

Photo by Bob Baldwin

## *Miracle'*

### **Did Auschwitz victim's intercession save Benedicta's life?**

**Teresia Benedicta McCarthy (above) is a happy, healthy little two-year-old named after a Jewish Carmelite nun killed at Auschwitz by the Nazis in 1942. A few weeks ago, Benedicta was literally at death's door from accidental poisoning. Many who know the child, including doctors and nurses who were caring for her, believe that her complete and phenomenal recovery is due to a miracle. Her family and the legion of friends who prayed for a healing are convinced Benedicta is alive today through the intercession of Blessed Teresia Benedicta (Edith Stein) who was beatified by Pope John Paul II in Cologne, Germany, on May 1.**

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# Opinion / 'There goes the glory of God!'

It seems apparent to those who know Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy and his family that Blessed Teresia Benedicta (nee Edith Stein) did indeed intercede to God on behalf of her little namesake, when two-year-old Teresia Benedicta McCarthy was literally at death's door a few weeks ago. (See next two pages)

The relationship between the McCarthy family and the Catholic Church's candidate for canonization goes back several years. It was back in the early 1980s that Father McCarthy (whose writings have been featured many times in the *Church World*) first began relating Edith Stein to the peace movement.

As many of our readers know, the Catholic priest (of the Melkite rite) has been dedicating his life almost exclusively to the promotion of Christian nonviolence and peace. For several years, he has undertaken a 40-day fast from solid foods each July — the breaking of the fast coinciding with the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Aug. 9, 1945. Three years earlier to the day, Aug. 9, 1942, Edith Stein perished in the gas ovens at Auschwitz. It was Father McCarthy who first began associating this event to the dynamics of the Catholic Peace Movement.

Back in those days, it seemed that only a few "old timers" in the peace movement — Gordon Zahn, Eileen Egan and Dan Berrigan — even knew who Edith Stein (Sr. Teresia Benedicta) was. "We experienced her sanctity long before there was any official proclamation for that truth," according to Father McCarthy, "which is why we named our youngest *Teresia Benedicta* after her. And henceforth we placed our Benedicta under the special



**Teresia Benedicta McCarthy**

*Photo by Bob Baldwin*

protection of Blessed Benedicta (Edith Stein always referred to herself as *Benedicta* after entering the Carmelites). It was a special gift when we realized that when our Benedicta was born on Aug. 8, at 8:15 p.m., because of the time differential, it was actually Aug. 9, 2:15 a.m., Auschwitz time."

So it naturally followed that when young Benedicta McCarthy was dying at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, recently, of accidental poisoning, her family and friends directed their prayers to Blessed Benedicta to intercede with God on behalf of her namesake who had been placed under her special protection.

When the child, who was expected (by almost everyone) to die, experienced a complete and unprecedented healing, the doctors and nurses were reportedly stunned. "It's a miracle," they told Benedicta's mother, Mary McCarthy.

There's no question in Father McCarthy's mind: "It is a miracle!"

The exuberant parents are gathering all the medical records and testimony which they will forward to the Carmelite community which is promoting Edith Stein's cause for canonization. Also exuberant are Father McCarthy's legion of friends who prayed fervently to Blessed Teresia Benedicta while her little namesake was hovering between life and death, begging the Auschwitz victim to intercede to God for a healing. In Maine, the telephone lines were busy as the appeal for prayers to Edith Stein were communicated from one community to another.

We all rejoice with the McCarthy family as we gaze upon the beautiful photos of a perfectly healthy Teresia Benedicta McCarthy in this issue. The photos were taken by Bob Baldwin, a few days ago, in the McCarthy home in Brockton, Mass.

We all join with Father Charley McCarthy in proclaiming: **'There goes the glory of God!'**

**Henry Gosselin**

# 'Miracle'

## Did Auschwitz victim's intercession save Benedicta's life?

Teresia Benedicta McCarthy is a happy, healthy little two-year-old named after a Jewish Carmelite nun killed at Auschwitz by the Nazis in 1942. Many who know the child, believe she is alive today through the intercession of her namesake.

The little girl's father, Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, is a Catholic priest of the Melkite rite, which permits the ordination of married men. Last May 1, the same day that Carmelite Sister Teresia Benedicta, a Jewish convert, was being beatified in Rome, Father McCarthy arrived in Newcastle to give a workshop retreat on the theology of Christian non-violence.

