

SAINT BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS (EDITH STEIN): CROSS AND THE TRUTH

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Abstract:

Pencarian kebenaran sejati merupakan perjuangan setiap orang yang berpikir khususnya mereka yang “skeptik” terhadap kebenaran-kebenaran iman. Edith Stein yang berpersonalitas sangat keras dengan kemampuan intelektualnya yang sangat tinggi berhadapan dengan krisis iman sejak masih muda. Dia tidak percaya kepada eksistensi Allah sebagai seorang Pribadi. Dia adalah seorang “atheist” yang giat mencari kebenaran melalui ilmu pengetahuan – khususnya lewat fenomenologi yang diajarkan oleh Edmund Husserl. Perjumpaannya dengan beberapa filsuf beriman seperti Max Scheller dan Adolf Reinach telah menimbulkan kerinduannya untuk bertobat dan oleh rahmat Tuhan ia dituntun kepada suatu pengalaman iman ketika membaca buku *Riwayat Hidup Teresa dari Avila*.

Keywords:

High intellectual, an atheist, Sceptical, Phenomenology, grace, existence, essence, love, Truth, desire

INTRODUCTION

“What is the Truth?” (Jn.18:38). The quest for “truth” is the fundamental desire of every human being. This question has been crucial from ancient times from one generation to the next generations and to everyone who is sceptical about the meaning of the truth. The question about “truth”, too, was one of the most fundamental question and struggle of a famous philosopher like, Edith Stein, “who eventually

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discovered the real truth by studying the philosophy of phenomenology and confirmed by reading the book about the life of St Teresa of Avila.”¹

In our time, truth is often mistaken by the opinion of many people. “There is a widespread belief that one should use truth even against love or vice versa, but *truth and love need each other*.”² Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) is a witness to this reality and became a “martyr of love”. She has walked a very long journey to get her martyrdom. Starting her journey in search for the truth, she arrived in the Truth Itself. The question is, what exactly did she discovered and how did she find it? What is the meaning of that truth for herself? These questions will be discussed in this paper.

EARLY LIFE OF EDITH STEIN

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross also known as Edith Stein “Edith Stein was born on October 12, 1891 in a Jewish family in Breslau.”³ “She was born during the period when Jewish families celebrate Yom Kippur, the most important festival of the Jews, the Day of Atonement. Edith believed that her birth on that particular holy day had a special meaning.”⁴ As she explains in her autobiography: “This is the highest of all Jewish festivals, the day on which the High Priest used to enter the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice of atonement for himself and for the people.”⁵ “She was the youngest child of a total of eleven children of a Jewish-Orthodox couple Siegfried Stein and Auguste Courant Stein. She lost her father in July 1893 when she was only 21 months old.”⁶

¹ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family (1891-1916)*, volume 1, ICS Publication, Washington D.C. 1986, 420. (Note: This book is the main source for the author in writing a biography of Edith Stein).

² JOHN PAUL II, “Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein”, no. 6, in ‘https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_11101998_stein.html, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican 1998 (accessed on 28th December 2017).

³ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family...*, 420.

⁴ The Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province, “Pillars of Carmel: Modern Carmelite Saints”, in *Mount Carmel: A Review of the Spiritual Life*, volume 57/4, (October-December 2009), 29.

⁵ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family...*, 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

Since her childhood, Edith Stein had tried to enter into the mystery of herself. The first great transformation took place in her life when she was about seven years old. She began to develop a solitary or self-contained character and started to build her-own-self. As a result, it really shaped her character that she does not give up so easily against the hardships she faced. With the development of self-awareness in full, she wanted to grow up fast, especially for achieving her dreams of a bright future.

Strong personality and high intellectual capability made her facing into crisis in her young age, especially when she began dabbling in the world of education, between the ages of 13 years to 21 years. Edith Stein had a crisis in her faith life. "She did not believe in the existence of God as a Person."⁷ And "that formed an important part of Edith's life: **Her searching for the truth.**"⁸ "She was extremely intelligent and talented, and from her earliest years she showed a great desire for learning and intellectual inquiry."⁹

THE DESIRE OF THE TRUTH

Edith Stein search for the truth began when she entered at the University of Education. After studying for four semesters at the University of Breslau, Edith continued her studies at the University of Gottingen. At the University, she studied philosophy and psychology. "When she studied at Göttingen, Edith still regards herself as **an atheist.**"¹⁰ It was here that she met with a new experience and was very interested in a new subject, **Phenomenology** taught by Edmund Husserl. "Phenomenology is from the Greek word, *Phenomenon*, mean, *appearance*. In philosophy, the term is used in the first sense, amid debates of theory and methodology. Phenomenology is the study of *phenomena*: literally, *appearances* as opposed to *reality*."¹¹ "Phenomenology is specifically talking about the

⁷ Edison TINAMBUNAN (ed.), *Perempuan Menurut Pandangan Edith Stein*, (=Women in the View of Edith Stein) Dioma, Malang 2003, 3.

⁸ The The Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province, "Pillars of Carmel: Modern Carmelite Saints"..., 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰ Edison TINAMBUNAN (ed.), *Perempuan Menurut Pandangan Edith Stein*..., 5.

