

SACRED MOMENTS OF SAINT EDITH STEIN AS WE CELEBRATE THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – 9 JANUARY 2022



The Baptism of Christ, c. 1535/1540 by Paris Bordone | public domain

THANK YOU

Thank you for the feedback during the week about the prayer to Saint Edith Stein, and requests for more information about her faith.

[\[COVID Prayer for the Intercession of Saint Edith Stein in 2022 - print English & Arabic\]](#)

As we reflect on the baptism of Jesus and our own baptismal journeys, let us recall Edith Stein's journey to baptism.



BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

Edith was born in 1891 and grew up worshipping God in her Jewish family tradition.

Somehow, she lost her faith, and became an atheist.
However, God still continued to reach out to her.
God never gives up on any of us.

This year we celebrate the Centenary Year of Edith entering into the Catholic community.

On January 1st 1922, Edith was baptised at St Martin's in Bergzabern.
On February 2nd that year, she received the Sacrament of Confirmation, in the Bishop's chapel in Speyer.

How did she move from atheism to a deep love of God?

What is the story of her re-discovery of God?

Let us reflect on some of the moments that inspired her.

THE GENUINE WITNESS OF ANOTHER IN PRAYER

In 1916, she and a friend toured the old section of Frankfurt. They visited the cathedral, and Edith noticed a woman enter and kneel in a pew and prayed. The woman had come to pray briefly to God. Edith was impressed that the woman seemed to converse intimately with God. Edith never forgot the experience.

RELIGIOUS ART

Continuing their exploration of Frankfurt, Edith and Pauline were impressed by a group sculpture of Mary the mother of Jesus, John, Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus.

Edith described the effect as *'overpowering'*.

Originally the sculptures had been at a 16th Century Flemish grave.



[Website of Discalced Carmelite Friars, Washington](#)

THE FAITH OF A FRIEND

Edith was close to the Reinach family who became Christian. She offered to assist Anna Reinach in 1918, who was widowed after her husband Adolf's death in 1917. While working her way through Adolf's academic writings, Edith was touched by the strength of Anna's faith, and the comfort and courage that Anna's belief in God gave her.

RELIGIOUS WRITING

During the 1921 summer, Edith visited another friend, Hedwig Conrad-Martius. While enjoying the visit, she picked up a book from the home library to read. As a philosopher, Edith searched for meaning and truth. In reading the book, *'Her Life'* by St Teresa of Avila, the 16th Century Carmelite author, Edith found her calling. Her response to reading the book was "that is the truth". She knew that she was now called by God to be baptised a Catholic, and to enter, at some future stage, the Carmelite Sisters. Edith found the meaning and truth she sought, in St Teresa of Avila's life story.

Let us pause and note some of the sacred moments in our own lives.

[we pause and reflect]

GOSPEL OF LUKE 3:15-16 AND 21-22

During the year we will reflect on how we communicate our faith.

How do prepare people for Jesus?

John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus.

"As the people were filled with expectation,

*and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John,
whether he might be the Messiah,
John answered all of them by saying,*

*'I baptize you with water;
but one who is more powerful than I is coming;
I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'*

Yesterday I met with three families, in preparation for the baptism of their children. We pray for all families who journey with their children this year for the Sacrament of Baptism.

In today's Gospel we are informed of what happened at the baptism of Jesus.

*'Now when all the people were baptized,
and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,
the heaven was opened,
and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.
And a voice came from heaven,
"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."'*

We note from the Gospel passage above, that it was when Jesus was praying that the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and the voice from heaven declared who Jesus was.

How does the Holy Spirit prompt us?

[we pause and reflect]

We are told in the next verse

'Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work.'

When and how did we begin our work for Jesus?

[we pause and remember]

On March 30th 1917 the Decree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred on Edith. Her doctoral dissertation was titled "*On the Problem of Empathy*".

From early 1922, she deliberately drew strength from God's love as a teacher and a philosopher.

Later, she inspired audiences as a faith educator.

On the 14th October 1933, Edith entered the Carmelite monastery as a postulant, and on the 15th April 1934, she became a Carmelite Novice, choosing the name Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

She continued to write and share her gifts from God.

On the 21st April 1938, she made her final profession as a Carmelite Sister.

She and her sister Rosa were murdered by the Nazis in 1942 in The Holocaust. Her last work was *'The Science of the Cross'*, a book about St John of the Cross. It was published after her death.

Edith discovered God calling her to use her gifts for others. Edith made a difference to the world then, and to our world today.

Our call is based on the invitation of Jesus to love God and to love our neighbour. A love based on the dignity of people, created in God's image and likeness.

Let us reflect this week on how we live our baptismal call.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010922.cfm>

