although the Church is first and foremost a divine institution of redemption issuing forth the means to find union with God, it may happen that the members despise or abuse those means, and in this way exclude themselves from this organism and cease to be living members of the Church. Then, they either leave it externally as well, or they die spiritually and become dead tools. Such is the case of unworthy priests who do in fact dispense God's graces in the Church, but do not themselves actually have a part in them.⁴³⁵ This scenario resembles an account from the life of Teresa of Avila which Stein wrote about. Not long after she had entered into the convent, she became seriously ill and had to leave for special treatment. At her new dwellings, the priest who listened to her confession was so shaken by the purity of her soul that he himself confessed that for a long time he had been

⁴³³ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 16f.

⁴³⁴ E. Stein, *Bildung und Entfaltung der Individualität*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 102.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

living in a state of mortal sin. St Teresa did not give up on him until she had led him out of a sinful relationship, and he started a worthy priestly life. The year in which the said priest became acquainted with Teresa of Avila proved to be his last and was, in fact, preparation for a good death.⁴³⁶

Assuredly, Stein was also worried about the level of the spiritual life of the priesthood. It should be noted that during WWI, when Stein still considered herself to be an atheist, she met a Catholic priest in a field hospital, but his lack of interest in the welfare of the sick did not make a good impression on her.⁴³⁷ That is why she wrote about the need to ensure that only good choices were made and that appropriate preparation for candidates was provided. In reference to the conditions of admitting candidates for ordination, she reiterated the fact that the Church had rejected the theory concerning the necessity of preserving the innocence of baptism; however, she emphasized the need to put candidates to the test for the subsequent, higher levels of service.⁴³⁸ Another occasion for recalling the need to eliminate inappropriate candidates and the concerns about the sound choice of teachers in the seminary was the question of modernism, which was topical at that time. In this matter, Stein referred to the opinion of Pope Pius X in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*.⁴³⁹

Stein wrote that the clergy representing Christ, the Head of the Church, must follow Him in His perfection which, although it is beyond natural human strength, is possible thanks to the divine strength of the Head.⁴⁴⁰ Alongside Eucharistic spirituality, which has

⁴³⁶ Ibid., p. 96.

⁴³⁷ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 276.

⁴³⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17 op. cit., p. 161.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., p. 218f.

⁴⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 191f.

already been discussed, the prayer of the priest, especially the Liturgy of the Hours, is very important here as, according to Stein, it has a huge input into the forming of the priest's soul.⁴⁴¹ She also linked with prayer an aspect of priestly spirituality that she discussed at length, which was the chastity experienced in celibacy. She believed that all those who have been called to the ministry of the priesthood must be detached in a certain way. As early as in the Old Testament, God said to those called to serve in the temple, 'Be Holy, for I am the Lord your God' (Lev 20:7). In the year of service, they were ordered to live far away from home and to refrain from sexual relations so as to offer God good gifts in purity. Similarly, it is Christ's will that priests of the New Testament should live in chastity, so that everything in the daily sacrifices should be pleasing to God, since 'those that are in the flesh cannot please God' (Rom 8:8). Stein saw in this an argument for priestly celibacy, which was obligatory from the subdiaconate. From this ministry it was not only forbidden, but even impossible, to marry legally. Stein added that whilst celibacy may be regarded as a negative means to make man free for the holy ministry, the positive means for maintaining the spirit in an appropriate state for service is *divinum officium*.⁴⁴² By way of a comment to this, it should be mentioned here that the argument for ritual purity is not cited in the set of arguments for the discipline of celibacy these days.⁴⁴³ In another place, Stein herself concentrated on the exemplary value of the virginity of Christ and Mary, highlighting the justification of priestly celibacy

⁴⁴¹ E. Stein, *Bildung und Entfaltung der Individualität*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 59f.

⁴⁴² E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 160.

⁴⁴³ Jan Paweł II, *Udienza Generale. La logica della consacrazione nel celibato sacerdotale*, 17 VII 1993, no. 5, "Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II" 16 (1993) 2, Vaticano 1995, p. 69f.

in the indivisible readiness to serve the Lord, who makes the priest his earthly representative.⁴⁴⁴

Stein portrayed priests as those who preach the word of the Lord and who dispense the sacraments.⁴⁴⁵ She also emphasised the ontological bond of priests with Christ, writing that, if the members of the hierarchy, through the ministry of the Eucharist, transfer the fruits of Christ's sacrifice to souls, then they fulfill the pastoral service in His name and His strength. If through teaching they prepare souls to receive grace, then the words of Christ are the content of their instruction. In this, the Church manifests itself as a Christ who is still very much alive.⁴⁴⁶ Among all the priestly tasks, Stein seems to highlight the worship function the most. With reference to the form of ordination, she stresses the offering of the sacrifice as an important task for the priest, and adds that due to a lack of such accentuation, Anglican ordinations are considered invalid by the Church.⁴⁴⁷ When explaining the priest's office of teaching Stein started with the significance of Sacrifice; their task was that of reading and interpreting liturgical texts and explaining from these the meaning of Christ's Sacrifice.⁴⁴⁸

These days we would rather place emphasis on a different order. The Second Vatican Council depicted presbyters as people who are 'consecrated to preach the gospel, shepherd the faithful, and celebrate divine worship, so that they are true priests of the New Testament' (LG 28).⁴⁴⁹ John Paul II commented on the teaching of the Second

⁴⁴⁴ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, in:ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 178.

⁴⁴⁵ E. Stein, *Bildung und Entfaltung der Individualität*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁴⁶ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 162.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴⁴⁹ John Paul II, *l'Inaugurazione del nuovo seminario*, 28.04.1991, 3, "Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II" 14 (1991) 1, Vaticano 1993, p. 933f; John Paul II, *Al*

Vatican Council saying that the priestly ministry begins with the proclamation of the Gospel (see PO 2), but at the same time, the ministry of the word leads to the Eucharist which is the source and culmination of all evangelisation (see PO 5). Therefore the priests perform the main tasks in the ministry of the Eucharistic Sacrifice (see PO 13).⁴⁵⁰ Thus, from this point of view nothing has really changed, apart from the starting point of the reflections. Stein wrote that priests celebrate the Eucharist not only for themselves, but for all the faithful belonging to the mystical Body, that is why, in her opinion, the Council of Trent permitted and encouraged the practice where only the priests partook of the Body and Blood of the Lord during Holy Mass and the congregation took part spiritually. However, in order to see the full picture, it should be added that the Council also encouraged the faithful to take part in the communion during Holy Mass.⁴⁵¹ In considering their proper function as concerns worship, it can be seen in all the teachings about the sacraments which Stein wrote, that the role of the priests was to administer them.⁴⁵²

We have already mentioned the task of teaching which, in Stein's discourse, is strictly related to the priestly function of administering the sacrifice. Since the Council of Trent, the instruction about the meaning of the Eucharist and the explanation of the texts during the Holy Mass have particularly been the duties of the priests. This has enabled the huge spiritual values of the Holy Mass to be made accessible to the faithful without resigning from the use of Latin

clero e ai seminaristi nella cattedrale di San Patrizio a Melbourne, 28.11.1986, 4, in "Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II" 9 (1986) 2, Vaticano 1986, p. 1718f.

⁴⁵⁰ John Paul II, *A vescovi degli Stati Uniti in visita "ad limina"*, 9.11.1983, 5, "Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II" 6 (1983) 2, Vaticano 1983, p. 423.

⁴⁵¹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 154.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 116–174.

as the liturgical language of the whole Church.⁴⁵³ Stein believed that teaching was the fulfillment of the pastoral function, and that religious education, as an obligation of the Church, should be performed mainly by priests. The Church performs this task through services, administration of the sacraments, the priests' sermons from the pulpit, and in religious education, in other words throughout all pastoral activities.⁴⁵⁴ She wrote that the formative work of the priest should be both maternal and paternal. As an organ of the Mother Church the priest should give an example of ministerial love in forgetting about himself so that through this love he can gain intimate access to the souls and their individual characters. Since a priest represents Christ, the Head of the Church, he should liken himself to His perfection, behave with paternal authority, and introduce the faithful to a service which every member of the Church should fulfill in regard to the Head and all the members.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 154f.

⁴⁵⁴ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 50.

⁴⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 191f.



SPIRITUALITY IN CONSECRATED LIFE

Consecrated life stretches back through the entire history of redemption. In the wake of the sin of man, the world has become a place for the effects of threefold covetousness. The forbidden fruit seemed to be 'tasty to eat', 'pleasing to the eye', and 'good for gaining wisdom' (see Gen 3:6). Ever since then, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (see 1Jn 2:16), which were symbolically depicted by Dante as a lustful leopard, greedy she-wolf, and proud lion, have accompanied man living in the world. It was no accident that in the wilderness Christ showed that it is not satisfying the needs of the body, nor acquiring the riches of the world or its admiration, but the fulfilling of God's will which proves real greatness (see Mt 4:2–11). From that time onwards, the Church has tried to model itself on the chaste, poor, and humble Lord incorporating into life the evangelical counsels both in practice and in spirit. Also for this reason it encourages three good deeds in the form of fasting, alms, and prayer. These are the elements of Christian ascetical life which will always remain up-to-date.⁴⁵⁶ Evangelical counsels are mandatory for all followers of Christ. Nevertheless, there is a particular group of religious people who decide to follow the Lord in a more radical way, and they lead a consecrated

⁴⁵⁶ W. Zyzak, *Co mam czynić, aby osiągnąć życie wieczne? Duchowość chrześcijańska na świeckiej drodze życia*, Kraków 2008, p. 353f.

life in which they take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. One of these was the Carmelite, Edith Stein.⁴⁵⁷

Stein had an exact imagination regarding religious life. She wrote about the existence of the calling to suffer with Christ which is incorporated in the great work of Redemption. This was, in her opinion, the fundamental way of thinking for all religious life.⁴⁵⁸ Stein knew that in the convent there was neither heaven nor hell, and that they should not be looked for in the conventual life.⁴⁵⁹ Just as Christ was killed and exalted, so all who are called to the Feast of the Lamb have to go through the suffering and the Cross. Although all baptized are called to this vocation, for Stein the calling to model oneself on Christ required a more pronounced response in the life of the religious.⁴⁶⁰ She believed that this imitation of Christ was most keenly expressed in the vows of entry into the religious life. In 1940, at a conference on the occasion of the Feast of the Cross, *Hochzeit des Lammes*, she compared them to nails being driven into the Cross.⁴⁶¹ In her way of understanding, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were like nails. The more a soul willingly stretches itself out on the Cross, the deeper it enters into the reality of the union with the Crucified. Such a crucifixion becomes the marriage for the soul.⁴⁶² Stein gave many examples of consecrated people who reached holiness through the heroic fulfillment of the evangelical counsels. In this group were mainly those from the Carmelite order, and also Saint Elizabeth

⁴⁵⁷ W. Zyzak, *Życie konsekrowane w pismach świętej Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein)*, Scripta Theologica Thoruniensia, vol. 36, Toruń 2015, pp. 81–98.

⁴⁵⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., s. 254.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277f.

⁴⁶⁰ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14.09.1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 128f.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130f.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

of Thuringia.⁴⁶³ Having said that, Stein portrayed Mary, above all others, as the role model for fulfilling the evangelical counsels.⁴⁶⁴

The essence of consecrated life understood in this way can be accomplished on many various vocational paths. According to Stein, the large number of orders, convents, congregations, and associations is not a coincidence, as they have been established in response to a correspondingly large number of objectives and diversity of people. Different people require different things, and there is no singular organisation which can attain everything for everybody, that is why the Church is one Body with many members. Stein writes that it is not possible to discover an individual calling by only examining oneself and the paths available, but it is necessary to pray for it and search for it in allegiance to the Church.⁴⁶⁵ This individuality of the vocation can be accomplished in a variety of tasks depending on gender. In Stein's opinion, the perfect surrender of oneself to God in monastic or conventual life through the religious vows is similar for both men and women. Therefore, women are called to religious life in the same way as men. The only difference which Stein noted among all the diverse forms of their work was that the distinctly priestly duties were reserved for men.⁴⁶⁶ Out of all the various forms of consecrated life, the most significant for Stein was the Carmelite tradition, in which she tried to imitate Christ: the chaste, poor, and obedient. That is why this chapter will deal with the significance of the evangelical counsels in Stein's life.

⁴⁶³ E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, op. cit., p. 134f.

⁴⁶⁴ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., pp. 149–152.

⁴⁶⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 192.

⁴⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur – und Gnadenordnung*, ESW 5, op. cit., 1959, pp. 42–44.

From Stein's diaries we know that from early childhood she was an idealist, which was expressed in her own particular attitude towards material things. She never desired riches, but simply wanted to earn enough in the future to be able to live.⁴⁶⁷ Thus, it came as no surprise that when she received the gift of the calling to consecrated life, she drew attention to the fact that St Teresa of Avila collected souls around her which lived in poverty, obeying the strict original rules.⁴⁶⁸ After entering Carmel, Stein was aware that from that moment onwards that she could only offer joyful poverty and peace to others. She wrote that the walls of the convent which separated her from everything that was evil in the world, enclosed within all that was needed for happiness.⁴⁶⁹ She was embarrassed when her life was spoken about as a sacrifice. In her opinion, she had led a life of sacrifice in the world, and now, in the convent almost all of her burdens had been removed.⁴⁷⁰

In the text, *Hochzeit des Lammes*, Stein contemplated the nature of the vow of poverty. She believed that this vow opens the hands. It fastens them so that they cannot reach for things of this world.

It should constrain the hands of the spirit and soul: desires, which constantly search for pleasure and goods; concerns, which would like to secure earthly life; business, which cares about many trivial things, neglecting the one thing that is necessary. Life in luxury contradicts the spirit of holy poverty. At the beginnings of the reform the sisters were pleased if something which they needed was lacking. If they had everything, they were afraid that God had withdrawn from them. There is something wrong in the monastic community if concerns about the life outside the walls take up so much time and strength that the spiritual life suffers because of this. Something is not right in a sister's soul if she begins

⁴⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 179.

⁴⁶⁸ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 69–88.

⁴⁶⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

to care about herself and to do things which suit her desires and inclinations instead of surrendering herself to Divine Providence and gratefully receiving what is given to her from the hands of the sisters in charge. This does not mean that telling the sisters about any necessary health requirements is not allowed. Once this has been done, there are no longer any concerns. The vow of holy poverty wants to make us as carefree as sparrows and lilies so that the spirit and heart are free for God.⁴⁷¹

For Stein, the model of this approach was primarily the Saviour Himself and His mother. In freely-chosen poverty they wandered the streets of Judea and Galilee living off the alms of the faithful. The Lord hung naked on the cross and left the care of his mother in the hands of his disciples. That is why he demands poverty from his followers. Stein wrote that Mary was the first to walk the path of religious vows and wants to be a guide for the sisters.⁴⁷²

Stein also wrote about the vow of obedience. She remembered that as a seven-year-old girl the voice of reason spoke to her, and from a contrary child she became an obedient one.⁴⁷³ It seems that everything in her life since then had been preparing her to accept the Christly vow of obedience in the Church. Stein was fascinated by St Teresa of Avila and her criterion for being on the path to God. This was obedience to the Church: God would not let the devil cheat the soul which does not trust itself and is so strong in the faith that for one article of faith it is ready to give up its life a thousand times. God blesses such a stance of the soul and strengthens its faith. This kind of soul takes care that in all things, changes occur in accordance with the teachings of the Church. It adheres so strongly to the professions of the faith that all the revelations which are possible cannot shake it in its faith in even

⁴⁷¹ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes*, ESGA 20, Freiburg im Breisgau 2007, p. 139f.

