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## ***Doctor Crucis. The Criteria for Conferral of the Title of Doctor of the Church and their Application to the Case of Edith Stein. Part II\****

### **Abstract**

Edith Stein is widely recognised as a saint, a martyr, a victim of the Holocaust and a female philosopher – but can she be a Doctor of the Church? So far, thirty-seven figures, including four women, carry the title due to their so-called ‘eminent doctrines’, *eminentes doctrinae*. For centuries, a procedural difficulty existed in awarding the titles to martyrs, however, in the second decade of the 21st century, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints reached a conclusion that martyrdom is not, in principle, an obstacle in awarding the title. A question, therefore, can be posed: does the legacy of someone among the Christian martyrs fulfill the criteria of the Church’s Doctorate?

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The aim of this article is to investigate the criteria for conferral of the title of the Doctor of the Church, prime among which is a criterion called *eminens doctrina*, and apply them to one example, that of Edith Stein. In doing so, I consider the question purely historically and philosophically, starting out with definitions of the Father of the Church and the Doctor of the Church in part one (published in June 2023, no 1, p. 131–149). In the second part of the article (available below), I ask what aspects of the female martyr's theology, philosophy and spirituality fulfill the criteria of an eminent doctrine, as formulated in the Church's documents, and which are insufficient or lacking. In order to highlight the nature of a particular criterion, I contrast Stein's case with other recently debated cases, such as those of Irenaeus of Lyons and John Paul II.

### Keywords

Church Father, Doctor of the Church, eminent doctrine (*eminens doctrina*), Edith Stein, Doctor of the Cross (*Doctor Crucis*), John Paul II.

Edith Stein is widely recognised as a saint, a martyr, a victim of the Holocaust and a female philosopher – but can she be a Doctor of the Church? Thirty-seven figures, including four women, carry the title due to their so called 'eminent doctrines', *eminentes doctrinae*. For centuries, a procedural difficulty existed in awarding the titles to martyrs. In the second decade of the 21st century, *Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum* reached a conclusion that martyrdom is not, in principle, an obstacle in awarding the title. A question can therefore be posed: does the legacy of someone among the Christian martyrs fulfill the criteria of the Church's doctorate?

The aim of this article is to investigate the criteria for conferral of the title of the Doctor of the Church, prime among which is a criterion called *eminens doctrina*, and apply them to one example, that of Edith Stein. I ask what aspects of the German-Jewish martyr's theology, philosophy and spirituality fulfill the criteria of an eminent teaching, as defined in the Church's documents, and which are insufficient or lacking. In order to highlight the nature of a particular criterion, I contrast Stein's candidacy with other currently debated or established cases, such as those of Irenaeus of Lyons and John Paul II. In doing so, I consider the investigation purely historically and philosophically, thus investigating possible lines of argumentation, rather than speculating about what is likely to happen.

## 1. Does Edith Stein Meet the Criteria of the Church's Doctorate?

Let us begin with an obvious observation: all three discussed cases, Edith Stein, John Paul II and Irenaeus of Lyons, fulfil the time criterion, since their lives belong to our era. Moreover, each of them is a canonised saint. Irenaeus and Stein are also known as martyrs, both in the tradition and in the documents of the Church.<sup>1</sup> The example of their death can therefore support their teaching – for, as the Congregation already declared, ‘the love of a martyr can also enhance the splendor of science’<sup>2</sup> – if it can be proven that they formulated eminent teachings. John Paul II died a natural death although, as stated, some perceive him as a martyr in consequence of his reaction to the attempted assassination. There is no doubt, however, that *sanctitas vitae*, the criterion of the sanctity of life, is fulfilled for all three. I will argue that due to the specific nature of Edith Stein’s *eminens doctrina*, this saint’s martyrdom can significantly emphasise her teaching. What could be, however, her eminent doctrine?