Few of the more than 50 persons who attended Father McCarthy's talks at St. Patrick's parish center were aware that only a few weeks ago, the priest's youngest daughter was near death, her liver and kidneys barely functioning, because she had accidentally poisoned herself.

Father McCarthy didn't tell the retreatants about the near tragedy but when a reporter asked about it, he agreed to an interview.

### On a recent Friday

The episode began on a recent Friday evening. Father McCarthy and his wife, Mary, were flying home from a week-long retreat — the first time in 20 years that they had been away together from their 13 children.

They wanted to get home to Brockton, Mass., in time to pick up the children and take them to the "Grotonwood Weekend," a conference held each spring by the Needham Peace and Justice Group, in which the McCarthys are active. They had missed the previous year's conference because, on the opening night, Mary was busy — giving birth to their 13th child, Ananda, who died the same night.

As it turned out, the McCarthys never got to the 1987 conference either. They arrived home at about 8 p.m. "We didn't even get to the door when two of the children came running out in the street," Father McCarthy says. "They told us, 'Benedicta's in the hospital with seizures.'"

None of the McCarthy children — including the two oldest, who were home on a break from their classes at Notre Dame University — knew what had happened to Benedicta, or how. They told their parents they had taken her to the local hospital after she started "acting funny."

The McCarthys raced to the hospital, arriving just about the same time that the doctors were determining that Benedicta had ingested a large amount of Tylenol — approximately "16 times toxicity," they were told.

"At this point," says Father McCarthy, "what '16 times toxicity' meant hadn't quite reached me. She looked perfectly fine on the outside, but terribly, terribly drowsy — unable to stay awake — and her eyes were just a little uncoordinated. What the medical terminology meant was that Benedicta had swallowed the equivalent of 16 lethal doses of the drug.

### Prayed for Healing

"She kind of recognized us, but didn't fully recognize us," Father McCarthy remembers. "We prayed for a healing there. I anointed her, giving her the Sacrament of the Sick."

A doctor explained that the hospital had no capability to deal with such extreme poisoning and had called for an ambulance to take her to Massachusetts General in Boston. The McCarthys wanted to ride in the ambulance, but were told they couldn't.

They started to follow the ambulance in the car, but suddenly, the car wasn't working properly — it wouldn't shift out of first gear. Rather than attempt the 30-mile trip in low gear, they went home to get their van. When they got home, the van wouldn't start.

By now, it was beginning to feel as if the world were falling apart. "We went in the house and told the children that Benedicta was very, very sick and that they should say the rosary together while we were going to the hospital in the car," Father McCarthy says. Then the McCarthys got back into their car and began driving to Boston in low gear.



Blessed Teresia Benedicta (Edith Stein) was besieged by floods of prayers, asking her to intercede on behalf of her namesake, Teresia Benedicta McCarthy, who was dying at Massachusetts General Hospital.



When they finally reached Benedicta, in the pediatric intensive care unit at Massachusetts General, she looked groggy, but Father McCarthy had not yet realized how serious the situation was.

"I knew it was serious, but we were at Massachusetts General — one of the best hospitals in the world — they would take care of it.

### Most critical condition

"Then, a doctor came in and said something like, 'I want to be honest with you about this; this child is in the most critical condition we can list.'

"I think with that, it began to sink in. Her liver was five times its normal size. As the night went on, they did different tests. The results of the tests were bad to start with, and they kept getting worse. It really began to set in that something was going on here that was horrible."

The McCarthys spent a sleepless night at the hospital. Most of the time Benedicta was unconscious. "Whenever she did wake up she was scared and wanted to leave," Father McCarthy remembers.

In the morning, Father McCarthy stayed at the hospital but Mary went home to the other children. Their 17-year-old son, Charlie, said to her, "You know, Benedicta's going to be all right." He told his mother that after praying the rosary in the small chapel in the McCarthy home, he had felt certain that she would be healed.

Later in the day, Mary went to the hospital and Father McCarthy went home. All day, the news about Benedicta kept getting worse. Now her kidneys, as well as her liver, were beginning to fail.

"I went back to the hospital at about 6 o'clock," Father McCarthy says. "Benedicta now was just unconscious. There was no response at all. She was just lying there unconscious. We had done the things that you do. We'd brought her teddy bear that she likes, 'Brownie the teddy bear,' and her favorite book, 'Goodnight Moon.' We were reading to her, even though she was unconscious. And, of course, we prayed."