⁴⁷² E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 139–142.

⁴⁷³ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 48.

the smallest items which are taught by the Church. If the soul does not find this strength of faith and adherence to the Church within itself, then it is in danger.⁴⁷⁴

According to Stein

in order to be a complete Catholic, connecting the Church with the nation, means professing the faith of the Church, accepting the Catholic *Credo* in its entirety so as to be ready to lay down one's life for each and every article of the faith. It also means recognising the educational authority of the Church and surrendering oneself with childlike obedience to its decision, which also means following the path of imitating Christ which was shown by His words and deeds, and which we can also see in the saints; it means drawing strength for this path, which is the way of the cross, from the sources which the Saviour opened for us and gave to the Church, i.e. in the sacraments.⁴⁷⁵

Obedience to the enlightened spiritual guide is included in this approach too.⁴⁷⁶ Above all, Stein is concerned with obedience in faith, which is the foundation of all obedience. A perfect expression of this attitude is, in Stein's eyes, Mary's 'fiat'. In this regard, Jesus and Mary remained faithful to the Father, keeping the customs of the law and regulations of the earthly superiors. Obedience led Mary from the House of David to the simple home of a poor carpenter from Nazareth, then to a stable in Bethlehem, and finally to the cross.⁴⁷⁷

It can be seen here that, as in Stein's case, obedience to the faith constituted the foundation for religious obedience. In her opinion, God announces His will through the lips of the superiors, hence, keeping

⁴⁷⁴ E. Stein, *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jesus*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 68f.

⁴⁷⁵ E. Stein, *Rezension: Zum Kampf um den katholischen Lehrer*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, pp. 116–118.

⁴⁷⁶ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 113.

⁴⁷⁷ E. Stein, *Zur ersten hl. Proföß von Schwester Mirjam von der kleinen hl. Teresia. 16. Juli 1940*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, pp. 139–142.

the vow of obedience is the surest way to the eternal goal.⁴⁷⁸ In complete faith of 'fiat' Stein saw a balance between Christian freedom and fulfilling the monastic rules, which she considered to be an expression of the divine will.⁴⁷⁹ Stein was absolutely convinced that the paramount rule in Carmel was love.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, she always wrote about the superiors in the spirit of faith with childlike love and respect.⁴⁸¹ In one of the letters she compiled about the freedom of God's children and the slavery of one's own egoistic love, she referred to the monastic rules, and claimed that she did not have secrets from the superiors.⁴⁸²

In her writings, Stein devoted much time and space to the subject of vows of obedience. At a conference entitled *Ave Crux, Spes unica*, she spoke about the obedience to divine will which is expressed in the holy rule, monastic laws, in the decisions of the superiors, and in the delicate breath of the Holy Spirit within the soul itself.⁴⁸³ In a speech on the occasion of Sister Mirjam's profession of vows, *Zur ersten hl. Profieß von Schwester Mirjam von der kleinen hl. Teresia*, Stein said that through the vows of obedience we pledge to subordinate our will to the will of the superiors in faith, that by their lips the Lord Himself speaks to us and announces His will. Nobody can know better what we need than He does. Hence, the path of obedience is the surest way to the eternal goal.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁷⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 416f.

⁴⁸⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 300.

⁴⁸¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 292.

⁴⁸² Ibid., p. 459.

⁴⁸³ E. Stein, *Kreuzerhöhung. 14. 09. 1939. Ave Crux, Spes unica*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 124f.

⁴⁸⁴ E. Stein, *Zur ersten hl. Profieß von Schwester Mirjam von der kleinen hl. Teresia. 16. Juli 1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 141.

Stein claimed that holy obedience binds the feet so that they no longer go their own way, but rather the way of God. When the children of the world are in a situation where they are not subjected to anybody else's will, and where nobody disturbs them in satisfying their own desires and inclinations, they call this freedom, and for this they are prepared to fight and die. According to Stein, children of God understand freedom in a different way. They want to follow the Spirit of God without hindrance, and they know that the biggest hurdles do not come from outside, but lie within the man. Human intellect and will, which would like to be their own masters, do not notice how easily they become stained by natural desires and wishes, becoming enslaved by them. There is no better way to become free from this slavery and to accept that guidance of the Holy Spirit than the path of obedience. Indeed, it is not enough for the obedient person to overtly avoid breaking the rules, regulations, and precepts of the superiors, but he must really want to deny his own will. Due to this, the obedient person does not study the rules and regulations in order to see how much room is left for freedom, but to understand better how many little sacrifices there are and how many opportunities they give for self-denial. They are accepted as a sweet yoke and a light burden to bear as they mean that this person may feel more deeply united with the Lord who was obedient even to death on the Cross. The children of the world, according to Stein, probably see this activity as useless and senseless. The Lord, who built his every-day life on these small sacrifices for 30 years, will judge differently.⁴⁸⁵

The question of the vow of chastity still remains to be discussed. It is worth noting that purity of heart accompanied Stein from childhood. It is symptomatic that after her graduation exams, when she was living with her male cousin, and it was decided that a female cousin

⁴⁸⁵ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes*, ESGA 20, op. cit., p. 140.

should come and live with them, she felt offended at the thought that they needed supervision.⁴⁸⁶ Similarly, in Wrocław (Breslau) when one of her colleagues wanted to misuse the courses in order to make contact with the female pupils, she disrupted his plan by taking over the tutorship of the group of girls.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, despite being thoroughly absorbed in her studies, she carried in her heart the hope of finding true love and a happy marriage. As she wrote in her autobiography, without having any knowledge of the Catholic teachings on faith and morality, she was totally filled with the Catholic ideal of marriage.⁴⁸⁸

These are only a few chosen examples demonstrating how the grace of faith could have built upon the nature of Edith Stein. After her baptism, she stated that the task of the Church is to nurture one's proclivities and life to purity, according to revealed teaching.⁴⁸⁹ For Stein Jesus and Mary were role models of purity. They are of mankind, but they are free from all the bonds which make the possibility of fulfilling the sense of human life dependent on the union with a second person. For both of them instead of these bonds they have a union with God.⁴⁹⁰ Stein emphasised the significance of the virginity of the woman, giving the example of Mary discovering her specific vocation, just as many women in the Old and New Testaments.⁴⁹¹ Mary as *Mater – virgo* constitutes an example of *Sponsa Christi*, of being Christ's bride. This indicates freedom from creation which is the most internal, spiritual sense of purity. It does not hinder the approach of serving love, and each woman should protect that *maternitas* in the heart

⁴⁸⁶ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 136.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁸⁹ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, op. cit., ESGA 13, , p. 188f.

⁴⁹⁰ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 148–150.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152f

and in deeds.⁴⁹² Stein drew attention to the fact that whilst in the Old Testament the women's vocation was almost exclusively marriage and motherhood, the New Testament introduced the ideal of virginity and spiritual motherhood.⁴⁹³ Thus, authentic Catholic education must take this ideal into account.⁴⁹⁴ Stein understood virginity as a union with Christ in a continuing life companionship, assuming fulfillment in the divine truth found in the Scriptures and in the teaching of the faith.⁴⁹⁵ Not diminishing the sanctity of marriage, Stein considered virginity to be the highest way of life.⁴⁹⁶

That is why she wrote so beautifully about the vow of chastity. In her opinion, this vow wants to free people from the bonds of natural, community life, nail them to the cross above and beyond these bonds, and free the heart to union with the Crucified. This sacrifice is not accomplished at once. Although one is separated from the temptations outside the convent, many things that divert the spirit and heart still remain in the memory and imagination and can lead to the loss of their freedom. The dangers of creating bonds which hinder the full union with the Divine Heart also exist within the walls of the convent. When entering the order a girl becomes a member of a family. She wants to see the head and members of the Mystical Body of Christ in the superiors and other sisters. She is, however, only human and something overly human can easily become blended into the holy, childlike, and sisterly love. On looking at another human being, we know that we see Christ in him, but we do not notice that in a human way we rely only on what is human, and this brings the danger of losing

⁴⁹² Ibid., pp. 153–155.

⁴⁹³ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 91.

⁴⁹⁴ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 201.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁹⁶ E. Stein, *Sendung der katholischen Akademikerin*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 223f.

sight of Christ. However, it is not only the human inclination which interferes with the purity of heart. Both 'too much' and too little human love oppose the Divine Heart. Any aversion and anger which is tolerated in the heart closes the door to the Saviour. Involuntary stirrings are blameless, but when we notice them then we have to confront them because otherwise we are in opposition to God, who is love. The hymn sung by the virgins attending the Lamb is one of pure love.⁴⁹⁷ These views of the vow and virtue of purity are reflected in practice in Stein's consecrated life. She enjoyed life in the convent community and claimed that for most of her prior life she had been lonelier than in Carmel.⁴⁹⁸ The family of sisters not only shared material goods, but also spiritual joy.⁴⁹⁹ As I have already mentioned, Stein saw a danger in developing overly human bonds between the sisters as it threatened the loss of Christ from sight, but she was indeed very pleased when her friend Franciszka Ernst joined the Order and stood opposite her in the choir.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, Stein testified that consecrated purity is fulfilled in love of God, and in God's love of man.

⁴⁹⁷ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes*, ESGA 20, op. cit., p. 140f.

⁴⁹⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933-1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 108.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63f.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33; E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14. 09. 1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 132.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

In Catholic doctrine there is an indissoluble connection between ethics and education. Pedagogy is one of the main components of ethics and at the same time is its test and culmination.⁵⁰¹ In as much as the connection of education with ethics appears to be correct, then, for the Christian theologian a combination of pedagogical theory and moral theory is obvious. Consequently, a mutual dependency must be noted between moral theology and spirituality, as spirituality assumes a determined level of moral correctness and a moral life demands spirituality.⁵⁰² A logical conclusion can be drawn from the above, namely that a similar relation must exist between Christian education and spirituality. This connection is obvious if one remembers that the significant dimension of all spiritual theory is to indicate the principles of the development of spiritual life.⁵⁰³

Stein was aware of the needs of both pedagogical theory and practice.⁵⁰⁴ She even wondered whether she would be able to write about raising children as she was not a mother herself. In answer to that

⁵⁰¹ J. Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, vol. 1, Lublin 1986, p. 7.

⁵⁰² M. Chmielewski, *Metodologiczne problemy posoborowej teologii duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 245.

⁵⁰³ Ch. A. Bernard, *Teologia spirituale*, Milano 1987, p. 70.

⁵⁰⁴ W. Zyzak, *Święta Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża jako wychowawczynie*, in: *Wychowanie do świętości*, Scripta Theologica Thoruniensia, vol. 34, Toruń 2014, pp. 207–224.

question she cited not only her studies in psychology and pedagogy as arguments for the cause, but above all her experience, in other words, her wealth of memories from childhood, and observations of the development of children in her environment.⁵⁰⁵ Stein's interest in pedagogy had both an existential foundation and a professional dimension. It is worth remembering that in the years 1911–1915, she studied at the universities in Wrocław and Göttingen, where she completed courses in the propaedeutic of philosophy, history, and German. In 1915 she helped during WWI as a volunteer in the Red Cross, and in subsequent years worked academically as an assistant for Edmund Husserl. After completing her PhD in 1917, she tried many times to achieve her post-doctoral habilitation, but all attempts were unsuccessful. The years 1923–1931 offered valuable experience which shaped her concept of education as she spent those years teaching in Speyer. Later, in 1932–1933 she spent a short time lecturing in the Deutsche Institut für Wissenschaftliche Pädagogik (German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy) where she developed her educational theory. A significant role was also played by her participation in many academic events and congresses concerning pedagogy both in Germany and abroad in the years 1928–1932. Her activities in this area came to a close when she entered Carmel in Cologne in 1933.⁵⁰⁶

As a result of the above, two sources of pedagogical knowledge are visible in Stein's life. The first is the experience of a young teacher and the second is the work of a mature scholar developing a theory of education. A distinct interest in the human being, psychology, philosophy, and social and political life hail back to the times of her

⁵⁰⁵ E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, op. cit., p. 151f.

⁵⁰⁶ E. Birkenbeil, *Edith Stein: Assistentin, Lehrerin, Dozentin*, in: *Edith Stein. Leben, Philosophie, Vollendung*, op. cit., p. 95.

studies, and involved many issues from the didactic/educational field, which are related to the first source. Stein decided to apply for academic certification in the subjects of German and history, as she knew that they would enable her to teach in school. Her involvement in teaching did not therefore come about simply as the result of not being able to continue her academic work in the area of philosophy. This can be proved by her membership in associations related to education, such as the Pedagogical Group, the League for Educational Reform, and the Academic Association of Humboldt in which she was active from the first years of her university studies. Moreover, she also helped in evening classes for adults, providing mainstream education. Thanks to membership in these associations, Stein was able to experience different educational/care centres. She also gained valuable pedagogical experience through the extra lessons and evening classes which she offered to people from the lower classes. Having said that, her main source of educational experience was, of course, when she was working at school, first at the Viktoria middle school in Breslau (Wrocław) and later in the secondary school and Teacher Training College in Speyer.⁵⁰⁷ Many letters from this period indicate how deeply she was involved in her pupils' life problems.⁵⁰⁸ The second source of Stein's pedagogical wisdom was more theoretical and was related to the short time she spent teaching in the German Institute for Educational Studies in Münster. For Stein this was a time of theoretical research in the field of pedagogy and for various guest lectures on the subject of education which she gave in Germany and abroad. Her educational activity was

⁵⁰⁷ A. Rybińska, *Czy można mówić o pedagogice Edith Stein?*, "Kwartalnik TES" 1 (2005) 10, p. 4; E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 160–162.

⁵⁰⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESW 8, op. cit., pp. 154f., 187, 195.

accompanied by an analysis of the needs of society, and the development of appropriate teaching methods and fundamental pedagogical concepts.⁵⁰⁹ As can be seen from her letters, in this period of her life she wished to develop an appropriate concept for Catholic education.

In one of her letters from 1933, Stein wrote that she would like to establish a system of Catholic pedagogy in the Institute in Münster. For this purpose, she wanted to join together her phenomenological and scholastic works in such a way that philosophical and theological anthropology would constitute a foundation for Catholic education.⁵¹⁰ The methods used in the scientific research of natural and humanistic subjects, especially in the field of psychology, had never satisfied her as, in her opinion, no positive science is able to reach to the internal form and structure of the being.⁵¹¹ Anthropology, based only on natural sciences, rooted in evolution, treats *homo sapiens* as an animal species which has attained its peak of development. Stein believed that this approach could not constitute the foundations for a genuine theory of education. Due to the fact that natural science does not take any values into consideration, it does not have any great significance in establishing the purpose of education.⁵¹² In the end, Stein postulated the building of pedagogy on the basis of philosophical anthropology.⁵¹³ This would involve general science about being, which would take into consideration the difference between what is created and what is not created, in other words, from an anthropological point of view, the difference between man and God. For Stein it was important that

⁵⁰⁹ A. Rybińska, *Czy można mówić o pedagogice Edith Stein?*, "Kwartalnik TES" 1 (2005) 10, p. 5.

⁵¹⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 265.

⁵¹¹ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., pp. 153–155.