### 1.1. *Doctor Veritatis*

The first aspect of an eminent doctrine is a wide and profound contribution to the Church’s comprehension of Revelation, thus – the mystery of God. Let us consider what impact Edith Stein made in this respect by considering her predominant reception in the Church. The words of John Paul II, spoken during her canonisation, testify to this: “Teresa Benedicta of the Cross was able to understand that the love of Christ and human freedom are intertwined, because *love and truth have an intrinsic relationship*. The quest for truth and its expression in love did not seem at odds to her; on the contrary she realised that they call for one another. In our time, truth is often mistaken for the opinion of the majority. In addition, there is a widespread belief that one should use the truth even against love or vice versa. But *truth and love need each other*. St Teresa Benedicta is a witness to this. The ‘martyr for love’, who gave her life for her friends, let no one surpass her in love. At the same time, with her whole being she sought the truth, of which she wrote: ‘No spiritual work comes into the world without great suffering. It always challenges the whole person’. St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross says to us all: *Do not accept anything as the truth if it*

<sup>1</sup> J. Sullivan, *The Path to Beatification*, 1998, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum, *Le cause de Santi*, 2018, p. 631.

lacks love. And do not accept anything as love which lacks truth! One without the other becomes a destructive lie.”<sup>3</sup>

At the time of canonisation, often a peak of popularity or its beginning, Edith Stein was perceived and celebrated as someone who revealed the link between truth, love and freedom. Such a reception of the saint as a thinker who emphasised the human aspiration for truth, ultimately leading to God, is also visible in her cult. The memorial book of the Edith Stein House in Wrocław contains an entry left by a group of young high school students. They addressed Edith Stein as ‘the patroness of people who seek the truth’. The first Polish edition of Edith Stein’s famous letters to Ingarden, in which she defends the rationality of the Christian position, was aptly entitled *Debate over the Truth of Existence* (*Spór o prawdę istnienia*) for Stein was already being recognised as a Christian philosopher to have defended the truth of her faith in a clash with Ingarden.<sup>4</sup> One of Stein’s most frequently quoted words, written after the death of her master and friend, Edmund Husserl, proclaim: ‘Whoever seeks the truth, seeks God, even if they did not know it’<sup>5</sup> Edith Stein is widely recognised as a philosopher uncompromisingly striving for truth.<sup>6</sup> While she initially sought it in rational attempts of the realistic phenomenological school (she later wrote about this period: ‘longing for truth was my only prayer’<sup>7</sup>), at a turning point in her life she identified truth in the testimony of the Carmelite mystic Teresa of Avila, about whose work she exclaimed: ‘This is truth!’ (*Das ist die Wahrheit!*<sup>8</sup>). Finally, she

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Homily for the Canonization of Edith Stein*, 11 October 1998, 6; [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_11101998\\_stein.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_11101998_stein.html) (12.10.2020).

<sup>4</sup> E. Stein, *Spór o prawdę istnienia: listy Edith Stein do Romana Ingardena*, trans. M. Klentak-Zabłocka, A. Wajs, Warsaw 1994, Wydawnictwo M.

<sup>5</sup> In the letter to Adelgundis Jaegerschmid on 23 March 1938 r. Cf. E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen II. Zweiter Teil 1933–1942*, Freiburg 2000, p. 285: “Um meinen lieben Meister habe ich keine Sorge. Es hat mir immer sehr fern gelegen zu denken, daß Gottes Barmherzigkeit sich an die Grenzen der sichtbaren Kirche binde. Gott ist die Wahrheit. Wer die Wahrheit sucht, der sucht Gott, ob es ihm klar ist oder nicht.”

<sup>6</sup> Cf. testimonies contained in: *Materiały z Sesji Naukowo Pastoralnej Święta Edyta Stein Doktorem Kościoła?*, 22 March 2003, Kuria Krakowskiej Prowincji Karmelitów Bosych, Cracow 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Teresa Renata of the Holy Spirit, *Siostra Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża. Filozofi karmelitanka*, trans. M. Kaczmarkowski, Paris 1973, Éditions du Dialogue, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Teresa Renata of the Holy Spirit, *Siostra Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża. Filozofi karmelitanka*, trans. M. Kaczmarkowski, Paris 1973, Éditions du Dialogue, p. 61.