During their retreat, the couple had bought an icon for each of the children. They brought Benedicta's to the hospital and put it on her bed.

### Edith Stein

They also placed on her bed a special cross, combined with a Star of David and worn by members of the Edith Stein Guild. Edith Stein was the family name of Sister Teresia Benedicta.

The McCarthys had chosen their daughter's name before she was born. "We knew from the ultrasound scan that she was going to be a girl," her father says. They also must have known that she would probably be born near the anniversary of the death of Edith Stein — Aug. 9, 1942.

As it turned out, Teresia Benedicta McCarthy

was born at 8:15 p.m., Aug. 8, 1984. At that moment, in Auschwitz, the time was 2:15 a.m., Aug. 9.

As the McCarthys prayed, their daughter lay in bed, motionless. "She wasn't responding at all," he says. "Nothing. She was just out. Unconscious.

"By this time, of course, we'd been without sleep for about 48 hours. This was unbelievable darkness. By now the doctors were being pretty clear about it. There's a major tragedy possible. Nothing's turning around. Everything's getting worse. The kidneys are losing more and more function. So about 11 o'clock Saturday night, after she's been unconscious for about five hours, we go home."

### North Dakota workshop

When they got home, the McCarthys had another decision to face. Nine months earlier, Father McCarthy had agreed to give a three-day workshop in North Dakota on non-violence. It was scheduled to open Sunday evening.

As Father McCarthy thought about cancelling his trip, he remembered an incident from the life of Teresa of Avila:

"When she was having a difficult time, 400 years ago, Jesus had appeared to her and said, 'You take care of my business and I'll take care of your business.'"

The McCarthys compared their situation with St. Teresa's and decided that Father McCarthy should go to North Dakota to give the retreat.

"In fact," Father McCarthy remembers, "Mary said that she felt very deeply that something was explicitly trying to prevent that workshop from being done, and that I should do it."

Shortly after midnight, the McCarthys went to bed for the first time in 48 hours. They didn't sleep long. At 4:45 a.m., the telephone rang. It was the hospital.

"When you've got a dying child in the hospital and at 4:45 the telephone rings and it's Massachusetts General Hospital, this is horror beyond anything you can imagine," Father McCarthy says. "They told us Benedicta had developed an infection which she couldn't stop and they couldn't stop. The liver was gone and there was nothing they could do. They said they were working at it but their words were that this was a 'most serious negative event' and they felt they had to call.

### Decision time again

"So we had to make the decision again whether to go to North Dakota."

Father McCarthy says he had nothing to cling to now except Christ's words to Teresa. "There was no bravado in this," he says. "It was a decision made in absolute, total powerlessness and weakness — to go forward and do it. There was no sleeping after that."

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# 'Miracle'

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At 7 a.m. Sunday, the phone rang again. This time it was a long distance call from a Catholic layman who had chosen this moment to challenge Father McCarthy's theology of non-violence.

"I don't feel anything negative about the call," the priest says, "but it's just bizarre that someone's calling at 7 in the morning when your child's dying and telling you you can't be a Catholic if you believe in non-violence."

The time spent on the plane to North Dakota, was "intolerable" says Father McCarthy. "The retreat, technically, went perfectly, except that every once in a while, as I was giving it, I would think about what was going on back in Boston and this tidal wave of horror would come in. The times of unbearable agony were the times alone — between sessions. I will say, positively, that during those times, the rosary had the effect of pushing the tidal wave or horror back, enough to live."

## Meanwhile, in Boston . . .

In Boston, after leaving her husband at the airport, Mary had gone back to the hospital. By now, Benedicta's doctors had given her a "paralyzer," a drug that prevented the child from moving any of her muscles.

In a telephone interview, Mrs. McCarthy later described the scene:

"They had to put her on a breathing machine. She was conscious. She could hear voices. They said they were giving her some morphine because the state was terrifying to be in. It was really hard to see her this way.

"I was there maybe a half hour when four members of the liver transplant team came in and told me her condition was so critical they would have to do a transplant." Benedicta would have to remain on the paralyzer until after the transplant.

A liver transplant is an extremely serious operation — undertaken only as a last resort to save a person's life. Earlier in their ordeal, a physician friend had advised the McCarthys not to consider a liver transplant if it came to that. There was a 25 percent chance that Benedicta would not survive such an operation, and, if she did, she would have further problems for the rest of her life.

