

We Can Learn from a Contemporary Saint: Edith Stein

Leader: Voices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 those to the left of leader around the table.....

Hymn: “Tree of Life” (CBW III #373, verses 1-3)

Leader: Yesterday was the feast day of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, or Edith Stein. It would be wise for us to learn of this contemporary woman who became a saint for our times.

Let us pray for those people who have been crushed by the forces of evil, even in our own days, may they be granted an inner strength to overcome their difficulties, we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer!

Voice 1: Edith Stein lived in Germany from 1891 to 1942. She was a brilliant student and philosopher, a frank and encouraging friend, and a teacher with a special gift for drawing out the promise of her students.

Leader: St. Edith Stein still found ways to go on with her life, prepared to halt at any moment, may we find such courage in the face of crisis, we pray to the Lord. **R**

Voice 2: She had a joyful family life and despite hardship incurred in finding her way around prejudice, a satisfying career. Her doctoral dissertation was written on the nature of empathy. Soon afterwards, she converted from Judaism to Catholicism in spite of her family’s objection.

Leader: That children may continue to be happy and hopeful even in the midst of tragic events, we pray to the Lord. **R**

Voice 3: After gaining an international reputation in the field of pedagogy, she embraced the Carmelite life in 1934, in order “to live in the inner sanctum of the church and to represent those who must labour outside.” Her model was Esther, who was taken from her people in order to stand up for them.

Leader: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross wrote about the gift of loving persons more than what they do, may we be such instruments of God’s love, we pray to the Lord. **R**

Voice 4: Until the end, Sister Teresa Benedicta remained calm and cheerful, solicitous of others who needed consolation.

Leader: For those who minister to the wounded, the sick and the infirm, that they may be gifted with gentleness and understanding, we pray to the Lord. **R**

Voice 5: Arrested in Holland because of her Jewish heritage, just before she left on the train to Auschwitz, Sister Teresa Benedicta wrote to her Carmelite sisters; “Now we have a chance to experience a little how to live purely from within.” Thus, her spiritual energy allowed her to be undefeated in the midst of such murderous evil. She died in Auschwitz along with her sister Rosa and other Jewish friends in 1942.

- Leader:** At Auschwitz, St. Edith Stein wrote, “So far I have been able to pray gloriously.” It is said, “Where sin is, grace abounds.” May it be so in so many corners of our world, we pray to the Lord! **R**
- Leader:** Father in heaven, form in us the likeness of Your Son and deepen His life within us.
- All:** Send us as witnesses of gospel joy into a world of fragile peace and broken promises.
- Leader:** Touch the hearts of all people with Your love, that they in turn may love one another.
- All:** Like St. Teresa Benedicta, may our faith be a source of strength and freedom as we journey the path the Lord has laid out for us, we ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen
- Hymn:** “Tree of Life” (CBW III #373, verses 4 and 5)

(Taken from *Why Not Become Fire?* Evelyn Mattern and Helen D. Brancato, Ave Maria Press 1999, pp. 75-80)