⁵¹² E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., pp. 18–20.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

it should begin with philosophical means, in other words, natural cognition. However, in her opinion, a believing teacher has to accommodate the revealed truth in his or her concept of the human and education. As a consequence, philosophical anthropology needs to be supplemented by theological anthropology.⁵¹⁴

The point here, according to Stein, is that in creative work on the subject of man and his education, issues are encountered which can be solved neither through empirical science nor through philosophical means. What goes beyond the natural capabilities of human understanding can be disclosed by the supernatural light of Revelation. Thus, Stein believed that philosophical anthropology in itself needed to be supplemented by theological anthropology, which means presenting the image of man contained in the Catholic teaching of faith. Moreover, Stein saw the need to free the Catholic philosophy and theology from distorted rationalistic and naturalistic influences by returning to classic source from the patristic and scholastic periods. On the basis of these, Stein wanted to conduct an evaluative review of the secularised sciences at the turn of the twentieth century because these provided the basis for the contemporary psychology and pedagogy of which she was highly critical.⁵¹⁵

According to Stein, what faith says about man constitutes an inherent theoretical foundation for practical educational work. On the other hand, if the science of education is to be a genuine science then it must, by its own methods, be able to figure out what education is and how it should be implemented. If it proceeds correctly, then the results will be in line with the contents of faith, even if they are not drawn directly from it. As Stein said, not everything which has

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., p. 26.

⁵¹⁵ E. Stein, *Theoretische Begründung der Frauenbildung*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 225f.

been revealed is elusive for the natural intellect. However, Aquinas claimed that while much could be recognised by the power of natural intellect, only a few could attain it, doing so only later, and with great effort. Yet Stein believed that what is necessary for redemption has to be available for everybody, and therefore, it cannot only depend upon the state of human research. In her opinion the science of education, which is the foundation for practical educational work, was at that time insufficiently developed and required supplementing with faith. It could even be said that it essentially needs that supplement, as the mysteries belonging to the Catholic faith are inaccessible for natural understanding, and in order to attain them supernatural light is required. Stein wrote that the mysteries which are the most important for man on earth and for his education are the truth about the Holy Trinity and about the Incarnation of the Word. God revealed them, since they are necessary for man to fulfill his vocation in life. Hence, if pedagogy resigns from drawing on the Revelation, it risks overlooking what is most important and basically severs itself from the possibility of defining the subject, i.e. the education of man in a satisfactory way. In the meantime however, only when it has been ascertained what the revealed truth tells us about man and his upbringing, can it be decided what is actually available for natural recognition and what is not. Finding natural explication for what can be recognised in a natural way makes a supernatural explication within the framework of pedagogy superfluous. However, wherever natural explication is impossible, Stein saw the need to build supernatural justification in the entire pedagogical system. It does not mean that the pedagogy in her system, like Christian philosophy, would actually become theology, but that it would find a significant and inalienable relationship with it.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁶ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 161f.

The foregoing views on Christian pedagogy based on philosophical and theological anthropology found their reflection in the extensive lectures in Münster. Initially, the philosophical part was delivered in the semester at the turn of 1932 and 1933. It was later published as *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*.⁵¹⁷ This philosophical lecture was meant to be continued in the summer term of 1933. Stein planned a series of lectures on the subject of anthropology, based on the Catholic doctrine of faith, but these did not take place due to the Nazi repression. Nevertheless, the script survived.⁵¹⁸ It was published posthumously entitled, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, and depicted the image of the human as contained in the doctrine of faith. In this material Stein expressed the opinion that each Catholic teacher should carefully research what faith says about the human being.⁵¹⁹ Such an approach to pedagogy with its roots in empirical, philosophical, and theological anthropology would be called an interdisciplinary method these days.⁵²⁰ A key element of its Christian character is the acceptance of the supernatural purpose of redemption and of God as the main Educator.⁵²¹ These issues will be discussed later on in the chapter.

As a result of reflections on the basis of philosophical and especially theological anthropology, Stein clearly formed a goal for pedagogical endeavours which featured the condition of the human being. This concerns man with original sin who, thanks to the grace of Christ, can participate in Redemption. In marking out the educational aims, Stein took into consideration the effects of original sin which remain

⁵¹⁷ K. Mass, *Geleitwort*, ESGA 14, Freiburg im Breisgau 2004, p. V.

⁵¹⁸ L. Gelber, *Einleitung*, ESW 17, op. cit., pp. 6–8.

⁵¹⁹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 13.

⁵²⁰ A. Rybińska, *Czy można mówić o pedagogice Edith Stein?*, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in human nature in the form of a weakness of will and random urges.⁵²² That is why she believed that it was very important to educate children from a young age about purity, regularity, obedience, order, and honesty.⁵²³ In addition, she saw education as an integral aim, forming the whole person.⁵²⁴ So she criticized the concept of pedagogy as a legacy of Enlightenment and the concept of the soul as a “tabula rasa” which should be filled with encyclopaedic knowledge.⁵²⁵ she also saw the need to train not only the senses, mind, heart, and will, but also the memory, and the imagination.⁵²⁶ She did not, however, remain adhered to the worldly goal, but always took the supernatural perspective into account in the form of the eternal aim of seeing God, which is set before man, by both the order of creation and the order of Redemption; hence, the need to include the supernatural aim in educational work.⁵²⁷ From this it is clear to see that Stein’s main educational objective was to create bonds between God and man.⁵²⁸ More precisely, her educational objective was the development of a supernatural man, which is Christ in the man.⁵²⁹ The most perfect form of humanity is in the Son of God, so man should draw on this image

⁵²² E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 74f.

⁵²³ E. Stein, *Mütterliche Erziehungskunst*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, s. 118n.

⁵²⁴ E. Stein, *Wahrheit und Klarheit im Unterricht und in der Erziehung*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 4f.

⁵²⁵ E. Stein, *Grundlagen der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 31.

⁵²⁶ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵²⁷ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 173f.

⁵²⁸ E. Stein, *Diskussion zum Vortrag “Grundlagen der Frauenbildung”*, ESGA 13, Freiburg im Breisgau 2002, p. 242.

⁵²⁹ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 172.

as much as possible, so that God can become man's internal form.⁵³⁰ Thus, the living and personal purpose of all human formation is precisely shown in Christ.⁵³¹

The foregoing objective of pedagogical efforts defines the role of the main educators. As the educational purpose is to prepare man for union with God in eternity, it is obvious, according to Stein, that the first and most important educator for man is God.⁵³² The way of educating humanity is the work of Divine Providence, since only God can transform nature by a miracle, which is an act of His grace.⁵³³ For a believer, all events take place in accordance with the divine plan or are, at least, foreseen by God. People can co-operate with this divine activity as tools of Divine Providence, in other words as '*causae secundae*'.⁵³⁴ Based on the encyclical, *Divini illius magistri* by Pope Pius XI on the subject of bringing up youth, Stein named three communities which are responsible for educating man: the Church, the family, and the state.⁵³⁵ According to Stein, the Church, with its Office of Teaching, is substantially the best qualified and called upon to provide religious instruction for youth. The Church fulfills this task through services, through dispensing sacraments, through the priests' sermons from the pulpit, and through religious education, in other words throughout all pastoral activities. The family also plays

⁵³⁰ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 49; E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 13f.

⁵³¹ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 176.

⁵³² E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 96.

⁵³³ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 48.

⁵³⁴ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 71.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

an important role, as the beginnings of instruction largely depend on family members.⁵³⁶ Stein cited canon 1113 from the *Code of Canon Law* of 1917, which placed the obligation of religious, moral, physical, and civil upbringing of children on the parents.⁵³⁷ The mother was entrusted with a special role in this area.⁵³⁸ This does not mean that concern for the family's religious development is exclusively the task of the woman. The man should also care for the supernatural life of his own family. Within his family environment, the man should constitute an image of Christ as the Head, seeing his most important role as being a model imitation of Christ and in supporting all seeds of faith. He can fulfill this role if he is closely bound to the Lord.⁵³⁹ In the process of instructing children in the faith, Stein underlined the example set by both parents who themselves seek eternal life, and in this way easily teach their off-spring the path to that goal.⁵⁴⁰

As a second, natural and necessary community responsible for education, Stein named the state, which was in the encyclical. The existence and prosperity of the family depend on its protection. On the other hand, the existence of the country depends, to a certain extent, on ensuring the education of its citizens and developing the understanding of the law and obligations in relation to the state. It is within the state's own interest to strive to develop its citizens so that they are strong,

⁵³⁶ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵³⁷ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 185.

⁵³⁸ E. Stein, *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 8.

⁵³⁹ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur- und Gnadenordnung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 72.

⁵⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 86f.

healthy, resourceful, and productive. In these endeavours the state should support families and other communities or organisations, and if they fail, it should implement its own initiatives, especially in the educational sphere. In itself it has only an indirect relation to the nurturing of children, and it is not its direct aim, as it is in the case of the family.⁵⁴¹ Both the state and the Church fulfill their educational obligations through schools and other means. When writing about her contemporary school, Stein noticed various dangers, among which were co-education and the limitations placed on the religious schools.⁵⁴² Ultimately, Stein's view is that all education is meant to serve the individual's obligation to educate himself. Hence, the goal of the educational efforts of all of the aforementioned institutions should be to facilitate that task of self-education.⁵⁴³ A free person is entrusted to himself and is directed by the will. By using the mind and the will a free person may effect his own education and upbringing.⁵⁴⁴ The theory that the development of man is ultimately the work of God indicates that the main aim of educational work is the transition from education to self-education, which is learning to cooperate with the grace of God.⁵⁴⁵

The preceding analysis allows us to include Stein in the list of theoreticians of Christian pedagogy. From a purely philosophical point of view Stein highlighted that for man to exist it is necessary to develop in a temporal process which is not unequivocally determined, but depends on different factors, especially on the freedom of the pupil

⁵⁴¹ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 162f

⁵⁴² E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, op. cit., p. 75f.

⁵⁴³ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁵⁴⁵ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 16.

himself.⁵⁴⁶ Stein went further in her contemplations, underlining that in contrast to philosophy, which researches the essential possibilities and necessities of human development, the theological task is to gather and interpret historical evidence which is contained, above all, in Divine Revelation. Stein wrote that the Holy Scriptures give facts and practical guidelines of huge significance for pedagogical theory and practice.⁵⁴⁷ For Christian pedagogy it is clear that without anchoring the educator in the love of God, he or she can never raise the natural pedagogical *eros* to the level of pedagogical *agape* and it is only in *agape* that particular Christian acts are secured.⁵⁴⁸ That is why educational work cannot serve only the natural growth process without the supernatural dimension. Only pedagogy which takes into consideration the religious longings of man and is filled with Christian spirit enables man to fully develop. Therefore, Stein demanded holistic education based on Catholic pedagogy. The aim of this pedagogy was to get to know the ways and means to help a growing man develop natural and supernatural talents. This is pedagogical accompaniment in the development of the bodies, souls, and spirits of men to their fullness of personhood, and through this to the status of a child of God who finds fulfillment in the life of the Church. At length, Stein combined the natural dimension with grace in education, and thus her pedagogy closely resembles spirituality in many places.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁶ B. H. Reifenrath, *Erziehung im Lichte des Ewigen*, Frankfurt am Main 1985, p. 127.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁵⁴⁸ E. Birkenbeil, *Edith Stein: Assistentin, Lehrerin, Dozentin*, op. cit., p. 105f.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106f.



INSPIRATIONS FOR NEW EVANGELISATION

On 24 November 2013, Pope Francis published his first exhortation on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world, *Evangelii gaudium* (hereinafter: EG). This is the fruit of the work of the synod of bishops on the subject of new evangelisation from the previous year. This document constitutes an instrument of various theological reflections. Due to the fact that it pertains to the new evangelisation of contemporary times, questions about the very newness and newness arise, which only become visible in the historical context of the bygone years. A good occasion for the diachronic comparison of concepts could be looking at today's challenges with regard to evangelisation from almost 100 years ago, the image of which has been outlined in Stein's works as St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.⁵⁵⁰

When Pope Francis described the dangers of the contemporary world, he said that the egotistical behavior of being caught up in one's own interests makes many people resentful and listless (see EG2). Stein presents us with a diametrically different attitude. This is evident in a fragment of a letter from 1933 to her nephew, Werner Gordon, in which she explained the state of her soul when she had to leave

⁵⁵⁰ W. Zyzak, *Inspiracje świętej Tersy Benedykty od Krzyża (Edyty Stein) dla nowej ewangelizacji*, in: *Nowa ewangelizacja w świetle nauki Mistrzów Karmelu*, red. J. W. Gogoła, Kraków 2015, pp. 119–141.

her job at the Catholic Institute for Educational Studies in Münster. She could have been disappointed with the attitude of many Catholics. In the meantime, she wrote that in actual fact, she did not have any reason to complain. But then again, even if people had not done her so much good, this would never have been able to wean her away from the Church. Besides, she added that she did not change her faith in order to gain any benefits, and neither did people attract her. Stein did this because the teaching of the Church and faith in the sacraments were vitally important for her. In addition, she contended that, because of the blessings she had experienced so abundantly for eleven years, that nothing could now separate her from the Church. If there was not another single person in the world, whose life would testify to what living faith can do to a human being, then Stein claimed that she would feel obliged to make that testimony.⁵⁵¹ This acknowledgment in itself shows that Stein could be an interesting inspiration for the new evangelisation. Her thoughts and testimony correlate with the papal teachings in accordance with the simple, Aristotelian key of four causes: final, efficient, material, and formal. Therefore, in this chapter we shall consider the purpose, subject, content and form of evangelisation with regard to the new evangelisation.

When reflecting on the purpose of the new evangelisation it is worth remembering the words of Pope Benedict XVI which were quoted in the document, that at the beginning of being a Christian there is no ethical decision, or any great idea, but an encounter with a person with divine love which frees from human limitations (see EG 7f). Such an experience is something to share with others. It appears that all of Stein's works concentrated on the fundamental purpose which

⁵⁵¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 295; E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów (1916–1933)*, Kraków 2003, p. 428.

is the meeting with God.⁵⁵² As a consequence, she saw the purpose of evangelical formation in two main dimensions: the eternal, in other words, seeing God in eternity, and the temporal purpose subordinated to him, in other words, participation in Divine life *in via*.⁵⁵³ She was thinking about Christ's likeness, which is becoming *alter Christus* in the wake of the union with Him.⁵⁵⁴ For that reason Stein, as a Christian, wished to lead all those who came to her to that relationship with God. When she noticed that people were more interested in her as a person, she asked God to help in a different way.⁵⁵⁵

This important objective of evangelisation is served by all other goals, i.e. primarily preaching about Christ to those who do not know Him. This Christian duty was underlined by the Pope in his exhortation (see EG 14). This does not concern imposing something on others, but pertains more to the power of attracting, which flows forth from a good Christian life. Many valuable remarks can be found on this topic in Stein's works for her having accepted the truth of the Gospel when she was a mature woman. In her opinion, although it cannot be merely accepted as impossible that someone, without it being their own personal fault, is not a believer, it is not possible to reject all human faults. Leaving original sin and the resulting darkening of the mind out of the equation, nobody actually grows up isolated from society; and if this society failed to offer a testimony which would open the eyes

⁵⁵² E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 148; E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., p. 48f.

⁵⁵³ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 76f.

⁵⁵⁴ E. Stein, *Die Mitwirkung der klösterlichen Bildungsanstalten an der religiösen Bildung der Jugend*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 51f.