Now the team was telling Mary that her daughter's liver had been totally destroyed. "They said that if they had a liver available, they would do the transplant immediately," she recalls.

"They had tentatively scheduled the operation for 11 o'clock on Monday in the hopes they would find a liver by then," she says. Benedicta was given the highest possible priority for a liver and two of the team stood ready to fly to any part of the country to bring one back if a liver should become available.

"When I went home Sunday night, everything looked terrible," Mrs. McCarthy says. "She had to have the transplant in order to live and there was no liver available." There was nothing the McCarthys could do now but wait and pray.

She called her husband in North Dakota.

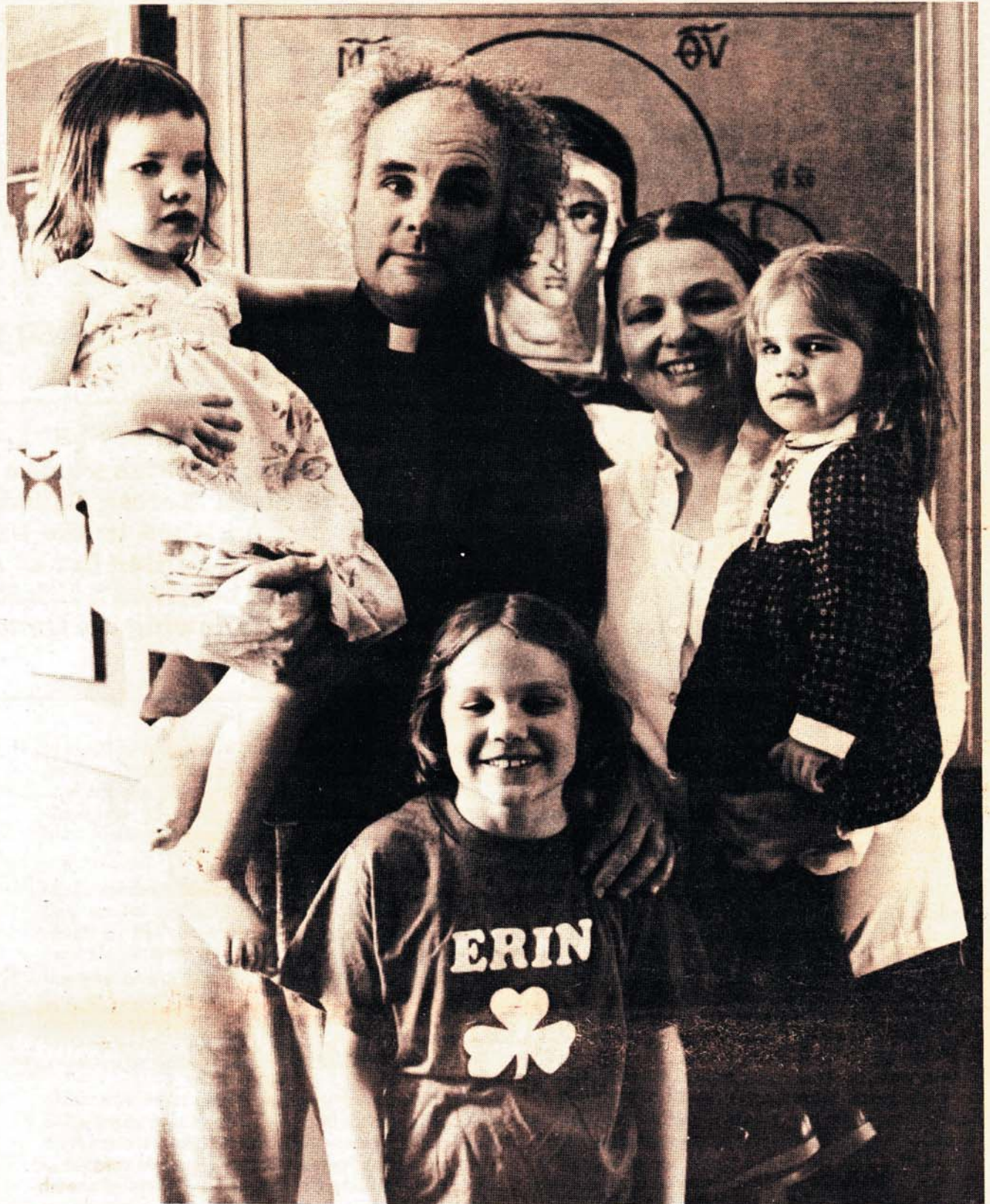
## Prayed to Edith Stein

Father McCarthy remembers the call. "We talked about it and said, 'the person to pray to is Edith Stein.' Mary called people — maybe a couple of dozen people — and asked them to pray to Edith Stein. And I prayed."