is a philosopher who after her conversion understood faith as complementary to rational investigation and consistently realised her philosophical vocation in the field of Christian philosophy,<sup>9</sup> within which she developed an original epistemological position on the theory of truth.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is possible to see, both in her written legacy and the example of life, a special message about truth. Some indeed would eagerly call Edith Stein *Doctor Veritatis*, a Teacher of Truth.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.2. *Doctor Fidei et Rationis*

Let us, however, recall other significant references to this saint in the Church's tradition. In one of his most influential encyclicals, *Fides et ratio* (1998), John Paul II names Edith Stein as an example of a thinker (the only woman mentioned in this context) who mastered the two cognitive attitudes comprising the topic of the encyclical: faith and reason. The bond between them is symbiotic in nature, with faith seeking its foundation in the Word of God and argumentative thinking taking the shape of a rational, philosophical investigation. John Paul II argued that it is so because, when enlightened by the Word, reason enters paths it would otherwise not discover by itself, and faith receives a deeper understanding and explanation from reason, one it would miss without philosophical explication and analysis. In order to illustrate his thesis by historical examples of those who combined faith with reason, John Paul II refers to a number of outstanding philosophers-theologians: "The fruitfulness of this relationship is confirmed by the experience of great Christian theologians who also distinguished themselves as great philosophers, bequeathing to us writings of such high speculative value as to warrant comparison with the masters of ancient philosophy. This is true of both the Fathers of the Church, among whom at least Saint Gregory of Nazianzus and Saint Augustine should be mentioned, and the Medieval Doctors with the great triad of Saint Anselm, Saint Bonaventure and Saint Thomas Aquinas. We see the same fruitful relationship between philosophy and

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922*, New York-Toronto-Plymouth 2007, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 177-186.

<sup>10</sup> E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2006, Herder, parts I, III, V.

<sup>11</sup> I refer to a debate held during an international conference in Edith Stein's House and an opinion expressed by prof. Hanna Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz. Cf. her article in the conference volume: *In which Way the Term 'Truth' Becomes Meaningful?* in: *Dialog o człowieku w drodze do prawdy*, 2020, pp. 187-198.

the word of God in the courageous research pursued by more recent thinkers, among whom I gladly mention, in a Western context, figures such as John Henry Newman, Antonio Rosmini, Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson and Edith Stein and, in an Eastern context, eminent scholars such as Vladimir S. Soloviev, Pavel A. Florensky, Petr Chaadaev and Vladimir N. Lossky.<sup>12</sup>

The understanding of the relationship between faith and reason contained in *Fides et ratio* perfectly harmonises with Stein's remarks about the nature of Christian philosophy, discussed in her *magnum opus*, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*.<sup>13</sup> Stein defended the thesis that Christian philosophy remains philosophy, even when it rests on the assumptions derived from faith. According to her, accepting dogmatic formulas can be rational. In the context of the reception of Stein as a figure harmoniously combining faith based on the Word with rationality manifested by philosophical research, one can nevertheless ask: what particular passage of the Scriptures has this saint-philosopher interpreted so deeply and significantly?<sup>14</sup>

Her *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, includes, *inter alia*, widely commented interpretation of the prologue to the *Gospel according to St John* in a dialogue with Goethe's *Faust*.<sup>15</sup> It also includes a rich commentary to the famous line from the Book of Genesis describing the act of creation of men and women in God's image and likeness.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Stein's anthropology, build on the principle of integrality of knowledge available from various sources – theological, scientific, philosophical – in and of itself comprises an original contribution to the Church's teachings.

### 1.3. *Doctor Humanitatis*

Stein's anthropology is described most fully in her lectures on philosophical and theological anthropology written in 1932 and 1933, *Der Aufbau der Menschlichen*

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<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, 1998, VI, 74.

<sup>13</sup> E. Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, 2006, pp. 20–46.

<sup>14</sup> M. Lebeck, *Why does John Paul II refer to Edith Stein in Fides et ratio?*, in: *The Challenge of Truth: reflections on 'Fides et ratio'*, Dublin, pp. 154–180.