⁵⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 142.

to the world of faith, then the blame may be placed on its doorstep.⁵⁵⁶ Here we have a distinct indication of the initial purpose of evangelisation, that being bringing somebody to the faith. In her analysis of atheism Stein also took into consideration the possibility that a non-believer in childhood was led into the world of faith by anthropomorphic images, but, over time, in the process of maturing, the crossing over from the natural world to the supernatural did not occur. In this way of thinking, another guideline concerning the purpose of evangelisation can be seen, which helps man to travel from the known sensory world to 'something else' which the Revelation tells us about.⁵⁵⁷

In order to attain such a spiritual stance, it is necessary to accept the existence of an objective truth. Pope Francis named the relativistic indifference of a culture in which everybody wants to have their own subjective truth as one of the most important difficulties arising in evangelisation (see EG 61). For Stein the existence of an objective truth, and the possibility of getting to know it, constitute an even earlier aim, a kind of foreground for evangelisation. If somebody sees everything as subjective, then it is impossible for him to receive the truth of the Gospel. Stein is well-known for her unrelenting search for the truth, even in her period of atheism.⁵⁵⁸ In her last work, *The Science of the Cross*, she wrote that a man who is really concerned with seeking the truth is closer to God than he even realizes. Stein undoubtedly wrote this on the basis of her own experiences.⁵⁵⁹ For her, the possibility of reaching the objective truth was a significant philosophical problem connected to the discussion between idealism and realism.

⁵⁵⁶ E. Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Die Symbolische Theologie des Areopagiten und ihre sachlichen Voraussetzungen*, ESGA 17, op. cit., pp. 52–54.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵⁵⁸ M. A. Neyer OCD, *Einführung*, in E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. XVI.

⁵⁵⁹ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 136.

That debate is still present today as evidenced by Pope Francis's deploring of 'unreal idealism' in the exhortation (see EG 232f). More than one hundred years ago this was one of the most irksome cognitive problems for Stein. We already know from earlier reflections that her criticism with regard to idealism indicated a compromise, which takes onboard as little idealism as is necessary in order to secure the bond of cognition with the subject and as much realism as is possible in order to ensure the bond of cognition with material width and depth.⁵⁶⁰ At first glance this problem may appear a little too academic and not really related to evangelisation. However, it is only possible to have an authentic dialogue about faith, starting with the conviction that the truth exists, and going through the disclosure of Incarnate Truth, until having a personal encounter with it.

This evangelical purpose contains, to some extent, guidelines related to the subject. Primarily, as the exhortation says, evangelisation is not just a heroic human task, but the work of God. Jesus is the first and greatest preacher of the Gospel, and in each form of evangelisation the primacy always belongs to God, who wanted to call man to co-operate with Him (see EG 12). Stein is also of the opinion that for a man standing on naturalistic ground, reality is only what is perceived by the senses and understood by the intellect. Meanwhile, for the believer, the world is God's world. Everything that exists is a divine creation, and everything that happens is in accordance with God's plan, or is at least foreseen by Him. People can co-operate in this divine activity as a tool of Divine Providence.⁵⁶¹ A Christian believes

⁵⁶⁰ B. Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluß an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein*, op. cit., p. 176.

⁵⁶¹ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 71.

that God has a plan for mankind and that the intervention of grace is necessary in order to fulfill it.⁵⁶² Thus, according to Stein, the process of educating humanity is the work of Divine Providence, since only God can transform nature by a miracle, which is an act of His grace.⁵⁶³ This shows that God is the first evangeliser: He has an eternal plan for man which contains the purpose of his existence and with His grace He helps to carry it through. Stein's most characteristic statement, emphasizing the above, was 'what did not lie in my plan, lay in God's plans.'⁵⁶⁴ For Pope Francis, it is also quite clear that the situation for each person before God is a mystery which nobody can fully know from the outside (see EG 172).

All members of the church are called to co-operate with that God Who is actively engaged. *Evangelii gaudium* expressly reminds us that the new evangelization should assume a new protagonism in each of the baptised (see EG 120). Linked to this task is the fact that God endowed all the faithful with the instinct of faith (*sensus fidei*), which helps them to discern what things truly come from God (see EG 119). Also, according to Stein, the evangelical endeavours of the educators are written into the forming acts of God in the Church, whose members and organs are all the faithful. Here Stein had not only priests in mind, but also parents, teachers, and especially people who live lives of exemplary holiness.⁵⁶⁵ In this respect, she referred to the universal

⁵⁶² E. Stein, *Diskussion zum Vortrag "Grundlagen der Frauenbildung"*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 241.

⁵⁶³ E. Stein, *Zur Idee der Bildung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 48.

⁵⁶⁴ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins* [Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being], trans. by K. Reinhardt, Washington D.C. 2002, p. 113f.

⁵⁶⁵ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 88.

teaching task which was given to the Church by Christ (see Mt 28, 18–20).⁵⁶⁶ Pope Francis referred to this very same order from the Lord when he said that evangelisation is the answer to Christ's missionary mandate (see EG 19). Whence comes the plea for the ministry to be more mission-oriented (see EG 15, 27).

It is especially worth noting that almost a hundred years ago Stein highlighted the fact that formation in faith cannot be the task exclusively of the clergy and religious. These words are still very apt. as For contemporary heathendom, for whom each religious habit seems suspicious, and who does not want to hear about any doctrine of faith, eternal life can bring together only those people who look similar, carry out a similar profession in the world, and have common interests with the rest of the people of this world. Nevertheless, it is possible to feel in them the workings of a power coming from somewhere else.⁵⁶⁷ That is why Stein considered the dynamically developing organization, Catholic Action, to be a tool for kindling faith and love in the human heart, and for helping in forming the private and public life of the faithful.⁵⁶⁸ That having been said, she placed a huge emphasis on the significance of the family. *Evangelii gaudium* too, underlines the fundamental role the family plays in the process of evangelisation (see EG 66).

When considering the content of the new evangelization, it is impossible not to notice at once the concern about the mature experience of faith. Pope Francis wrote that

at times greater emphasis is placed on the outward expressions and traditions of some groups, or on alleged private revelations which would replace all else,

⁵⁶⁶ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 188f.

⁵⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 112.

⁵⁶⁸ E. Stein, *Jugendbildung im Licht des katholischen Glaubens. Bedeutung des Glaubens und der Glaubenswahrheiten für Bildungsidee und Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 140.

than on the impulse of Christian piety. There is a kind of Christianity made up of devotions reflecting an individual and sentimental faith life which does not in fact correspond to authentic popular piety” (EG 70).

At this point it is worth recollecting what Stein often repeated when referring to the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas. In living out the faith she specified the acceptance of the truth of faith in view of the authority of God, i.e. believing God (*credere Deo*), believing that God exists (*credere Deum – believing in God*) and turning towards God in faith, in other words, striving towards Him, (*credere in Deum – believing unto God*).⁵⁶⁹ More attention should be given to the last of these points, *credere in Deum*. Pope Francis refers to this when writing about the concept of authentic popular piety, explaining that it is not deprived of content, but discovers and expresses that content more by means of symbols than reason, and in the act of faith, greater emphasis is placed on *credere in Deum* than on *credere Deum* (see EG 124). What the Pope wished to express here was the certainty that if someone offers themselves to God in love, then he will undoubtedly bear abundant fruit (see EG 279).

The preceding comments do not denote a reduction in the meaning of the content of the faith. Pope Francis underlines this by saying that the Church, being a missionary disciple herself, must grow in her interpretation of the revealed word, and in her understanding of the truth (EG 40). The exhortation positively validates the justifiable diversity of opinion which helps to bring out and develop the different aspects of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel (EG 40). This shows that Catholicism constitutes the integration of diversity. All these thoughts can be found in Stein’s works. In response to Josef

⁵⁶⁹ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 28.

Adelmann's accusation that Catholicism in the Roman version does not suit the soul and essence of what it means to be German, Stein wrote about the many possibilities for development within the doctrine of the faith, the evidence of which are forms of different popular piety from different nations, that start at grass root level and are later accepted by the Church.⁵⁷⁰ Stein expressed her delight in the Catholic faith. She saw within it a wide array of directions and accents, and it was exactly this which constituted its real Catholicity in the meaning of an openness to diversity within the framework of the integral whole.⁵⁷¹ The concept that everything in the Church is carved in stone is, according to Stein, a falsehood. In this case, the world has naively overlooked the fact that the Church has a history, and that from the human perspective she has been inclined towards development from the very outset, often in the form of battles.⁵⁷² In the history of the Christian life of faith, as in the lives of individuals, the mysteries of faith step into the centre of attention one after the other.⁵⁷³ This awareness has to have its consequence in evangelisation as well. That is why the Pope declared that the pastoral ministry, in a missionary perspective, has to resign from the comfortable pastoral stance that says 'that's how it has always been done' (see EG 33).

In conclusion, the form of the new evangelisation should be considered. For sure, the most important observation will be the ascertainment that the soul of all evangelisation is prayer. Without prolonged moments of adoration and a prayerful encounter with the word, the task easily becomes relinquished of its sense (EG 262). In this

⁵⁷⁰ E. Stein, *Rezension: Zum Kampfum den katholischen Lehrer*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 114f.

⁵⁷¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 195.

⁵⁷² E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 147.

⁵⁷³ E. Stein, *Elizabeth von Thüringen*, ESW 15, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, p. 132f.

respect it suffices to recall what has already been discussed in the chapter about prayer in Stein's life and teachings. In Stein's case we can see the particular connection of intercessory prayer and the apostolate. We also notice her frequent presence in the locutory. Stein herself wrote that most of the sisters saw the necessity of having to go to the locutory as a penance. The Carmelite nuns were happy when they returned to the silence of the choir and prayed the intercessory intentions which had been submitted to them before the tabernacle. However, Stein felt this peace to be too much of a gift to make use of it herself, and if somebody who was exceptionally busy or depressed found a little peace and comfort with her, it made her extremely happy.⁵⁷⁴ It can be seen here that Stein is an excellent example of the holistic experience of consecrated life as a spiritual life in which not only prayer, but also all the other tasks are part of her own identity. This is the attitude to which Pope Francis calls consecrated people (see EG 78). He believes that the evangelizing beauty of liturgy is closely related to prayer (EG 24). This aspect of Stein's spirituality has also been widely discussed earlier. The evangelizing meaning of the 'way of beauty' (*via pulchritudinis*) is also related to the above. As the Pope writes, proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in Him is not only something true and right, but also beautiful. Every expression of true beauty can be acknowledged as a path which leads the way to an encounter with the Lord Jesus (EG 167). In a similar vein, Stein wrote that He who has given all creatures existence and beauty must be the highest beauty and even beauty itself.⁵⁷⁵ It is characteristic that Stein, as an aesthetically sensitive woman, was enraptured with sacral art even before her baptism.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 34f.

⁵⁷⁵ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 300f.

⁵⁷⁶ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 332.

The next significant aspect of the new evangelisation is joy. That is why ‘an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral’ (EG 10). There were many moments of crises in Stein’s life, but from the moment when she received the grace of faith she was able to say:

There is not another person on this planet with whom I would like to change places. I have only learned to live since I have discovered what I am living for.⁵⁷⁷

This internal joy accompanied her in the process of evangelisation and due to this, she wrote that awakening a divine spark in a child’s heart, seeing the divine life grow within him, helping in reawakening a life of grace and accompanying the formation process, working with it as a tool, means giving spiritual life and nurturing it for heaven, and is a joy not of this world.⁵⁷⁸ Stein’s experiences are also an excellent confirmation of the thesis that goodness always tends to spread. Each authentic experience of truth and beauty seeks its own expansion (EG 9). Her explanation that Catholicism is a matter of both life and heart can be clearly seen in her correspondence with Roman Ingarden, who was critical about her conversion. Due to the fact that Christ was the centre of her life and the Church was her fatherland, it was difficult for her to write letters to him constantly having to be careful not to mention those things that filled her heart, so as not to awaken any animosity to the truth which she loved and considered as holy.⁵⁷⁹ Related to this is the vitally important formal aspect of evangelisation, i.e. the testimony of life. Pope Francis speaks about

⁵⁷⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 154.

⁵⁷⁸ E. Stein, *Die Bestimmung der Frau*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 53f.

⁵⁷⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 175.

many witnesses, among whom some contributed in a particular way to an increase in the joy linked to faith (see EG 13). Stein personally experienced this in the contact which she had with the married couple, Theodore [Teodor] and Jadwiga [Hedwig] Conrad-Martius, with Max Scheler, and with the Reinach family.⁵⁸⁰ Some meetings of witnesses of the faith took place indirectly due to the writings of such authors as St Augustine, St Francis, or St Teresa of Avila.⁵⁸¹ The latter had such a huge impact on Stein's spirituality that in the next chapter a closer look at her evangelizing dimension of spiritual life will be investigated.

⁵⁸⁰ A. U. Müller, *Grundzüge der Religionsphilosophie Edith Steins*, op. cit., p. 87.

⁵⁸¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 188f.



THE EVANGELIZING DIMENSION OF TERESA OF AVILA'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

It is difficult to overemphasize the influence Teresa of Avila had on the entire Carmelite Order. So it comes as no surprise that we can also find it in the life of another great woman of that Order, namely, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, that is, Edith Stein.⁵⁸² During her investiture, Stein took the name Teresa to signify that the great Spanish mystic had led her to Christ. Cardinal Friedrich Wetter wrote beautifully about the event. In his narrative from August 1921, Stein had gone to visit her close friend, Jadwiga Conrad – Martius and her husband Theodore at the health resort in Bergzabern in the Rhineland Palatinate. The couple had to leave the house for a while. Before leaving, Mrs. Conrad led Stein to the library and proposed that she should take any book that she fancied. Stein said, 'I reached out my hand and at random picked out a sizeable book. It was entitled, *The Autobiography of St Teresa of Avila*. I started to browse through it, became absorbed straight away and did not stop reading until I had finished it. Then I closed the book and said to myself, "This is the truth"'. She read all night until sunrise. What had happened? For all those years Stein had been seeking the truth and that night she found it. But it was not what the philosophers, and she was one herself, would call the truth;

⁵⁸² W. Zyzak, *Edyta Stein o ewangelizacyjnym wymiarze życia duchowego w ujęciu Teresy Wielkiej*, in: *W relacji przyjaźni*, red. J. W. Gogola, Kraków 2016, pp. 186–200.

it was an entirely different kind of truth, a personal truth, a loving (addressable in the familiar “You”) God, Whom Teresa of Avila could experience and vouch for in the description of her life. Stein had been seeking the truth and found God.⁵⁸³ Regardless of the discussion about the real circumstances of the reading of this autobiography, it is possible to claim in all certainty that in St Teresa of Avila Stein found the same love of truth which inspired her too. Stein was so enraptured with her great patron that she devoted three dissertations directly to her.⁵⁸⁴

St Teresa of Avila was undoubtedly the most important figure to influence Stein’s spiritual path. Stein was deeply bound to her internally, she encompassed her with great reverence, and many references to her can be found in Stein’s works. The spiritual bond would certainly have been even greater had Stein known about Teresa’s Jewish background.⁵⁸⁵ In Stein’s eyes, Teresa of Avila was an indisputable authority on faith issues, especially in the area of prayer. This authority would be even more important at the present time, as St Teresa of Avila is a Doctor of the Church, and for Stein a measure of the authenticity of the Carmelite reformer’s teachings was the concurrence with the mystical theology of St John of the Cross, as a Doctor of the Church.⁵⁸⁶ This fact would have had an immense significance for Stein as she wrote that

⁵⁸³ F. Wetter, *Edyta Stein. Powołana do prawdy – przez Krzyż błogosławiona*, Wrocław 1991, pp. 21–25.