Mrs. McCarthy says that before she left the hospital Sunday, she had specifically sought Edith Stein's intercession, praying and asking that her child's liver return to its normal size and resume its normal functioning. "Of course we had many, many people praying for her," Mrs. McCarthy adds.

By Monday, there was still no liver available but the transplant team told Mrs. McCarthy that morning that there was some sign that the liver was functioning again and the team had decided to postpone a transplant, even if a liver became available.

Benedicta was taken off the paralyzer. Normally, Mrs. McCarthy says, a child would come out of the paralyzer in two hours. But because Benedicta's



Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, who has preached retreats on Christian nonviolence in Maine, is pictured with his wife Mary, and three of the younger children — Teresia Benedicta (in Mary's arms), Kateri, who is named after the American Indian saint (in Father McCarthy's arms), and Erin (in front).

liver wasn't functioning properly, nothing appeared to be happening.

Mrs. McCarthy remembered one of the doctors telling her earlier that even if Benedicta survived, it would be a year before the enlarged liver would return to normal size.

By Tuesday, the child was still not moving and, according to her mother, people were beginning to worry that Benedicta had suffered neurological damage. But, by the time Father McCarthy returned home on Tuesday night, she was beginning to move her fingers and toes and was off the critical list.

## More bad news

There was bad news the next day. "On Wednesday they told me she definitely had kidney damage," Mrs. McCarthy says. "Her kidneys were only working at 15 to 20 percent." Her creatinine level — a measure of the kidneys' ability to function, was far too high. The doctors hoped it would stabilize at about 1.6 — slightly above normal for an adult, but extremely high for a child. If that level could be maintained until she reached adulthood, she would probably be able to live with it.

But by Saturday, the creatinine level was 0.6 — exactly where it should be in a child her age. In fact, by then, Benedicta's entire condition was that of a normal three-year-old. Her kidneys as well as her liver were functioning normally. "Her liver was absolutely normal in size and absolutely normal in function," Mrs. McCarthy says.

## 'It's a miracle'

Several of the doctors and nurses were amazed. "A couple of them said to me several times, 'You know it's a miracle.'"

One of the nurses, who had been with Benedicta in the pediatric intensive care unit, came back to work after two days off, assuming that Benedicta was dead. She ran into the child's room and said, "I was just down in the cafeteria and someone happened to mention that Benedicta was alive and not dead."

Benedicta left the hospital without a single prescription, without an ounce of medication to be taken, her father says. He had ordered copies of the medical records, which will be given to a Carmelite community that is promoting Edith Stein's cause for canonization.

"Everybody who's ever taken a workshop with me knows that I try to be precise and orderly and rational and unemotional — just try to get it out there and let people work with it. But there's no other way to say it except, 'it is a miracle.'"

In the early church, says Father McCarthy, Christians could sometimes be recognized just by their demeanor or their presence. Pagan Romans would pass them on the street and say, "There goes the glory of God."

"That's the way it is with Benedicta," he says. "People can look at her now and say, 'There goes the glory of God.'"

Text and photos by Robert F. Baldwin

# Beatification of Edith Stein

הֵן עַבְדִּי

*(Here is my servant)*



Edith Stein

**Born on Yom Kippur 1891 — the Day of the Atonement — Edith Stein, a Jewish woman who converted to Catholicism, became Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. The saintly Carmelite perished in the Nazi gas ovens of Auschwitz on Aug. 9, 1942. Calling her a "great daughter of Israel," Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein in Cologne, West Germany, on May 1. Following is a translation of his German-language homily.**

"These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb." (Rv 7:14).

1. Among these blessed men and women, we greet today in deep veneration and holy joy a daughter of the Jewish people; a woman rich in wisdom and heroism. Grown up under the influence of the strict tradition of Israel, credited by her virtuous and sacrificing life; she showed heroic-mindedness on her way into the extermination camp. She gave her life, united with Christ crucified, "for the true peace" and "for the people": Edith Stein, Jewess, philosopher, sister of an order, martyr.