<sup>15</sup> E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*, 2006, part III, paragraph 12, pp. 99–112.

<sup>16</sup> E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein*, 2006, part. VII.

*Person and Was is der Mensch?*<sup>17</sup> Stein structured the first semester of her lectures according to the logic of the ancient notion of microcosm, that is the being that unites various kinds of the world: the material, plant, animal, and personal. Following Scheler's method of philosophical anthropology as well as her own principle of the integrality of knowledge, Stein sought the truth about the human being in various sources, varying from the humanities to the exact sciences.<sup>18</sup> As a result, she worked out an integral vision of the human being that incorporates the data from philosophy, theology, biology (including the evolutionary theory) medicine, psychology and many more. Her findings are not only comprehensive but also visionary, specifically in relation to the evolutionary theory and the biblical description of creation. Her approach to the evolutionary theory anticipates the solution John Paul II proposed as the official standpoint of the Catholic Church many decades later.<sup>19</sup> Stein's anthropology is today not only subject to philosophical and historical analyses but also fruitfully applied in the practice of psychology and therapy.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1.4. *Doctor Crucis*

However, John Paul II began Edith Stein's canonisation homily with the words of St Paul: 'As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>21</sup> Thus, what was emphasised during her canonisation was Edith Stein's contribution to the contemplation of the Cross and union with the Cross, not any of her exegetic analysis present in her *magnum opus*. According to many, including John Paul II, the Cross does seem to be a red thread in the history of this saint. Almost eleven years earlier, during the beatification Mass, the Pope explicated Stein's Carmelite name as follows: 'Benedicta a Cruce

<sup>17</sup> E. Stein, *Der Aufbau der Menschlichen Person*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder 2004; E. Stein, *Was is der Mensch?*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder 2005.

<sup>18</sup> J. Guerrero van der Meijden, *What is Phenomenological Thomism? Its Principles and an Application: The Anthropological Square*, "Religions" 14/7 (2023), p. 6, <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/7/938> (25.07.2023).

<sup>19</sup> John Paul II, *The General Audience of April 16, 1986*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/audiences/1986/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19860416.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/audiences/1986/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19860416.html) (14.02.2023).

<sup>20</sup> C. M. Wulf, *When the I shatters: Insights in Psychotrauma for Victims and their Accompaniers*, Münster 2021, LIT Verlag; C. M. Wulf, *How Narcissists Function. A Phenomenological Analysis Based on Case Studies*, "Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities" 6/1 (2020), pp 1–6.

<sup>21</sup> Gal 6, 14.

is blessed by the Cross' (*die vom Kreuz Gesegnete*), not simply, *Benedicta of the Cross*.<sup>22</sup> Stein's martyrdom, in 1942 during a German Nazi revenge action after the protests of the Dutch bishops condemning deportations of the Jews, remains one of the most widely recognised facts of this saint's life.

Edith Stein is, however, not just a martyr who accepted and endured an unjust death for faith but also, significantly, one who had earlier contemplated the meaning of suffering and presented an answer to the ancient philosophical question '*unde malum?*'. This fact has been observed by John Paul II, who in his canonisation homily described Edith Stein as a thinker to have pointed out a special meaning of suffering, that of the lesson of love.

The question of the meaning of suffering has accompanied Christianity since its beginnings. Attempts at analysing the problem of theodicy can be divided into two main types: first, those giving an answer to the genealogical question of 'where does evil originate from?' (e.g., free will, sin, etc.), and second, those revealing the meaning of evil in response to the question 'what is evil for?' (e.g., purification, kenosis, test of virtue, sacrifice, holiness, etc.). John Paul II identified Edith Stein's thought as a contribution to the latter type of investigation. In the canonisation statement cited already, he interpreted Edith Stein as a thinker to have revealed the meaning of suffering as a lesson in love: "The mystery of the Cross gradually enveloped her whole life, spurring her to the point of making the supreme sacrifice. As *a bride of the Cross*, Sr. Teresa Benedicta did not only write profound pages about the 'science of the Cross', but was thoroughly trained in the *school of the Cross*. Many of our contemporaries would like to silence the Cross. But nothing is more eloquent than the Cross when silenced! The true message of suffering is a lesson of love. Love makes suffering fruitful and suffering deepens love."<sup>23</sup>