⁵⁸⁴ *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und wirken der heiligen Teresia von Jesus* written at the turn of 1933. In the next two years, the following were written: *Eine Meisterin der Erziehung-und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jesus*, and *Die Seelenburg*, as supplementary material to *Endliches und ewiges Sein*. See U. Dobhan, *Edith Steins Teresa – Bild*, in: “Wandle den Weg dem Glanze zu”. *Dokumentation zur Heiligensprechung von Edith Stein am 11. October 1998 in Rom*, Speyer 1999, p. 56.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ E. Stein, *Neue Bücher über die hl. Teresia von Jesus*, ESW 15, Freiburg im Breisgau 1993, p. 190.

St John, as a Doctor of the Church, is an indispensable source for all those who wish to become acquainted with mysticism in the framework of Catholic doctrine.⁵⁸⁷ For Stein, St Teresa was above all a great expert on education in the faith which was also displayed, in her opinion, by the influence of St John of the Cross.⁵⁸⁸

Knowledge of St Teresa's works had an enormous effect on Stein's conversion and vocation. It was also reflected in the huge quantity of her literary output. It appears that St Teresa was a particularly interesting character for Stein, as a phenomenologist, due to her religious experience. It undoubtedly had an evangelizing value for her, since St Teresa's conception was that the extent of the depth of our entry into the interior of the soul changes the way we affect the world. St Teresa of Avila was, for Stein, an example of the apostolic dimension of contemplation, that is to say an example of the bond between mission and prayer. This bond, as a heritage of the renewed Carmel, was nurtured by St Teresa's spiritual daughters who perpetually saw their lives given up to prayer as a mission. St Elizabeth of the Trinity, who unceasingly enveloped the world in prayer, was acknowledged as a true disciple. St Theresa of the Child Jesus (of Lisieux), patron of missions, was also aware that she was participating in Christ's mission, in as much as it had been He who had chosen her.⁵⁸⁹ We can definitely add Stein, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, to this group, which has been drawn from the heritage of St Teresa of Avila, as every single day of her life

⁵⁸⁷ E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵⁸⁸ U. Dobhan, *Edith Steins Teresa – Bild*, op. cit., p. 58f; E. Stein, *Eine Meisterin der Erziehung – und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jesus*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 110.

⁵⁸⁹ Élisabeth de la Trinité, *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris 2002, pp. 411, 543, 557f., 600, 1009f; L. de Saint Chamas, *Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus et une Théologie de la Mission*, in: *L'apport théologique de sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, docteur de l'Église*, Toulouse 2000, pp. 265–267.

in the convent she testified to the truth of the words of St Teresa that God alone suffices (*Quien a Dios tiene, nada le falta. Sólo Dios basta*).

Stein's fascination with St Teresa of Avila could have started as early as under the influence of her tutor Edmund Husserl. She recalled a conversation with this philosopher in 1918.⁵⁹⁰ Husserl, wanting to re-discover the original religious dimension in life, intended to return to the source of religious experience with reference to St Teresa, among others. That is why he directed his attention to a book by Rudolph Otto, *Das Heilige*, in which Stein was able to find Carmelite mystics, especially St Teresa of Avila. Hence, the possibility that she could have read the autobiography of St Teresa before 1921 cannot be ruled out.⁵⁹¹ It was this experience, connected with becoming further acquainted with St Teresa, which constituted a significant topic in the intellectual discussions between Stein and Roman Ingarden. As was indicated in the previous chapter, it is not possible to escape the impression that these discussions, from Stein's perspective, had an evangelizing role. In her letters to Ingarden, which described her own path of discovering faith, Stein claimed that the intellectual element had played a considerable role in the many years of preparation, but the real, gradual development of events had been decisive, on a par with a particular image of real Christianity in the testimonies of the saints. In this context she named St Teresa of Avila.⁵⁹² She advised him to reach for her writings, as the best source materials for spiritual experience could be found there.⁵⁹³ If one is lacking in one's own experience, it is necessary to hold to the witnesses of *homines religiosi*, among which

⁵⁹⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 85.

⁵⁹¹ U. Dobhan, *Einführung*, ESGA 18, op. cit., p. XIIIf.

⁵⁹² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 188f.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 193f.

St John of the Cross and then St Teresa of Avila made the greatest impressions on Stein.⁵⁹⁴

We already know that in an appendix to the work *Finite and Eternal Being* Stein wrote about the construction of the soul on the basis of the works of St Teresa of Avila. Teresa imagined a castle where the body is defined as the walls, and the senses and spiritual faculties (memory, reason, and will) as the vassals, guards, and inhabitants. Outside the castle, an external world spreads out, and heading inwards, into the interior, there are seven encircling chambers, where the outermost is the seventh, and God lives in the central one. The gate through which the castle can be entered is prayer and contemplation. The first chamber is self-examination, because knowing oneself and knowing God support each other. In the second chamber the soul hears God's calling through, for instance, the words of a sermon, fragments of books, or experiencing illness. In the third chamber the souls constantly seek to bring their lives into submission to divine will. The feeling of the presence of God, characteristic for mysticism, begins in the fourth chamber where the prayer of quiet occurs. In the fifth chamber, in the short prayer of union, the soul is awakened to God and withdraws from the problems of the world and from itself. Desiring the acts for the redemption of souls with regard to divine glory is the best result of this union and is also required from those for whom the Lord has not granted any supernatural graces. For the souls which the Lord guides through the mystical path of grace, the prayer of union is preparation for the spiritual betrothal in the sixth chamber. At last in the seventh chamber the marriage takes place in intellectual vision. The God in Holy Trinity descends on the soul which recognises Him 'visibly' as it knew Him through faith. Stein presented this path of the soul in the words of Teresa, as it was difficult for her to find better words. Stein

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

explained the way through the chambers as the path that 'I, which is a movable point, follows within the space which is the soul. The central point of the soul is the place from which the conscience can be heard and is the place for free personal decision.⁵⁹⁵ Stein said that for Teresa of Avila, entering the internal part of the soul was like building an appropriate relationship with the world. Only from the final depth of the soul, from the centre of the Creator is it possible to form an appropriate image of creation. This will not be a complete one like God has, but neither will it be distorted. This entering into the interior is getting closer to God, and also the gradual attainment of a purer and more appropriate attitude to the world. The end of the road shows that after ecstasy, the soul regains all its natural strength to act in order to be able to work in the service of the Lord.⁵⁹⁶ This view leads us to the aspect of the union of action and contemplation, which was highlighted by Stein and was essential for Teresa of Avila.

As shown above, St Teresa of Avila understood that prayer is the highest act of which human souls are capable, and she tried to help others to experience it in the consequent stages from vocal prayer right up to the threshold of mystic prayer, where the soul is divested of acts of its own faculties and becomes a vessel for receiving mercy.⁵⁹⁷ This dimension of contemplation in the life of St Teresa of Avila had an immense influence on the life of the Church. In an era of mass exodus from the Catholic faith, she saw the main means of help for the Church in the renewing of the real internal life.⁵⁹⁸ The deep spiritual life lib-

⁵⁹⁵ E. Stein, *Die Seelenburg*, ESW 6, op. cit., pp. 39–67; Teresa od Jezusa, *Twierdza wewnętrzna*, op. cit., pp. 221–446.

⁵⁹⁶ E. Stein, *Die Seelenburg*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 62f.

⁵⁹⁷ E. Stein, *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jesus*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 52f.

⁵⁹⁸ E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 18; E. Stein, *Eine Meisterin der Erziehung – und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jesus*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 95f.

erated immeasurable strength, saving the faith in many parts of Europe.⁵⁹⁹ Stein drew attention to the fact that when Teresa of Avila was alive, a division in the faith occurred which tore the unity of Europe apart. This situation caused a strong desire within her to remedy the disaster and compensate the Lord for that insult. Then God inspired her to renew the Carmelite Order in the spirit of the original rules, taking into account the compensation for the division in faith, and prayerful help for clergy who are the first to face the enemy.⁶⁰⁰ In a way, St Teresa, defending the unity of faith in Spain, which had only recently been re-established after the Moors had been driven out of the country, was standing in spirit at the side of the great defender of the faith, St Ignatius of Loyola.⁶⁰¹ As early as in childhood, her living faith had aroused a desire in her for martyrdom. As martyrs continually gaze at God, Teresa decided to travel to Moorish lands to die for the faith. According to Stein, the desire for martyrdom and the expiation for splitting the faith was a significant result of the union with God.⁶⁰² It is worth reiterating that in Teresa's view, the wish to act for the salvation of souls for the sake of divine glory, constituted the best fruit of the union.⁶⁰³ Under St Teresa's influence, the unlimited surrendering of oneself to God in a constant mystic union was, for Stein, the highest level of prayer, whence came the sacrificial surrender to the apostolate in the Church.⁶⁰⁴

According to Stein, Teresa of Avila saw the peak of perfection in the combination of contemplative prayer and work. She also tried

⁵⁹⁹ E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 18–21.

⁶⁰⁰ E. Stein, *Über Geschichte und Geist des Karmel*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 6f.

⁶⁰¹ E. Stein, *Liebe um Liebe. Leben und Werke der Heiligen Teresa von Jesus*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 41.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 42f; E. Stein, *Neue Bücher über die hl. Teresia von Jesus*, ESW 15, op. cit., p. 191.

⁶⁰³ E. Stein, *Die Seelenburg*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 49.

⁶⁰⁴ E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 22f.

to nurture her sisters to this.⁶⁰⁵ Other writers, specialists on Teresian spirituality, also took note of this. St Teresa of Avila said that the Lord wants works. This can be understood as voluntarism, i.e. as a requirement of more active engagement in the building of the kingdom, or more mystically, placing an emphasis on apostolic activity which should be first received from the Holy Spirit because the apostolate is fundamentally the answer to the love of God. St Teresa of Avila who conveyed an authentic mystical doctrine concerning apostolic activity presents an excellent example of the latter approach. She was of the opinion that apostolic effectiveness depends strictly on striving towards holiness, especially by means of internal prayer. Clear recognition of divine strength and mercy as well as man's weakness is essential for spiritual life, especially for apostolic life which is a response to the gift of the love of God Himself who is the main source of apostolic work. In order to be deeply committed to the works, the apostle should develop a *habitus* for seeking God. For St Teresa there was no conflict between seeking union with God, and the apostolate which should draw strength from the divine source. The fact that fulfillment of the work should be increasingly inspired by the divine spirit and not any other motives was of significance for her. It is contemplative prayer which causes such a 'broadening of the soul' that by faith, wider apostolic horizons are discovered in prayer, exceeding purely human projects, right up to the mystical marriage in which contemplation and action, symbolically portrayed by the evangelical Mary and Martha, are experienced in an unusually intense and harmonious way. Here, the Lord Himself fulfills His apostolic work through man. This goes to show that the imitation of Christ, whose food was to do the will of the Father, is the driving force of apostolic life. The works

⁶⁰⁵ E. Stein, *Eine Meisterin der Erziehungs- und Bildungsarbeit: Teresia von Jesus*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 104.

which St Teresa continually called upon have their source exclusively in love. The Christian apostolate consists of living and emitting love, because the soul, which loves, is essentially apostolic. Growth in love and apostolic enthusiasm are mutually related. The apostolate also contributes to the development of mystical life. Particularly interesting is the fact that, for St Teresa, the apostolate feeds contemplation. In her eyes it was a means of sanctification, and also a battlefield between light and darkness. Notably at the higher stages of spiritual life, in the sixth and seventh chambers, the activity acquires all its sanctifying efficiency since everything becomes an occasion for spiritual progress. Here, the action is as unifying as contemplation, as they are both overflowing with complete love. According to St Teresa, an apostle is called to experience a 'Passover of activity' so that he, as a result of long and painful purifications, comes to a level of detachment and receptivity which enables him to become obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. As a result of experiencing his spiritual poverty, the apostle discovers the absolute priority of God and the need to completely surrender himself to His mercy. That is why he places the fruits of the apostolic pains, which he received from God, into God's hands.⁶⁰⁶

Together with the modern spirituality of Sts Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, and Teresa of Avila, an openness to a world with new religious, cultural, and social problems occurred. Spirituality wanted to answer modern subjectivism by turning to an individual open to transcendence. This concerned the meeting with God according to theological virtues, as the original factor of the transformation of man and history. Ignatian spirituality is the spirituality of active struggle in the service of the Church. Sanjuanist spirituality is mystagogical, teaching the way to the union with God through

⁶⁰⁶ F. R. Wilhélem, *Dieu dans l'action. La mystique apostolique selon Thérèse d'Avila*, Venasque 1992, pp. 307–340.

the internal night of purification. The French School of spirituality is a spirituality of union with Christ, creating the centre of Christian life from His mysteries. The spirituality of Francis de Sales, through discernment of spirits, wants to steer the lives of all Christians all the way to the peak of holiness. Finally, Teresian spirituality is extremely contemplative, teaching the way of internal prayer, and serving the Church through contemplation. The aforementioned authors, who almost all had an enormous impact on Stein's spiritual development, all share significant elements of Christian spirituality, that is, action and contemplation, asceticism and mysticism, and Christian perfection and holiness, combining harmoniously in one whole. Different doses of these elements have enabled different schools of modern spirituality to exist.⁶⁰⁷ For Stein, St Teresa of Avila above all featured the perfect health of a soul overwhelmed with grace, and as a mystic who was filled with love for God, she was also a philosopher in the sense of a person loving divine wisdom.⁶⁰⁸ That wisdom has a clear apostolic dimension in as much as both Stein and Teresa of Avila understood the union with God to be the most important source of fruitful evangelisation. It has been written about both these women that, despite many differences, they were joined by a spiritual clarity, absolute independence, and also realism, restraint, and holy tenacity in fulfilling their aims.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁷ C. García, *Espiritualidad de los laicos*, op. cit., p. 63f.

⁶⁰⁸ E. Stein, *Neue Bücher über die hl. Teresia von Jesus*, ESW 15, op. cit., p. 189f.

⁶⁰⁹ J. I. Adamska, *Sól ziemi. Rzecz o Edycie Stein*, Poznań 1997, p. 82.



MERCY IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF EDITH STEIN

Especially since the times of St John Paul II, who canonised Sister Faustyna Kowalska and wrote the encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, mercy, both divine and human, has become a significant topic of theological reflection.⁶¹⁰ Of course, this is not a new subject; ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and the Stoics spoke about the subject of mercy, usually in a negative way.⁶¹¹ However, a certain causal relationship has been noticed between the blossoming devotion to Divine Mercy in the 20th century and the contemporary challenges for the Church and the world.⁶¹² No doubt, as Cardinal Walter Kasper recollected, the drama of WWII leads one to reflection on the subject of mercy.⁶¹³ One of the victims of that drama is Edith Stein, who became the saint and martyr Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Admittedly, the topic of mercy, and especially the term *Barmherzigkeit*, seldom occur in her writings, to such an extent that there is no mention of them whatsoever in her last work, *The Science of the Cross*, which is an expression of mature theological thinking. However, Stein, a patron of Europe, frequently interpreted events in her life as a display

⁶¹⁰ J. Zabielski, *Wydobywanie dobra. Teologia chrześcijańskiego miłosierdzia*, Białystok 2006, p. 11.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67–71.

⁶¹² W. Seremak SAC, *Miłosierdzie Boże a nowa ewangelizacja. Znaki czasu*, Lublin 2001, p. 398.

⁶¹³ W. Kasper, *Miłosierdzie. Klucz do chrześcijańskiego życia*, Poznań 2014, pp. 7–12.

of the working of divine mercy and, as a consequence, she subjected them to systematic reflection. This chapter will present the most important elements of that reflection.