Dear cardinal, dear brothers and sisters! Today, with this beatification, a desire will be fulfilled; a desire yearned for not only here in Cologne, but also by the many Christians and by many communities within the church. Seven years ago, the entire German conference of the bishops addressed unanimously a request to the Holy See; numerous bishops from other countries joined this request. Therefore, we all are full of joy, because today I am able to grant the desire, and, in the course of this solemn liturgy, to present in the name of the church and to all faithful Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross as a blessed in the glory of God. Henceforth, we may revere her as a martyr and we will ask her to intercede for us at the throne of God. At this beatification I congratulate all of you, particularly the members of her Carmelite religious order here in Cologne, as well as the one in Echt, and the entire community of her order. Full of joy and gratefulness we see, that also Jewish sisters and brothers, particularly relatives of Edith Stein, attend to this solemn liturgy.

"Manifest yourself in the time of our distress and give me courage." (Est., 4C: 23)

2. The first reading of the today's liturgy starts with the cry for help exclaimed in the times of the Babylonian captivity by Esther, a daughter of Israel. She said to God, the Lord, when her people were menaced to death, and it affects us deeply: "My lord our king, you alone are God. Help me, who am alone and have no help but you, for I am taking my life in my hand.... You, oh Lord, chose Israel from among all peoples, and our fathers from among all their ancestors as a lasting heritage.... Save us by your power." (Est., 4C: 14-25)

The deadly fear, Esther was quivering with, emerged from the order to exterminate the Jewish people living in the Persian empire, which was given by the intervention of Haman, a powerful deadly enemy of the Jews. Esther has been instrumental in the salvation of her people, with the help of God and at the risk of her life.

3. Today's solemn liturgy puts this prayer for help, more than 2,000 years old, in the mouth of the

servant of God Edith Stein, a daughter of Israel of our century. It became up to date again, when here, in the heart of Europe, another plan was made to exterminate the Jews, determined by an insane ideology in the name of a fatal racism and executed with merciless consistency.

Simultaneously with the dramatic events of the Second World War extermination camps and combustion furnaces were constructed in haste. Several million sons and daughters of Israel found their death in these places of horror: children and old women and men. The terrific machinery of power, part of totalitarianism, didn't spare any one, and the most cruel measures were taken against everybody who had the courage to defend the Jews.

4. As a daughter of her tortured people, Edith Stein perished in Auschwitz, an extermination camp. Only temporarily she found protection from the expanding persecution of the Jews despite of her removal from Cologne to the Dutch Carmelite convent in Echt. Immediately after the occupation of the Netherlands, the National Socialists also there started the extermination of the Jews, although in the beginning excluding the baptized Jews. But after the Catholic bishops in a pastoral letter had protested sharply against the deportation of the Jews, the authorities -- as a revenge -- decreed also the extermination of Jews of Catholic faith. So it happened, that Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross went on her way to martyrdom, together with her blood sister Rosa, who too had found asylum in the Carmelite convent in Echt.

Leaving the convent, Edith took her sister by the hand, and she only said: "Let's go, we will go for our people." She had the strength, coming from the willingness to self-sacrifice inherent in the imitation of Christ. Although she seemed to be helpless she found a way to render her people a last service. Some years before that, Edith compared herself already with Queen Esther being in exile at the Persian court. One of her letters tells us: "I have confidence in the fact that the Lord has taken my life in exchange for all (the Jews). Again and again, the example of Queen Esther comes in my mind, she was the chosen one of her people to speak for them in the presence of the king. I am only a helpless poor little Esther, but the king, I was chosen by, he is great and merciful.

5. Dear brothers and sisters! In the course of this festive Mass, Esther's prayers will be followed by the second reading of Galatians. There the Apostle Paul says: "But may I never boast except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

During her life Edith Stein also found this secret of the cross, preached in this letter to the Christians by St. Paul. Jesus came to Edith, and this meeting guided her step by step into joining the Carmelite

order. In the extermination camp she died as a daughter of Israel, "for the glorification of the most holy name (of God)," and at the same time as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross -- as the one blessed by the cross.

The entire course of Edith's life is formed by an unremitting search for the truth, elucidated by the benediction of the cross. The message was first revealed to her in the person of a fellow-student's widow, who, deeply religious, didn't despair confronted with the loss of her husband, but obtained strength and confidence out of the cross. Later Edith will write referring to this experience: "that was my first meeting with the cross, with the strength of God, which is communicated to the ones who carry it.... In this moment, my disbelief was destroyed and Jesus Christ appeared in his glory, Jesus Christ in the secret of the cross."