Edith Stein was no stranger to suffering. At the end of her life, she almost clung to the Cross, which she earlier chose as her name ('Teresa Benedicta of the Cross') and religious motto ('Ave Crux, spes unica!' – Heil the Cross, the only hope!). When appointing Edith a co-patroness saint of Europe, John

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<sup>22</sup> John Paul II, *Seligprechung von Schwester Benedicta Teresia vom Kreuz*, Stadion Köln-Müngersdorf, Friday 1 May 1987, 5, <http://www.benedykta.diecezja.gda.pl/content/homilia-jana-pawla-ii-wygloszona-podczas-uroczystosci-beatyfikacji.pdf> (12.10.2020).

<sup>23</sup> John Paul II, *Homily for the Canonization of Edith Stein*, 11 October 1998, 7; [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_11101998\\_stein.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_11101998_stein.html) (12.10.2020).



Paul II called her ‘a symbol of the European tragedies of the 20th century’.<sup>24</sup> Stein indeed knew the kind of suffering marked by historical significance, particularly that of a genocide, death at the hands of her own people,<sup>25</sup> discrimination for a typical trait, not an individual guilt (which constitutes the essence of genocide defined as selecting people according to their typical, not individual feature with disregard to their individual guilt or innocence).<sup>26</sup> She also experienced the usual, everyday hardships and pain: exclusion from the academic community, heartbreak and romantic rejection, estrangement by her mother after her conversion, the necessity to give up her beloved profession in 1933 when she was forced to drop her position at The German Pedagogical Institute, her mother’s silence when both of their lives were in danger, and her betrayal by study friends cooperating with NSDAP against Jewish academics.

In all this she was able to reflect deeply on the meaning of suffering. Early in her youth, in her doctoral dissertation, as a phenomenologist, Stein laid intellectual foundations for the later understanding of the union with the Cross by means of acts of empathy, *Einfühlung*, with the Crucified.<sup>27</sup> *Einfühlung*, typically translated as empathy is, according to Stein, an act of accompanying internal acts of one subjectivity by another. In her doctoral dissertation, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Stein analysed the criteria and character of such empathic acts using the transcendental and eidetic phenomenological reductions.<sup>28</sup> In her last

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<sup>24</sup> John Paul II, *Concelebrazione Eucaristica in Occasione dell’apertura della II assemblea speciale per l’Europa del sinodo dei vescovi*, 1 October 1999, 5. trans. J.G.M., [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1999/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_01101999\\_sinodo-europa.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_01101999_sinodo-europa.html) (12.10.2020). Edith Stein, che, provenendo da famiglia ebrea, lasciò la brillante carriera di studiosa per farsi monaca carmelitana col nome di Teresa Benedetta della Croce e morì nel campo di sterminio di Auschwitz, è simbolo dei drammi dell’Europa di questo secolo.

<sup>25</sup> She consistently referred to herself as both Jewish and German. Cf. E. Stein, *Życiorys*, in: *Dzieje pewnej rodziny żydowskiej*, trans. I.J. Adamska, Cracow 2005, Wydawnictwo Karmelitów Bosych, pp. 363–364. Eng. trans. J.G.M.

<sup>26</sup> J. Guerrero van der Meijden, *Person and Dignity in Edith Stein’s Writings: Investigated in Comparison to the Writings of the Doctors of the Church and the Magisterial Documents of the Catholic Church*, Boston–Berlin 2019, de Gruyter, p. 218; See J. Guerrero van der Meijden, *Zagadnienie wczucia według Edyty Stein a symbol Auschwitz*, “Filozofia Religii” 4 (2017) No. 1, pp. 48n.

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of a subject in both Stein’s first and last work see: A. Grzegorzczuk, *Ponad kulturami. Uniwersalizm Edyty Stein*, Poznań 2010, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, pp. 93–111.