If we acknowledge mercy to be a divine attribute which in an undeserved and free way turns towards creation with help, comfort, and forgiveness, then it should be admitted that such experiences of divine mercy accompanied Stein throughout her life in different ways. From childhood she was under her mother's influence, who, as a practicing Jew, understood that all successes in life are not the result of her own strengths, but God's help.⁶¹⁴ For Stein, finding Christ and becoming a Christian was also an act of divine mercy towards her as 'there is not much you can do in relation to what has been done for us'. As a result, in her opinion, it is necessary for one to surrender oneself to the workings of grace without resistance.⁶¹⁵ It is of general opinion that the descriptions cited earlier relating to the experience of *Geborgenheit* in Stein's analyses constitute a reflection on her own experiences when she witnessed the truth that God had bestowed mercy on her.⁶¹⁶

Such experiences of God meant that Stein often wished to turn to the supernatural in her academic lectures, since she had just one small truth to tell and that was how to start to live in nearness to the Lord.⁶¹⁷ Here we can understand her fascination with the figure of Saint Therese of Lisieux whose life, according to Stein, flowed exclusively from the source of divine love and was totally transformed by that love. Stein simply wrote that she had never known anything greater and therefore wished to arouse in herself and others even just a little

⁶¹⁴ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESW 7, op. cit., p. 35f.

⁶¹⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 188f.

⁶¹⁶ E. Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, op. cit., p. 170f.

⁶¹⁷ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 164f.

of that attitude.⁶¹⁸ As a Carmelite nun Stein assessed her ministerial vocation as an expression of exceptional divine mercy.⁶¹⁹ Within the context of her whole life, also in the perspective of the supreme sacrifice, Stein liked to compare herself to the Biblical Esther who was taken from her people to represent them before the king (see Est 4). She considered that she also had been chosen by a great and merciful (*barmherzig*) king.⁶²⁰ Stein tried to convey this experience of mercy to those close to her. To one of these people she wrote:

not only you do many bad things everyday – we all do that. But the Lord is patient and of a great mercy. In his economy of grace he can also use our mistakes if we place them on the altar for Him.⁶²¹

As Stein's research work was always the result of reflection on what had been occupying her in life, her theoretical comments to the experiences related to divine mercy should be sought out in her works.⁶²²

In both the Old and New testaments God revealed himself as merciful, mainly through care and forgiveness.⁶²³ Stein wrote that faith shows us a loving and merciful God in personal closeness. In the dimension of the relationship of mercy to man, it is possible to know God. That is how Stein interpreted the fact that God said to Moses

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., p 270; E. Stein, *Bildung und Entfaltung der Individualität*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 79.

⁶¹⁹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 237f.

⁶²⁰ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 332f.

⁶²¹ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 189.

⁶²² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESGA 4, op. cit., p. 143.

⁶²³ J. Zabielski, *Wydobywanie dobra. Teologia chrześcijańskiego miłosierdzia*, op. cit., p. 52f; E. Salmann, *Barmherzigkeit. II. Systematisch-theologisch*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 2006, col. 15.

“I am who I am” and added, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (see Ex 3). In her opinion, “I am who I am” is a truth which is not understandable, whereas being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob makes God comprehensible.⁶²⁴ Stein wrote here about the possibility of a personal encounter with the merciful God who nevertheless remains some kind of mystery. On the subject of atheism, she believed that the proclamation of the faith reached out to many who did not accept it. There could be natural reasons for this, but there are also cases where a mysterious weakness is at the basis: “the hour of grace has not yet come”.⁶²⁵ If, however, God touches man, He reveals Himself as an omnipotent power. If man seizes the divine hand which touches him, he finds perfect support and shelter. Then the almighty God stands before him as a merciful God, his hope and castle. Love for Him fulfills him and he feels carried by His love. Having said that, it is possible to refuse obedience to God, after which He remains present, but now represents a threat.⁶²⁶

Such an early, phenomenological, almost psychological sketch of the experience of mercy found later theological development in Stein’s reflections in the context of instruction on the subject of grace. For her, grace is the elevation of a created being through union with God.⁶²⁷ From St Augustine, Stein drew the idea that although free will (*liberum arbitrium*) was not completely extinguished in man after original sin, it was weakened to such an extent that since then nobody can believe in God if this is not preceded by the grace of divine

⁶²⁴ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 58f.

⁶²⁵ E. Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, op. cit., p. 183

⁶²⁶ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 192.

⁶²⁷ E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 373.

mercy.⁶²⁸ As the foregoing grace calls the sinner without any merit whatsoever on his own part, every step he then makes in the right direction and all progress in good is the work of this grace.⁶²⁹ Therefore, God is the maker of all good in the heart, all virtues and actions. Accepting the faith is also a result of the enlightenment and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Hence, for all free acts which have any significance for redemption, Stein believed that it was necessary to look for the cause in divine mercy.⁶³⁰ Due to this, Stein did not support the statement that if we want to believe without the grace of God, then mercy will be bestowed upon us if we do not take into consideration that the pursuit itself occurs upon the incentive of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the aid of grace cannot be seen as the answer to human humility and obedience, as they are themselves gifts of grace.⁶³¹ Also, if we are able to maintain our faith it is thanks to divine mercy.⁶³² By faith in Christ we gain God's righteousness (see Phil 3:8f).⁶³³

Stein stated that, the extent that we ourselves may merit the bestowal of any grace, we may also implore grace for others, since the Lord is not only righteous but also merciful.⁶³⁴ She had to take such a stance many times in relations with her nearest and dearest. Also acknowledging the limited possibilities of influencing her tutor, Edmund Husserl, in questions of faith, she emphasized the importance of prayer and sacrifice, combined with trust in divine mercy.⁶³⁵ She did not fear

⁶²⁸ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 73.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178f.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶³⁴ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 168.

⁶³⁵ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 108.

for his eternal fate because she believed that divine mercy is not limited to the visible Church.⁶³⁶ In this way dogmatic reflection on the topic of divine mercy descended into a heated discussion on eschatology. Nowadays, a stronger emphasis on divine mercy in eschatological issues is also noticeable.⁶³⁷ It has, of course, a connection to the general vision of God. At this point we can recollect that whilst still at university Stein rejected the particular casuistry of an orthodox Jew, Eduard Metis, to whom, by accident, she gave a file to hold on the Sabbath. When she apologized, he insisted that he had done nothing wrong as he had not left the flat and only carrying things on the street was forbidden.⁶³⁸ At that time the idea of ecclesiastical law with its rule that the salvation of souls should be the supreme law of the Church was more in line with Stein's way of thinking.⁶³⁹ She later wrote that humanity was not able to free itself from the slavery of sin by law. Divine mercy foresaw the road to salvation and promised a saviour. He was sent at a chosen time to lead mankind again to divine filiation.⁶⁴⁰

Considerations about divine mercy need to take on a Christological character, since the most complete revelation of Mercy is the mystery of the Incarnation, which reaches its peak in the death and resurrection of Christ.⁶⁴¹ Thus, although the books of the Old Testament painted a bright and suitably complete picture of mercy, something completely

⁶³⁶ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 300.

⁶³⁷ G. Kucza, *Ostateczne wydarzenia człowieka a Boże Miłosierdzie*, in: *Bóg bogaty w miłosierdzie*, red. L. Balter, Poznań 2003, p. 355f.

⁶³⁸ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 165f.

⁶³⁹ T. Schüller, *Barmherzigkeit. IV. Kirchenrechtlich*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 2, op. cit., col. 16.

⁶⁴⁰ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 84.

⁶⁴¹ A. Słomkowski, *Miłosierdzie Boże we Wcieleniu i Odkupieniu*, in: *Ewangelia Miłosierdzia*, red. W. Granat, Poznań 1970, pp. 49–112.

new was nevertheless required, and that was the example and sacrifice of Mercy Incarnate so that the Old Testament ethos could receive its deepest meaning.⁶⁴² In the New Testament, mercy is perceived in the context of the person and work of Jesus Christ, especially His Paschal Mystery.⁶⁴³ In many of Stein's works, her fascination with the Redeemer's mercy can be seen. She described Him as the example of perfect humanity. In her opinion, the more we get to know the Saviour shown in the Gospel, the more we become drawn into his sublimity, sweetness, and kingly freedom which know no bounds other than the will of the Father. In as much as He is free from all creation, His merciful love flows to it.⁶⁴⁴ Those who accepted the faith at the very beginning of Christianity did so because of a meeting with Jesus, with His word and outlook through which they could experience the divine. Stein wrote that, nowadays, people also become believers through meeting Him in the words of the Gospel, through the example of the lives of those who follow Christ, and through the mysterious force which draws us to the Church and makes us fall on our knees before the tabernacle.⁶⁴⁵

Contemporary devotion to Divine Mercy is related to the 'Jesus, I trust in You' painting, derived from the vision of St Faustyna.⁶⁴⁶ The very centre of the mystery portrayed is the pierced heart and side from which blood and water flow. It should be mentioned at this point

⁶⁴² J. Homerski, *Milosierdzie w księgach Starego Testamentu*, in: *Milosierdzie w postawie ludzkiej*, Homo Meditans, vol. 5, red. W. Słomka, Lublin 1989, p. 26.

⁶⁴³ I. Broer, *Barmherzigkeit*. I. *Biblich*, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 2, op. cit., col. 14f.

⁶⁴⁴ E. Stein, *Der Eigenwert der Frau in seiner Bedeutung für das Leben des Volkes*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 211.

⁶⁴⁵ E. Stein, *Rezension: Karl Adams Christusbuch*, "Die Christliche Frau" 3 (1933), p. 89.

⁶⁴⁶ J. Zabielski, *Wydobywanie dobra. Teologia chrześcijańskiego miłosierdzia*, op. cit., p. 166f.

that the Saviour's pierced side was often a subject of reflection for Stein. This concerns analogies on many levels. Stein saw, primarily, an analogy with intertrinitary life and family, especially the first one. In her opinion, as the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from both, in the same way woman comes from man, and they both produce children. God is love and love cannot exist if there are fewer than two persons.⁶⁴⁷ This symbolism of making the first woman from the side of the first man refers to the birth of the Church from the side of the Saviour. Stein often wrote of Mary as the new Eve at the side of Jesus, the new Adam.⁶⁴⁸ In one of her works she explains that Eve coming from the side of the first Adam is an archetype for the coming of the new Eve – Mary and the whole Church – from the open side of the new Adam.⁶⁴⁹ It is no accident that love, which is the basis of purity, is related in Stein's writings to the pierced heart of the Saviour, and in a similar vein, poverty is linked with the wounded hands, and obedience with the feet.⁶⁵⁰ The symbolism of the piercing of Jesus' heart, hands, and feet can be connected to the analysis of the subject of transverberation, i.e. the way God's love pierced the heart of St Teresa of Avila, to whom Stein felt a spiritual closeness.⁶⁵¹

Mercy in the sense of inter-personal relationships between people is a subject mainly dealt with by moral theology. It portrays mercy as a form of love which spontaneously turns to a second person in need of help. A merciful person suffers and, in solidarity with his neigh-

⁶⁴⁷ E. Stein, *Beruf des Mannes und der Frau nach Natur- und Gnadenordnung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 59.

⁶⁴⁸ E. Stein, *Probleme der neueren Mädchenbildung*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 177f.

⁶⁴⁹ E. Stein, *Aufgabe der Frau als Führerin der Jugend zur Kirche*, ESW 5, Freiburg im Breisgau 1959, pp. 191–193.

⁶⁵⁰ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 130–132.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–69; E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESW 8, op. cit., p. 325.

bour, tries to remove everything which may inhibit his development. An example of such an attitude was shown by Christ in the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Lk 10:33f), who noticed, sympathized with, and took definite action to help a victim. In the history of Catholic theology, these particular elements of mercy are highlighted in different ways.⁶⁵² Contemporary mercy is treated as a vocation, imposing a real obligation. In religious-moral life and the mission of the Christian, merciful love is the behavioural norm.⁶⁵³ Mercy, according to the teachings of St John Paul II, as an act of merciful love, consists of the common experience of the goodness inherent to every human person and of the common experience of its dignity.⁶⁵⁴ This is how Stein understood mercy. She learned in her own home about concern for the needy and poor, particularly by observing the attitude of her mother, Augusta.⁶⁵⁵ Such readiness to help in material matters stayed with Stein throughout her life and can be best seen in her correspondence with Roman Ingarden, who was the head of a family that had financial problems.⁶⁵⁶ The foundation for this stance was spiritual poverty. Stein never attached much importance to wealth and luxury. As a Christian and especially as a Carmelite nun, she wished to imitate the poverty of Jesus and Mary.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵² Tomasz z Akwinu, *Summa theologica*, II-II, q. 30, a. 3; A. Elsässer, *Barmherzigkeit*. III. *Theologisch-ethisch*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 20p. cit., col. 15f; B. Ferdek, *Milosierdzie*, in: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, op. cit., p. 518f.

⁶⁵³ F. Greniuk, *Czynić miłosierdzie drugim*, in: *Milosierdzie w postawie ludzkiej*, op. cit., p. 59.

⁶⁵⁴ J. Zabielski, *Wydobywanie dobra. Teologia chrześcijańskiego miłosierdzia*, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶⁵⁵ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESW 7, op. cit., p. 34f.

⁶⁵⁶ E. Stein, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden*, ESW 14, op. cit., p. 217.

⁶⁵⁷ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 139–142.

In analysing the various forms of monastic and conventual life, Stein paid special attention to those orders where active mercy was a principal vocation. She believed that acts of neighbourly love were closer to the spirituality and charism of the female orders.⁶⁵⁸ The increase in the need for engaging women in works of mercy is evidence, according to Stein, for the possibility of increasing the appreciation of their role within the Church.⁶⁵⁹ Many examples of the creative works of merciful consecrated woman can be found in Stein's writings. Above all, she depicted St Teresa of Avila as a person who enjoyed giving alms to the poor.⁶⁶⁰ Stein also extensively portrayed mercy in the life of St Elizabeth of Hungary. Even the whirl of court life did not manage to smother her goodness and mercy. She helped the poor by giving them food, drink, and a comforting word. In times of famine she distributed the food reserves, despite the objections of the courtiers. She was not afraid of others' defiance. The hardheartedness and egoism of the rich was painful for her. After her husband's death she became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and a sister of the poor. From that time onwards, the only thing which made her happy was caring for the sick and giving alms to the needy.⁶⁶¹ Additionally Stein described the life of Sister Marie-Aimée de Jésus, from the Carmelite convent on Avenue de Saxe in Paris as 'a page from the great book of Divine Mercy'. When she was six years old she was sent for education to the Sisters of Mercy where she shared food and religious education with the poor children. This bearing stayed with her throughout her life.⁶⁶² These examples confirm Stein's convictions that, through-

⁶⁵⁸ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe*, ESW 5, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁵⁹ E. Stein, *Probleme der Frauenbildung*, ESW 5, op. cit., pp. 106–108.

⁶⁶⁰ E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., pp. 42–45.