Her own course of life, her way of the cross is deeply linked to the destiny of the Jewish people. In a prayer she confesses to the savior, to know "that it is his cross, which now will be imposed on the Jewish people." Everybody who is able to understand this message, "should willingly take it upon themselves. I was ready to do this, but he had to show me how to do it." At the same time she obtained the certitude that the more often swastikas were seen in the streets, the higher the cross of Jesus Christ rose up in her life. Joining as Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross the Cologne Carmelite convent in order to participate more deeply in the cross, she knew that she "was married to the Lord under the symbol of the cross." The day when she professed her vows, she felt like the "bride of the lamb." She was convinced that her betrothed in heaven would profoundly introduce her into the secret of the cross.

6. Teresa, the one who is blessed by the cross -- that is the name given to her by the order. It was the same woman who started her religious journey with the conviction that no God whatever exists. As a student, 15 years old in her hometown Beslau, she decided -- as she confessed herself -- "not to pray anymore." Brought up in a Jewish family, although deeply impressed by the orthodox religious faith of her mother, during her early years and years of studies she came under the intellectual influence of atheistic ideology. She didn't believe in the existence of a personal God.

During her studies in psychology, philosophy, history and German philology in Breslau, Goettingen and Freiburg, God didn't play any role in her life. However, she rendered homage to a "highly sophisticated ethical idealism." According to her highly developed intellectual talent she didn't accept anything without looking into it, not even the faith of her own people. She wanted to get to the

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# BEATIFICATION

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roots of everything, by herself. That's why she was searching unremittently for the truth. Later, passing these times of intellectual restlessness in review, she recognized the important stage of her own inner process of growing mature, so she stated: "my searching for the truth has been a single prayer," -- a magnificent statement of comfort for all those, who have a lot of difficulties in believing in God! Even searching for the truth is exceedingly searching for God.

Under the strong influence of her teacher Husserl and his phenomenological school, the searching student turned more and more emphatically to philosophical questions. Little by little she learned "to envisage everything without prejudices and to throw off the 'blinkers.'" She met Max Scheler in Goettingen, and so Edith Stein ultimately came in touch with Catholic ideas. She herself wrote about this: "The barriers of the rationalistic prejudices, under which I grew up, were removed, and I didn't even realize it, suddenly there was the faith. The people I had lived with every day, whom I admired, lived in this faith."

The long wrestling with the personal decision to believe in Jesus Christ came to an end when she started to read, influenced by a close girl friend, the autobiographical book "The Life of St. Teresa of Avila." She was enthralled and didn't stop to read until it was finished: "In the moment I closed the book, I told myself: 'That is the truth.'" She read all night, until sunrise. And she found the truth, not the truth of philosophy but the personal truth, the greater love of God. Edith Stein was searching for the truth and she found God. Immediately she got baptized and converted to the Catholic Church.

7. For Edith Stein the christening ceremony didn't mean at all a break with the Jewish people. On the contrary she said: "I gave up practicing my Jewish religion as a girl of 14 years, and only then, after I found God I felt myself as a Jewess again." Ever she is conscious of the fact that she "belongs not only intellectually but also by blood and race to Jesus Christ." She is afflicted with the sorrow she caused her mother converting to the Catholic faith. Even after the conversion she accompanied her to the services in the synagogue, praying the psalm together with her. When her mother stated that it could be also possible to be religious in a Jewish way, Edith answered: "Certainly, if you never had the chance to know anything else."

After reading the work of St. Teresa of Avila, joining the Carmelite order was the goal. But she had to wait an entire decade before, during a prayer, Jesus Christ showed her the way. She worked as a teacher and lecturer in schools and she was engaged in educational work, mostly in Speyer, later also in Muenster. Henceforth, she endeavored to connect science and faith, and to impart both together. In this matter she wanted to be only "God's passive agent." "I will direct all those to him who come to me." At the same time she led the life a woman of the convent does; privately she took the three vows and became the great woman, inspired by prayer. Studying intensively the work of Thomas Aquinas, she learned that it was possible "to practice scientific work as a service for God.... Only that experience helped me make the decision (after having converted) to be concerned seriously with scientific work again." With all deep respect to sciences, clearly Edith Stein realized that it was not science but love which defines the heart of Christianity.