<sup>28</sup> E. Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2008, Herder. Summary, in: J. Guerrero van der Meijden, *Zagadnienie wczucia według Edyty Stein...*, pp. 54–68.

work, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, she related the topic of *Einfühlung* to the contemplation of the Cross.<sup>29</sup> And in following the internal life of the Crucified, she found strength and hope that allowed her to accept and realise the gift of martyrdom, perceived by her not as an end in itself, but as a *transitus*: “[The] Cross is not an end in itself. It rises upwards and points upwards. But it is not only a sign – it is also a mighty weapon of Christ; a shepherd’s staff with which the divine David set out against the infernal Goliath; with which he knocks powerfully at the gates of heaven and opens them. Then divine light flows out and embraces everyone who belongs to the procession of the Crucified.”<sup>30</sup>

One can, therefore, identify both a contribution to the Church’s doctrine (the first aspect of *eminens doctrina*, i.e., a certain knowledge illuminating Revelation, in this case, *scientia Crucis*, a theory of union with the Cross by means of *Einfühlung* laid out in *The Science of the Cross*),<sup>31</sup> and an example of life (the second aspect of *eminens doctrina*, one named during *Vaticanum Secundum*, i.e., a testimony of life, in this case an extraordinary path of unity with Jesus in the Cross) present in both Edith Stein’s legacy and witness. Therefore, can she not be called, *Doctor Martyrii*, the Doctor of Martyrdom, or – pointing not to human experience but an aspect of God’s mystery – *Doctor Crucis*, Teacher and Doctor of the Cross?

Edith Stein’s life is, I believe, a vivid example of an optimistic martyrdom, one filled with hope. Let us recall that as a nun in the monastery in Echt, where she was moved to hide her from the German Nazis, she joked about her death to her sisters ‘if I shall die, you will finally have the opportunity to sing *Te Deum*’.<sup>32</sup> In her Testament she used a typical Carmelite phrase: ‘Today I accept death with joy’.<sup>33</sup> This was not, however, a form of frivolousness. Stein approached the mystery of union with the Cross entirely seriously, having previously followed the path of empathy, *Einfühlung*, with the Crucified for many years and found

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<sup>29</sup> E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft. Studie über Johannes vom Kreuz*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2003, Herder.

<sup>30</sup> E. Stein, *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, p. 16, trans. J.G.M.

<sup>31</sup> Stein’s *Science of the Cross* remains the most important work on this topic, but parts of *On the Problem of Empathy* concerning suffering and pain (as well as *Internal Castle* or *Nature and Grace*) are significant as well.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. a conversation with Fr. Güntherem Schulemann in: W. Herbstrith, *Edith Stein. A Biography*, San Francisco 1985, pp. 77, 95.

<sup>33</sup> E. Stein, *Testament*, in: eadem, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie und weitere autobiographische Beiträge*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2007, Herder, p. 374.

in Him the source of hope, and ultimately triumph. For her, the Cross was not an end in itself, but a sign opening a new perspective.

And that is why with her monastic motto on her lips, 'Ave Crux spes unica!' – Heil, the Cross, the only hope! – she pulled away from the desk and the work on *The Science of the Cross*, and carrying her chosen Carmelite name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, she accepted a martyr's death that led her to the truth that she had searched for all her life.

## 2. Doubts and Counterarguments

Having stated this, we ought to ask if there are any obstacles in the way of recognising Edith Stein as a Doctor of the Church—and if so, what they might be.