⁶⁶¹ E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur religiösen Bildung*, ESW 12, op. cit., pp. 128–138; E. Stein, *Verborgenes Leben*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 28n.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 101–105.

out its history, the Church has organised different kinds of works of mercy from the service of the deacons and material help for sisterly communities, through the charitable activity of religious institutions, fraternities, and hospitals in the Middle Ages up until the modern forms of *Caritas* organisations.⁶⁶³

Teaching the subject of Divine Mercy was not central in the theological reflection of the Church during Stein's lifetime. Naturally, mercy as a divine attribute and man's duty is a subject which is inseparable from Christianity. Stein wrote that she interpreted her path in life as an expression of the works of the grace of Divine Mercy. Her experiences are an occasion for deeper theological contemplation on the topic of God's mercy revealed in Jesus Christ. It is also an opportunity for portraying mercy in inter-personal human relationships. It seems that Stein's fate as a martyr during WWII should constitute a reminder that in a culture based on Divine Mercy, what matters is the protection of man as a person who is bestowed with inalienable dignity, reasonable and free, naturally social, called to love, a subject of and participant in God's plans. The life of man and mankind must develop on the foundation of a living common moral culture. Bearing this in mind, democracy should not only take on an economical model of productivity and consumerism, but it should undertake new common efforts in order to build a society able to share material and spiritual wealth.⁶⁶⁴ Without mercy it is not possible to build and deepen a civilisation of love. In the face of the ideology of hatred and class struggle, Christianity indicates the true equality and internationalism expressed by Saint Paul in his letter to the Galatians (3:28). Perceiving human sinfulness, Christianity highlights the mystery of mercy from

⁶⁶³ B. Ferdek, *Miłosierdzie*, op. cit., pp. 519–522.

⁶⁶⁴ P. Warchoł, *Miłosierny Bóg i miłosierny człowiek. Teologiczna interpretacja miłosierdzia w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Wrocław 2007, p. 265f.

which flows the duty to give a helping hand in every situation.⁶⁶⁵ One of the expressions of a merciful attitude to our neighbours is unquestionably the desire of expiation for the sins of people. This will be the subject for reflection in the last chapter.

⁶⁶⁵ A. Nossol, *Personalistyczno-humanistyczny aspekt w doznawaniu i świadczeniu miłosierdzia*, in: *Miłosierdzie w postawie ludzkiej*, op. cit., p. 51.



THE EXPIATIONAL DIMENSION OF SPIRITUALITY

The centenary of the apparitions of the Holy Mother at Fatima, which took place in 2017, constitutes an occasion for theological reflection on the significant elements of the spiritual message related to this event. The message of Fatima heavily emphasizes the requirement for penance not only for our own sins, but also the sins of those close to us. In particular, in the second aspect of penance, apart from prayer, it is necessary to make sacrifices pleading for the grace of conversion and compensating for evil which is always a turning away from God. An important element of the event at Fatima is expiation and reparation. The concept of reparation or expiation indicates a situation in which atonement must be made on behalf of somebody who has been harmed. This can be made by the guilty person, or by someone else in his name. Although some authors suggest a difference between reparation undertaken by the sinner and expiation carried out by another person, theological dictionaries most frequently treat the concept interchangeably.⁶⁶⁶ Therefore, expiation in Stein's current reflections on the subject of reparation will be treated in the same way. She dealt with expiation in various circumstances including the theory of a state,

⁶⁶⁶ T. Paszkowska, *Zadośćuczynienie, ekspiacja*, in: *Leksykon duchowości franciszkańskiej*, Kraków–Warszawa 2016, red. E. Kumka, col. 2188; *Ekspiacja*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 4, red. M. Krąpiec, Lublin 1989, col. 814.

notably based on the reflections of Dietrich von Hildebrand.⁶⁶⁷ More significant for us is the theological-spiritual aspect which comes from Stein's own life experiences. In the following reflections of this last chapter, expiation in Old Testament terms will be presented, as it was for Stein, the basis for further Christological contemplation coming to fruition in her spiritual life through the desire for prayer and sacrifice on behalf of her nearest and dearest.

Stein grew up in the Jewish culture. In the Old Testament the idea of expiation is well known. It is presented as something freely done, out of love for God, often through the offering sacrifices especially for atonement for sins.⁶⁶⁸ Surely, the best-known Old Testament story about sacrifice, in which we can find the concept of substitution, is the attempt to offer Isaac as a sacrifice by Abraham (Gen 22:1–19). The story tells how the father, Abraham, was led by God to the redeeming of his firstborn son by the sacrifice of an animal.⁶⁶⁹ The classic use of the idea of 'instead' can be seen here which is also characteristic of the workings of expiation.

However, the most characteristic symbol of expiational sacrifice is the Old Testament scapegoat. For René Girard it is one of the fundamental strains in the founding myths of different civilisations. The ritual of driving out a scapegoat was recorded in chapter 16 of the Book of Leviticus. When the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was celebrated in autumn, sacrificing a bullock was part of the ceremony in which two goats also had a part. They were taken up to the high priest who randomly marked one of them for a sin offering, whilst he laid his hands

⁶⁶⁷ E. Stein, *Eine Untersuchung über den Staat*, op. cit., pp. 103–108.

⁶⁶⁸ Z. Pałubska, *Zadośćuczynienie*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 20, red. E. Gigilewicz, Lublin 2014, col. 1168f.

⁶⁶⁹ R. Clifford, R. Murphy, *Genesis in: The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, London 1996, p. 26.

on the second goat and confessed all the iniquities and transgressions of the children of Israel. Then, the animal, on which the sins of the community had been laid, was driven out into the wilderness for Azazel. Of course, just as in the case of the sacrifice of Isaac, the reference of the scapegoat to Christ seems to impose itself. Innocent, driven out of the community, He dies for the sins of mankind. Nevertheless, for the most distinguished theologians, this scene is not about substitution for punishment. For St Thomas Aquinas the scapegoat signifies the effect of the sacrifice. Consequently, thanks to the sacrifice of Christ, sin was expelled from both the holy community, and the Church.⁶⁷⁰

Stein knew the story and understood it in her own particular way. We know her interpretation of the above Old Testament writings from the period when she was already a Christian. She inevitably wrote about them in the light of the New Testament. At any rate, the meaning of the Jewish festival of Atonement during which, as she wrote, the high priest made a sacrifice for the people, remained firmly fixed in her memory.⁶⁷¹ In her autobiography *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie* Stein recollected the years which she had spent in her family home. At that time she considered the Day of Atonement to be the most important Jewish festival. When the temple still existed the high priest would offer up a sacrifice for the people in the Holy of Holies. Stein added that also on this day all the sins of the people were placed upon the scapegoat and it was driven out into the wilderness. Those traditions had disappeared, but this special day was celebrated with prayer and fasting when Stein was still alive. It should be added that this was a special day for Stein as her birthday also fell on the Day of Atonement, and her mother also considered this festival as the real

⁶⁷⁰ M. Paluch, *Traktat o zbawieniu*, in: *Dogmatyka*, vol. 3, Warszawa 2006, pp. 448f., 458.

⁶⁷¹ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14.09.1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 127.

anniversary of her birth.⁶⁷² For those who analyse Stein's life, the fact that she was born on Yom Kippur, on the Day of Atonement and remembrance of the dead, appears to be a mysterious buckle connecting the beginning and the end of her life to each other.⁶⁷³

Stein believed that the real sacrifice of atonement was Jesus Christ. Just as He was killed and exalted, so all who are called to the Supper of the Lamb have, in her opinion, to go through suffering and the Cross.⁶⁷⁴ Stein wrote that although everybody has to suffer and die, through the bond with Christ suffering and death take on a redemptive character. In the economy of redemption they can be used for saving enslaved sinners.⁶⁷⁵ Here we are approaching the core of the interpretation of the Old Testament sacrifice, in particular the symbol of the scapegoat in the light of Christ's mystery. Stein wanted to help free sinners by sacrificing her life. At this point her exceptional bond with the Jewish nation throughout her whole life should not be forgotten. The awareness of her responsibility for her nation became most apparent during her arrest when she said to her sister, Rosa, the words: "Come, let us go for our people."⁶⁷⁶

We can find another Old Testament story in Stein's works which is connected to the idea of expiation. In one of her letters from 1938, she wrote about the difficult situation of her relatives saying,

If they only knew where to go! 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

⁶⁷² E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., pp. 43–46.

⁶⁷³ B. Albrecht, *Edith Stein – Gelebtes Evangelium*, Vallendar–Schönstatt 1991, p. 18f.

⁶⁷⁴ E. Stein, *Hochzeit des Lammes. Zum 14. 09. 1940*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 128f.

⁶⁷⁵ E. Stein, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*, op. cit., p. 203f.

⁶⁷⁶ K. Albert, *Philosophie im Schatten von Auschwitz*, Dettelbach 1995, p. 68f.

of them. I keep having to think of Queen Esther who was taken from among her people precisely 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.⁶⁷⁷

Stein alludes here to Esther the Israelite, who was related to Mardocheus and the main heroine of the book bearing her name. Esther, the wife of Ahasuerus, traditionally identified as Xerxes I, saved her nation from the destruction which threatened the Jews of the Persian diaspora due to the advances of Haman, who was a high-level courtier of the king. In remembrance of that event, the Jewish holiday of Purim is celebrated in Israel. Some of the texts about Esther pertain in Roman liturgy to Mary as the queen and advocate of the people of God.⁶⁷⁸ As can be seen, Stein related them to herself as well. As a Carmelite nun, she edited a dialogue entitled *Nächtliche Zwiesprache*, in which we can find the autobiographical motive of Esther, who noted the beginnings of the Church in her chosen people.⁶⁷⁹ This thought allows us to make the next step in the form of deepening the Christocentric idea of expiation.

In the New Testament, the act of Christ who, as God-man, gave His life as a ransom for many (see Mt 20:28) has the character of expiation. Therefore, the central point in Christian theology is occupied by the concept of Jesus as the intermediary who makes reconciliation for the sins of the people before God. Jesus became man and sacrificed Himself to the Father in order to deliver humanity from sin. Man can join in His atonement by working with Him in the act

⁶⁷⁷ E. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters 1916–1942*, The Collected Works of Edith Stein vol. 5, trans. by J. Koeppl O.C.D. Washington D.C. 2016, no. 281.

⁶⁷⁸ R. Rubinkiewicz, *Estera*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 4, op. cit., col. 1139.

⁶⁷⁹ E. Stein, *Nächtliche Zwiesprache*, ESW 11, Freiburg im Breisgau 1987, p. 170.

of redemption which is on-going in the Church. Human experience of guilt before God calls for the need of expiation in order to be reconciled with Him in the mysteries of the sacraments, especially penance and the Eucharist.⁶⁸⁰ These fundamental Catholic teachings on the subject of atonement are also found in Stein's works. Notably in her theological anthropology in the book, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, she analyses the original condition of man, his fall from grace into original sin, and the state of redemption merited for us by the God-man, Jesus Christ.⁶⁸¹ In Stein's theological reflections, many trains of thought about salvation can be found in which she emphasized the role of Christ's redemptive act. In her opinion, God became man so that the sons of man could become the sons of God.⁶⁸² She wrote that Christ suffered for all people, and that if redemption is not used, then it should be connected to a human lack of faith.⁶⁸³ Already in her very early works Stein wrote that faith in unlimited divine love and grace justifies hope in universal atonement, nevertheless, through fundamentally possible resistance to grace, there still remains the possibility of eternal damnation.⁶⁸⁴

Stein is of the opinion that through suffering and death Christ redeemed the sins of all people, and through this action took away the ancestral sin which burdens all Adam's children. However, in His

⁶⁸⁰ Z. Pałubska, *Zadośćuczynienie*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 20, op. cit., col. 1168f.

⁶⁸¹ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., pp. 15–25.

⁶⁸² E. Stein, *Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit*, ESW 15, op. cit., p. 200.

⁶⁸³ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 87f.

⁶⁸⁴ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, ESW 6, op. cit., p. 159.

work which was performed for the entire human race, only those who belong to the Redeemer have any part in it. This belonging is gained through faith in Him and through keeping his commandments.⁶⁸⁵ Stein listed the steps which prepare for justification; they are the acceptance of faith caused by grace, turning freely to God, and accepting His Revelation in faith, awakening hope and love for Him and then undertaking penance and the decision for baptism, and finally starting a new life in accordance with God's commandments.⁶⁸⁶

Thus, in Stein's works, participation in the Christly atonement has not only a theological character but also a clearly sacramental one. The condition for justification is baptism which, together with the remission of sins, bestows the infused virtues: faith, hope, and love.⁶⁸⁷ In baptism and the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, the blood of Christ washes away sins, and opens the eyes to eternal life, the ears to hearing God's word, and the lips to prayers of adoration. In the sacrament of confirmation Christ marks and strengthens a Christian to bravely profess the faith.⁶⁸⁸ The sacramental dimension of participation in the Christly atonement attains its zenith when the Eucharistic truth, i.e. the presence of the Saviour in the Holy Sacrament, the daily renewal of His sacrifice on the altar, and the Saviour's desire to unite with every soul in the sacrament of Communion, effectively work in the life of man.⁶⁸⁹ Stein emphasized the significance of this free act, the conscious participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice, in other words, offering oneself together with gifts to God, and the partaking

⁶⁸⁵ E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, ESW 17, op. cit., p. 86.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 104–106.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106f; E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ESW 2, op. cit., p. 475f.

⁶⁸⁸ E. Stein, *Das Gebet der Kirche*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 24.

⁶⁸⁹ E. Stein, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, ESGA 16, op. cit., p. 64.

of Christ in the communion.⁶⁹⁰ The sacrament of the Eucharist had an exceptionally expiatory and propitiatory meaning for Stein. When writing about a situation where word and example are insufficient to turn somebody away from sin, she suggested, above all, turning towards the strength which pours out of the sacrifice of redemption.⁶⁹¹ In her letters she also expressed faith in the power of a mass offered for someone's intention.⁶⁹²

The concept of expiation and participation in justification brought by Christ cannot be understood in the right way without the dimension of ecclesiastical solidarity. According to Stein, Christ founded the Church because it is God's will that man should grow in a society. Due to the fact that through original sin the entire human race fell, returning to God is only possible via a redeemed society.⁶⁹³ Without this internal binding of all people in one Body, it would not be possible to explain the mystery of original sin and Redemption.⁶⁹⁴ Therefore, if the breaking of social interpersonal bonds is the result of the destruction of the union with God, this social situation can only be cured by reforming the relationship with Him. The redemptive act of Christ merited this for all people.⁶⁹⁵ Union with Christ in the Church enables solidarity which is an extremely significant factor for expiation.

This does not only concern the mediation of Mary and the saints, but also those thoughts of Stein which were formulated whilst re-

⁶⁹⁰ E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, ESGA 14, op. cit., p. 162f.

⁶⁹¹ E. Stein, *Christliches Frauenleben*, ESGA 13, op. cit., p. 108f.

⁶⁹² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 364.

⁶⁹³ E. Stein, *Die theoretischen Grundlagen der sozialen Bildungsarbeit*, ESGA 16, Freiburg im Breisgau 2001, p. 17f.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

flecting on her own conversion, namely that mediation may also be accomplished by praying for grace for a neighbour.⁶⁹⁶ In her opinion, on the grounds of merit one may implore grace for others, since the Lord is not only righteous but also merciful.⁶⁹⁷ An example of this can be found not only in her constantly praying for relatives and especially her mother, but also, as has already been pointed out, in the face of her helplessness and a lack of influence over Edmund Husserl's religious stance, Stein emphasized the importance of prayer and sacrifice combined with faith in divine mercy.⁶⁹⁸ It appears that the particular spirituality of St John of the Cross inclined her to reflect on the compensating dimension of suffering in union with Christ. In 1934 she wrote that voluntary suffering as an act of reparation is what most deeply connects us to the Lord. Stein distinguished this from the natural fleeing from suffering and from the perverse seeking them for pleasure. She believed that the desire to suffer in reparation is only available for those whose spiritual sight is open to the supernatural relationships of the history of the world. This is possible for people living by the Spirit of Christ, as only in union with Christ does human suffering gain the power of reparation.⁶⁹⁹

The substitution model is the most commodious of the ways of explaining redemption related to the death of Jesus Christ. This is about representation. Nevertheless, substitution does not mean transferring the guilt, but rather solidarity. A request directed to God by a just person, or the suffering undertaken in reparation for a sinner may

⁶⁹⁶ E. Stein, *Die ontische Struktur der Person und ihre Erkenntnistheoretische Problematik*, op. cit., p. 160f.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶⁹⁸ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 108.