She didn't escape from the real world, neither did she from any responsibility, when she entered in 1933 the Carmelite convent in Cologne: this represented entering even more decidedly in the imitation of Jesus Christ. During a first colloquy she told her prioress: "It is not human activity which helps us, it is the Passion. My desire is to participate in this." For the same reason during the investiture there was no other desire than to be named in the order "of the cross." And she chose the words of St. John of the Cross to be printed on her holy image: "My sole profession from now on will be only to love."

Dear brothers and sisters! We, together with the entire church bow to this great woman, to whom we could henceforth invoke as the blessed one in the glory of God. We bow to the great daughter of Israel, who found her true faith and her vocation for the people of God in Christ the savior. According to her



Artwork by Kristin McCarthy, sister of Teresia Benedicta McCarthy.

point of view the ones who join a Carmelite order "will not be lost for their people and family but, instead they are only in that moment really won; for it is our proper profession to represent all in the presence of God." Since "under the cross" she started to understand the Jewish people's destiny, our newly blessed daughter today was more and more deeply taken into the secret of salvation by Jesus Christ, in order to bear the suffering of the people together with him and to participate in helping to expiate the existing shameful wrong and injustice in the world. As "Benedicta a Cruce" — the one blessed by the cross, she wanted to carry the cross with Jesus Christ for the salvation of her people, of her church, of the entire world. She offered herself as a "sacrificial offering for the sake of the true peace," and particularly for her menaced and humiliated Jewish people, having realized that once again God was imposing his hand heavily on his people, she was convinced "that her people's destiny was her own destiny."

Starting to write her last theological work "The Sciences of the Cross" in the Carmelite convent of Echt, which remained unfinished because her own Way of the Cross was to start, Sister "Benedicta a Cruce" stated: "talking about the sciences of the cross does not only mean ...a theoretical thing... but lively, real and effective truth." Seriously endangered by the deadly menace to her Jewish people, she was ready to fulfill with her own life what she had already realized years before: "There is a vocation for suffering together with the Passion of Jesus Christ, and by it to participate in his message of salvation ... Jesus Christ lives in the lives of those who follow after him and in them he is suffering; suffering united with the Lord means to participate bearing his Passion, being part of his message of salvation and being fruitful in it."

Together with her people and "for" her people Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross went into the extermination camp. She accepted the pain and the death not only in a passive way but she also linked this consciously to the expiatory sacrificial offering of our redeemer Jesus Christ. "With joy I will accept now the death which God already intended for me, being thoroughly subject to his most holy will," she wrote some years before in her last will: "I ask god to accept my suffering, so that it may serve towards his honor and his glorification, towards all matters concerning the holy church." The Lord granted her petition.

Today the church represents us with Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross as a blessed martyr,

as an example of heroic imitation of Christ, to be looked up to and as an example. Let us take her message, the message of this woman of the spirit and the sciences, who saw the summit of wisdom in the science of the cross, from this woman who was a great daughter of the Jewish people and who was a deeply religious woman among the millions of creatures. She saw her cross coming towards her, inexorably: she didn't escape despite all the horror, but she even embraced it, in Christian hope, with her last love, and with the secret lying in the idea of Easter she welcomed it: "Ave crux, spes unica!"

According to the message of Cardinal Hoffner communicated in his recent pastoral letter, "Edith Stein was a gift, a challenge and a promise in our times. She should be our intercessor with God, for us and for our people, and for all peoples."

8. Dear brothers and sisters! Today the church of the 20th century is living a great day: We bow deeply, in the evidence of the life and the death of Edith Stein, the outstanding daughter of Israel and at the same time the daughter of a Carmelite order. Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross who united a dramatic synthesis of our century within her rich life. The synthesis of a story full of wounds, which are still hurting, but many responsible men and women are engaged all the time until now in healing these wounds. At the same time it is the synthesis of the full truth about human beings, created in a heart which remained restless and unfulfilled for a long time, "until it found peace in God."

Being spiritually present at the site of the martyrdom of this great Jewess and Christian martyr, the locality where all this horror took place, we are called today to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, of the savior and the son of man, the Lord, the redeemer.

As the apostle of God's unfathomable secret of the salvation he talks to the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob: "You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the father in spirit and truth; and indeed the father seeks such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jo 4:22-24)

Beatified is Edith Stein, Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a true worshiper of God -- in spirit and in truth.

Yes, she is beatified! Amen.