Firstly, a critical point can be raised that there is a lack of visible sanctities among the followers of Edith Stein's sanctity. In other words, there is no group of people who, having followed her path of life, have achieved holiness verified by the canonisation process, which would in turn verify the legitimacy of Stein's message. The same obstacle has been pointed out in the case of John Paul II, since in his case as well, too little time has passed after his death for the next generation to follow in his footsteps and attain sanctity. However, in his case one can point out the existing Order of the Knights of John Paul II,<sup>34</sup> which lists four charismas derived from the Pope's spirituality: faith, mercy, solidarity and patriotism. Naturally, due to the shortness of time, no such Knight has yet been canonised. Moreover, there are other figures whose holiness may speak for the validity of the path set by John Paul II. For example, blessed Fr Jerzy Popiełuszko, a Polish communist martyr and defender of religious freedom under the communist regime, who referred to John Paul's teachings many times before he was killed in 1984, and is in the process of canonisation. A great many other canonised saints that build on Wojtyła's contributions to *Vaticanum Secundum* or his encyclicals and books could also serve as verification of the Pope's path. One of the arguments in favor of Wojtyła's Church's doctorate refers indeed to his role as a co-creator and interpreter of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The order's official website: <https://rycerzejp2.com.pl/> (12.10.2020).

<sup>35</sup> J. Kupczak, *Wywiad dla Dziennika Polskiego*, <https://dziennikpolski24.pl/sw-jan-pawel-ii-doktorem-kosciola-biskupi-pisza-list-do-franciszka/ar/c1-14526393> (12.10.2020).

The condition of the holy followers in Edith Stein's case is more disputable. However, the example of John Paul II himself may well serve as an argument in Stein's favor. John Paul II was inspired by Edith Stein, reaching as far back as the 1960s, when as a Bishop in Cracow he asked Roman Ingarden, the only Pole who knew her personally and was still alive, to introduce him to her thought during a symposium devoted to the memory of the holy Jewish martyr-philosopher.<sup>36</sup> The interest of this young Bishop did not cease, culminating in his expression of appreciation for her by appointing her Patroness of Europe in 1999.<sup>37</sup>

In order to illustrate this fascination with Edith Stein, I will relay here a significant opinion concerning the spiritual and intellectual formation of the Pope during the exercise of his pontificate. In 1998 at the Angelicum in Rome, during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of John Paul II's election to the Throne of Peter, Joseph Ratzinger, then the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, indicated that Edith Stein was a figure from whom the pontificate drew his spirituality and wisdom: "Two women, both belonging to the Carmelite Order, can help us understand the nature of prayer and wisdom which underline the theological reflection of John Paul II during these twenty years of his pontificate. The first one is Teresa of Lisieux, a saint whom he declared a doctor, and the second is Edith Stein, a doctor whom he declared a saint."<sup>38</sup>

Ratzinger singled out Edith Stein as one of the two whom the Pope owed the prayer-wisdom aspect of his pontificate, and this fully corresponds to the remarks of the Holy Father himself formulated in *Fides et ratio*. Of course, there are many other parallels between the thinking and intellectual formation of Stein and Wojtyła, such as researches in realistic phenomenology, referring to Max Scheler in philosophy and John of the Cross in spirituality, their personalism, interests in developing Thomism, alleged mysticism, and their humanism, that is, a hermeneutic style of reflection in dialogue with numerous traditions of European culture, multilingualism and love for classics of literature. That

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<sup>36</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Letter to Roman Ingarden on 22 September 1967 and 18 October 1967*, Roman Ingarden Digital Archives, <http://ingarden.archive.uj.edu.pl/archiwum/list-od-karola-wojtyly-z-22-09-1967> (22 September 1967) and <http://ingarden.archive.uj.edu.pl/archiwum/list-od-karola-wojtyly-z-18-10-1967>, 18 October 1967 (12.10.2020).

<sup>37</sup> John Paul II, *Concelebrazione Eucaristica in occasione dell'apertura dell'II assemblea speciale per l'Europa del sinodo dei vescovi*, 1 October 1999.

<sup>38</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Przemówienie w trakcie sesji zorganizowanej w 20-lecie pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II*, 5 November 1998, Rome, trans. from available Polish by J.G.M.

is why some people write about the ‘twin souls’ of these two.<sup>39</sup> John Paul II is, of course, a spiritual child of many saints, according to his own words, twice spoken publicly in Poland: ‘Saints do not wither, saints live through saints, saints desire sanctity.’<sup>40</sup> However, similarly to the most famous Christian authority, Thomas Aquinas, John Paul II is as much an outstanding thinker as the one who owes his greatness to the earlier giants of human thought and spirituality on whose shoulders he himself stood – a large number of saints and thinkers from whom he learned and who often have been canonised by him. More than half of the saints elevated by him to the altars are martyrs. And one of these martyrs was a Jewish-German female philosopher – not only a practitioner, but also a theoretician of the Cross – and her student, none other than Pope John Paul the Great, now canonised. His person can therefore serve as an argument in Stein’s favor, not vice versa.