⁶⁹⁹ E. Stein, *Kreuzesliebe. Einige Gedanken zum Fest des hl. Vaters Johannes vom Kreuz*, ESW 11, op. cit., p. 122f.

replace the sinner's own calling for grace.⁷⁰⁰ As previous analyses have proved, the awareness of having offended the Lord by committing sins awakens the need to apologise to Him, along with the need for propitiatory prayer, undertaking voluntary sacrifices, and accepting suffering.⁷⁰¹ After her conversion, this expiational stance accompanied Stein throughout her life and especially in her vocation as a Carmelite nun. Atonement for the sins of the world constituted an important element in religious life in Stein's eyes. She wrote about the existence of the calling to suffer with Christ which is incorporated in the great work of Redemption. This was, in her opinion, the fundamental way of thinking for all religious life, especially in Carmel.⁷⁰² Stein's desire to plead for God's grace for those close to her was covered extensively in the chapter about prayer. As she understood it, this was the fulfillment of a mission along the lines of that of the biblical Esther, which has already been discussed. Daniel Krochmalnik compared Stein's initiative in 1933, when she wanted to go to visit the pope to ask for an encyclical to be written against anti-Semitism, with the acts of the Old Testament figure. When her request for the audience with the pope was refused, she wrote a letter interceding on behalf of the Jewish nation.⁷⁰³ Likewise in the light of scandals within the Church she took the stance of atonement and an even greater fidelity of vocation.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ M. Paluch, *Traktat o zbawieniu*, op. cit., p. 365f.

⁷⁰¹ Z. Pałubska, *Zadośćuczynienie*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 20, op. cit., col. 1168f.

⁷⁰² E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Erster Teil (1916–1933)*, ESGA 2, op. cit., p. 254.

⁷⁰³ D. Krochmalnik, *Edith Stein – Der Weg einer Jüdin zum Katholizismus*, in: *Erinere dich – vergiß es nicht. Edith Stein – christlich-jüdische Perspektiven*, Hg. W. Herbstrith, Essen 1990, pp. 98–102.

⁷⁰⁴ E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen. Zweiter Teil (1933–1942)*, ESGA 3, op. cit., p. 291f.

Over time Stein's reflections on the subject of atonement connected more and more with the intuition of making the ultimate sacrifice. In an act of devotion on 26 March 1939 she asked that, if it were possible, she might offer herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement, and that the rule of the Antichrist might end without another world war.⁷⁰⁵ In a will from that year Stein wrote that joyfully accepted the death which the Lord had destined for her. She asked Him to accept her life and death for His honour, for all the intentions of His Sacred Heart, for those of Mary and of the Holy Church, for the preservation, sanctification, and perfecting of the Carmelite order, and in atonement (*zur Sühne*) for the faithlessness of the Jewish nation. She offered herself so that Jesus could be received by his own nation, so that His Kingdom could come in glory to save Germany and peace in the world, and finally for family members living and dead and for all those whom God had given her, so that none of them should be lost.⁷⁰⁶ During the cleaning of Stein's cell in the convent at Echt, a picture was found which had a message on the reverse side saying that she, Edith, offers her life for maintaining peace.⁷⁰⁷ In the light of these testimonies, not only Stein's life, but her martyr's death may be interpreted as an intercessory sacrifice along the lines of the life of Queen Esther.⁷⁰⁸

In the letter to Pius XI, which has already been mentioned, Stein, petitioning on behalf of the persecuted Jews, foresaw that the silence of the Church would not buy long-term peace with the German gov-

⁷⁰⁵ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 373.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 374f.

⁷⁰⁷ T. R. de Spiritu Sancto, *Edith Stein. Schwester Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, Philosophin und Karmelitin, Ein Lebensbild, gewonnen aus Erinnerungen und Briefen durch Schwester Teresia Renata de Spiritu Sancto*, Nürnberg 1948, p. 221.

⁷⁰⁸ R. Leuven, *Heil im Unheil*, ESW 10, op. cit., p. 148f.

ernment. In her opinion the fight against Catholicism would be conducted quietly and in a less brutal way than the one against Judaism, but, nevertheless it would not be less systematic.⁷⁰⁹ Stein's predictions came true, and bizarrely, her own fate united, in the idea of the expiation, the message of Yom Kippur and the acts of Queen Esther with participation in the sacrifice of Christ. Even in Stein's death the symbolism of the scapegoat can be seen as the Nazis deported her together with her sister, Rosa on 2nd August 1942.⁷¹⁰ This happened after a bold pastoral letter by the Dutch bishops in the defense of the Jews.⁷¹¹ Admittedly, as a result of the remonstrative telegram, the Nazis promised to waive the deportation of Christians of Jewish origin that had been baptised before 1941, but the bishops cared about the fate of all Jews. That is why that powerful and unambiguous letter was read out in the churches. Paradoxically, this was the voice of the hierarchy which Stein had expected and demanded in her letter to the pope. The answer to this was the Nazi's decision to kill Catholic Jews from Holland.⁷¹² Among them was Stein, who was murdered in the concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau most probably on 9th August 1942.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁹ M. A. Neyer OCD, *Der Brief Edith Steins an Papst Pius XI*, "Edith Stein Jahrbuch" 10 (2004), p. 18f.

⁷¹⁰ E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie*, ESGA 1, op. cit., p. 38of.

⁷¹¹ W. Herbstrith, *Edith Stein im Kölner und Echter Karmel in der Zeit der Judenverfolgung*, "Edith Stein Jahrbuch" 3 (1997), p. 409.

⁷¹² *Hirtenbrief der Katholischen Bischöfe in den Niederlanden*, in: *Passion im August (2.-9. August 1942)*, ed. A. Mohr, E. Prégardier, Plöger 1995, pp. 41-45; M. A. Neyer, *Edith Stein (Schwester Teresia Benedicta a Cruce OCD)*, Köln 1987, p. 67f.

⁷¹³ W. Herbstrith, *Edith Stein – Gestalt des Widerstands im Nationalsozialismus*, op. cit., p. 77.



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Edith Stein remains one of the most fascinating figures of the 20th century. Her life and exceptional wealth of literary output are an inspiration for many researchers from different areas of the humanities. Undoubtedly theologians of spirituality belong to this group. This is because she carried out research which today would be regarded as being interdisciplinary. For theologians of spirituality the most important is that she proficiently moved through the realms of philosophy, theology, psychology, and pedagogy. The contemporary Dominican author, Innocenzio Colosio stated that a theologian of spirituality must be *au fait* in dogmatics, moral theology, psychology, Biblical studies, ecclesiology, sacramentology, and liturgics.⁷¹⁴ Stein fulfilled those requirements to the fullest, and that is why her reflections have a huge influence on the methodology of the theology of spirituality. Most important were her critical analyses of idealism and her emphasizing of cognitive realism which breaks with skepticism in the face of the possibility of knowing the truth, opens new horizons of trust towards spiritual experience, and which is a genuine relationship with God, focused on the real “object” as opposed to the imaginary one. Thanks to her creative confrontation with phenomenology and Thomism,

⁷¹⁴ I. Colosio, *Suggerimenti metodologici per ricerche storiche nel campo della spiritualità*, “Rivista di Ascetica e Mistica” 10 (1965), pp. 492–508.

Stein belongs to an avant-garde of theologians of spirituality who portray the theological sphere in the perspective of phenomenological description of experienced reality, assessed in the light of Divine Revelation and the truths of faith taught by the Church. They constitute the nucleus of the popular bottom-up approach, the method of enriching natural knowledge by revelation.

It would have been sufficient in itself to deal with the heritage of this Carmelite nun. However, formal issues are only the beginning of an exceptional wealth of theological/spiritual content which can be found in her works. In terms of spirituality, the fact that most of her works focus on composing a pertinent anthropological vision is of utmost significance. Having said that, it is neither a kind of anthropocentrism nor a flat horizontality. Stein always perceived man in terms of his relationship with God. A person capable of meeting the Absolute, open to transcendence is, as Stein saw it, on the way to a union with God. This can happen largely due to the theological virtues. However, Stein's immense contribution to the understanding of Christian spirituality could be her continuous emphasizing of the deeply biblical, bodily-spiritual unity of man. This enhances the understanding of the fact that Christian spirituality is not primarily related to researching the human spirit, but to the spiritual experience of the divine spirit which encompasses the whole person that Stein investigated in the dimensions of human nature, gender, and individual characteristics.

This anthropological vision helps in the understanding of the evolution of spiritual experience, which works in different dimensions. In Stein's literary output, it seems that the dimension which is the most profound is that of the union with God thanks to faith, hope, and love. The issue of faith in particular may be the key to opening up the understanding of all of her works. As she saw it, faith is one of the three ways of knowing God, between the natural light of the intellect and the mystical experience. In a certain way, these are the analogues

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to moments of religious faith in the form of believing in the existence of God, accepting the truths which He revealed, and placing trust in His guidance. This process of union with God is, according to Stein, connected to a painful turning away from everything which impedes the way. The path to God is always the way of the Cross, preferential love for the Creator, which never assumes any form of contempt for creatures. The spirituality of the Cross which Stein writes about in compliance with the classic masters, may these days be an adjustment to the incarnational spirituality, in her overly optimistic view on the usage of creatures and taking for granted the spiritual value of suffering.

The union with God can also be presented as striving for perfection or holiness. For Stein this was linked to a threefold realism: childlike, holy, and artistic. Divine filiation and spiritual childhood, which are so important in spirituality today, fascinated Stein from the very first contact she had with the writings of St Teresa of Lisieux. The way she saw it was that the realism of the child provides a fertile ground for growth in holiness. Although Stein never did suggest such congruence, combining these two realisms with the third artistic one can be associated with the most important transcendentals, in other words, with truth, goodness, and beauty, and assumes the need for western spirituality to open up to the dimension of beauty which is so important for the East. Experiencing God as Truth, Goodness, and Beauty occurs in Stein's life and works and in her prayer, particularly the liturgical. In Christian spirituality, it is difficult to overestimate the meaning of Eucharistic piety, which was incredibly significant in Edith Stein's life. Many valuable comments and observations can be found in her works on the subject of virtually all kinds and forms of prayer from vocal, through meditation, to contemplation.

The last throws the door open wide to the vast dimension of mystical experience. In this respect, Stein's life is especially intriguing as it shows

that experiencing God is a gift which is not limited by any conditions. God can touch a non-believer and together with this experience, simultaneously pour faith into his or her heart. This allows for a broad interpretation of the essence of the mystical experience, which cannot be reserved for the enclosure of contemplative orders, but according to the modern-day approach to spirituality may touch anybody, including those in the world. In the sphere of mysticism, Stein provides us with valuable material about the symbolic language for expressing things which are inexpressible. She uses above all the metaphor of light and the lack of it – darkness – together with all the possible states in between the two, be they called twilight, or dusk and dawn. For Stein, twilight provided an occasion for reflection about the twilight of life, the twilight of world-view, and the twilight of the natural light of reason which the spirit leads to the peak of mystical experience of God through the night.

In Stein's works, many important facts were written on the subject of the spirituality of the states of the life in the Church. These comments which are directed to lay people, especially married couples and parents, to the clergy, and to consecrated people are, in many aspects, convergent with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the great exhortations by St John Paul II: *Christifideles laici*, *Pastores dabo vobis*, and *Vita consecrata*. Stein introduced an especially intuitive train of thought by searching for an analogy between the intertrinitary relations of the Divine Persons, and the human family whose beginning is included in the Book of Genesis. Thus, as the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds from them both, so the woman came into being from the first man and offspring from them both. Marital and family spirituality are included in Stein's works in a more general reflection on the subject of gender relations, which constitutes the foundations for describing the divergent spiritualities of men and women. Likewise, in this case, Stein referred back to the be-

ginnings to show how the threefold calling of the first people to be an image of God, raise children, and rule over the earth is performed in different ways for both genders. These observations, underlining equality in mankind and the gender difference, appear to be exceedingly pertinent in the modern world with modern-day discussions about gender ideology, feminist equality, and differential feminism.⁷¹⁵

Stein's contemplation on the spirituality of priests and the religious is also of value. In this case too, traditional reflections bound to the spirituality of the Cross can rectify contemporary accents. Highlighting the priestly ministry of the word is quite correct, but it cannot be at the cost of forgetting about the Sacrifice. Of significance for priestly spirituality is placing the accent of Eucharistic piety on the Sacrifice of Calvary more than on the Last Supper, as it helps in recollecting the whole dimension of sacrifices, asceticism, prayer, and chastity which is so necessary in the lives of priests and consecrated people. Similarly, the essence of consecrated life, which depends on imitating Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient, inspired Stein to create a beautiful vision of the religious vows as nails. Poverty nails the hands to the cross, obedience nails the feet, and thanks to chastity the heart is united with the pierced side of the Saviour.

Stein also wrote about spiritual education, which is understood as an integral formation of the whole person on the path to formation in the likeness of Christ and becoming *alter Christus*. There is no doubt that her reflections on Christian education, its goals, means, and both its subjective and objective aspects, remain an inspiration today, especially her idea of Eucharistic formation. This topic is related to the entire evangelisation dimension, wherein its essential features

⁷¹⁵ Por. H. B. Gerl-Falkovitz, *Zapomnieć o cielesności aż do ekskarnacji. Droga od feminizmu do gender*, in: *Gender. Spojrzenie krytyczne*, red. J. Jagiełło, D. Oko, Kielce 2016, p. 43.

reflect what St John Paul II called the new evangelisation. The dimension of gratitude for the gift of faith, the dimension of the aim of evangelisation which leads to experiencing God and conversion, and also the conviction that every person is responsible for conveying the faith through a joyful testimony of life and prayer is, in a surprising way, compatible with the exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium* by Pope Francis. For Catholic spirituality, the apostolic and evangelical aspects of contemplation which Stein learned from St Teresa of Avila and emphasized in her own works, are also of great importance.

Finally, it is worth noting two very topical and somewhat complementary forms of spirituality, namely mercy and expiation. For Stein it was obvious that everything is grace and that God's mercy is freely given. Nevertheless, man in his freedom must want to accept this gift of grace. At this point a wide scope for expiation, atonement for one's own and others sins, and the idea of ecclesiastical solidarity and substitution opened up for her, by which it could be possible to overcome the modern, individualistic approach to spirituality which often disregards the common responsibility for the redemption of our neighbours. Stein's life spans from her birth on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement for sins, which is connected to the scapegoat ritual, and the martyr's death which she accepted in order to intercede before God on behalf of her family and friends and in particular for the Jewish nation in the highest possible way, which is reminiscent of the biblical Esther. As the contents of this book show, this symbolic buckle binds together the fate of a woman whose spiritual experience constitutes a genuine mine of information and inspiration for each person who, with heartfelt sincerity, is looking for a deeper bond with God.



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