The second argument raised against Edith Stein is her allegedly poorer exegetics in the face of richer philosophical reflection. Traditionally Doctors were required to illuminate Revelation contained in the Scriptures. First of all, this criticism falls short of noticing why Edith Stein was listed in *Fides et ratio* as an outstanding example of a thinker who have combined reflection based on the Scriptures with philosophical argumentation. Moreover, in response to the first part of this objection, one suffices to point out a rich, yet still unknown source material,<sup>41</sup> including the already mentioned interpretation of the prologue to the Gospel according to St John or the passage from the Book of Genesis about the creation of man in God’s image and likeness. I analysed the originality of Stein’s understanding of human dignity as an icon of God in comparison to earlier Christian writers and argued that it consists of her taking into account the individual aspect of human iconicity, previously identified only on the level of generic human nature.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> J. Machnacz, *Koncepcja człowieka u Edyty Stein i kard. Karola Wojtyły*, a lecture during a conference *Dialog o człowieku w drodze do prawdy: Jan Paweł II – Edyta Stein – Roman Ingarden*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6232PQ0aCQQ> (12.10.2020).

<sup>40</sup> John Paul II, *Homilia wygłoszona podczas Mszy kanonizacyjnej błogosławionej księżnej krakowskiej Kingi [Homily on the canonization of St. Kinga, Cracow’s Duchess]*, Stary Sącz 10 July 1999. Exactly 33 years earlier, in 1966, Archbishop Wojtyła spoke the same words in the same city during the millennial celebrations of Poland’s baptism.

<sup>41</sup> R. Pindel, *Biblijne korzenie duchowości Edyty Stein*, in: *Światłość w ciemności*, J.W. Gogola (ed.), Cracow 2003, Wydawnictwo Karmelitów Bosych, pp. 17–49.

<sup>42</sup> J. Guerrero van der Meijden, *Person and Dignity*, 2019, pp. 239–262, 309–345.

Finally, it should be stated that neither Stein's philosophical and theological achievements exclude each other, nor are they irrelevant to each other. On the contrary, they support and elucidate one another, constituting a coherent whole. Following truth meant various reductions in Edith Stein's life, transcendental, eidetic and finally, *reductio ad mysterium*.<sup>43</sup>

The last reason why Edith Stein cannot be called a Doctor of the Church is, of course, the absence of the fourth criterion, *expressa Ecclesiae declaratio*. This insufficiency, however, is of no other nature than accidental.

### 3. Conclusion

In the years marked by the pandemic and War in Ukraine, one may ask if the Church does not need an expert on suffering, a Doctor-expert on martyrdom or a Doctor-expert of the Cross. If one answers in the affirmative, we have the example of Edith Stein who, on the one hand, was not distant from us in time, unlike Irenaeus of Lyons, whose martyrdom is neither historically certain nor known in detail. On the other hand, she is already well-researched and approved in terms of martyrdom by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints during her beatification process, unlike John Paul II, who is called a martyr only unofficially. Her example of martyrdom and suffering inspires by the depth of illuminating the mystery of the Cross.

Therefore, when during the 80th anniversary of Edith Stein's death, we ask about her legacy, we ought to observe that the way Edith Stein achieved her fullness was in the unity with the Cross. Both in her thinking and in her example, she illuminated one crucial aspect of the infinite mystery of God. Her legacy constitutes an example of an outstanding teaching, *eminens doctrina*, concerning the unity with the Cross, a legacy that already can, and someday perhaps will also be, given the appropriate title – *Doctor Crucis*.

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<sup>43</sup> E. Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, 2006, p. 32.

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