¹¹ SMITH, David Woodruff. "Phenomenology" in ***The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*** (Winter 2016 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/#3> (accessed on 8th January 2017).

consciousness and **structure**, or the ways in which the phenomenon appears to us. Husserl argues that there is truth to everyone and people can achieve. To discover this truth, one must go back to the reality of the self.”¹² Dermot Moran writes more detail about this in the book of *Introduction to Phenomenology*. He said:

"Back to the things themselves" is the core of the approach used to describe the reality according to what it is. This is because each object has its nature and essence that speaks to us if we open ourselves to the phenomena received. Requirements to discover the essence of the object is an object must release it from the influence of the common arguments-arguments, concepts and general theories. If symptoms was observed, then the objects speak for themselves about the essence and understood through to the intuition as stated by Edmund Husserl: But experience is not an opening through which a world, existing prior to all experience, shines into a room of consciousness; it is not a mere taking of something alien to consciousness into consciousness... Experience is the performance in which for me, the experiencer, **experienced being “is there”, and is there as what it is, with the whole content and the mode of being that experience itself, by the performance going on in its intentionality, attributes to it.**¹³

Here, “Edith Stein was introduced into the new experience of going into a religious atmosphere and philosophy, because the professors had extensive knowledge of philosophy and life of deep faith.”¹⁴

“In Göttingen, Edith watched the scientists study the structure and meaning of universal truths in depth. They discussed their philosophical views that were new as a quest for seeking the "truth", and "holiness" of the existing and the purity of the reality of everything.”¹⁵ Atheist Edith confronted with the philosophers who wanted to understand the true mystery of all that exists, the Jewish and Christian ideas about the

¹² Dermot MORAN, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, London and New York (NY) 2000, 4-6.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Edison TINAMBUNAN (ed.), *Perempuan Menurut Pandangan Edith Stein...*, 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

revelation at the centre of their attention. Edith studied the teaching of the Greek philosophers and the Scholastics. "Here she was so impressed by the life of Max Scheller and Adolf Reinach. Max Scheller was a Jew who converted to Catholicism."¹⁶ Also in Gottingen, Edith learnt to turn to God through study and through the experience of interaction with friends. She kept looking for the best way to get back to God as she says in the book of her biography:

In Gottingen I had learned to respect questions of faith and persons who had faith. With some of my women friends, I even went to one of the Protestant churches at times. (The sermons there, habitually mixing politics with religion, naturally could not lead me to the knowledge of pure faith; and they often turned me off). I had not yet found a way back to God.¹⁷

Then in 1916, Edith earned her doctorate degree of Philosophy after completing a thesis "On the Problem of Empathy" with the title of "Summa Cum Laude", and then she was invited by Edmund Husserl to be his assistant at the University Freiburg. However, that position did not make her heart happy and peaceful.

As time passed, in 1917, Edith was guiding a widow whose husband had died as a result of Nazi atrocities. The husband of the widow was Adolf Reinach, one of the professors of Gottingen. Worrying about how she could console the young grieving widow, Edith was amazed to find herself consoled by Anne Reinach, a convert to Christianity from Judaism. In that moment, Edith recalled years later, she came face to face with "Christ in the mystery of the Cross". This she said, on seeing Anne's serenity in sorrow "was my first encounter with the Cross and the divine strength that it inspires in those who bear it."¹⁸

A year later in 1918, Edith gave up her post as professor's assistant at the University Freiburg and returned to Breslau. "Since that time, there was a great upheaval in Edith Stein's own self, in which there was a strong

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family...*, 316.

¹⁸ The Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province, "Pillars of Carmel: Modern Carmelite Saints"..., 30.

impulse in her to become a Catholic.”¹⁹ She was sad because to become Catholic means she will bring sorrow and suffering to her family who loved her very much, but on the other hand she realized that she would never have peace in mind if she did not respond to God's call. “Edith was discerning whether to follow Christ in the Catholic or the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church.”²⁰

“After experiencing a very tough journey, finally in the summer 1921, she decided to enter the Catholic Church.”²¹ The decision was taken after she visited a friend's house Hedwig Conrad-Martius in Bergzabern, an unexpected experience settled the matter for Edith. The incident had occurred on one night, when they entered into the library and her friend left her alone in that place. “By randomly, she chose and read the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. She was very interested in the book. She could not stop reading the book before it was finished. She read the whole book without stopping until in the morning. After reading the book, she closed it and said to herself **“This is the Truth!”**”²²

“In St. Teresa’s response to Christ’s love, Edith found the answer she had sought.”²³ Therefore, “we can say that the “true” conversion of Edith Stein took place with the reading of St. Teresa of Avila. In fact, it is from this moment on, she feels strong in the desire to know and to meet the God of love, the God of mercy and peace.”²⁴ St. Teresa writes in her biography:

Once while in prayer [...], I was given knowledge of a truth that is the fulfilment of all truths. I don’t know how to explain this because I didn’t see anything. I was told without seeing anyone, but I clearly understood that it was Truth itself telling me: “This is no small thing I do for you, because it is one of the things for which you owe Me a great deal; for all the harm that comes to the

¹⁹ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family...*, 420.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Tiziana CAPUTO, *La ricerca della verità, l’itinerario teologico-fundamentale in Edith Stein*, Il Pozzo Di Giacobbe, Napoli 2009, 32.

²³ L. GELBER –Romaeus LEUVEN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein: Life in a Jewish Family...*, 420.

²⁴ Tiziana CAPUTO, *La ricerca della verità...*, 33.

world comes from its not knowing the truths of Scripture in clarity and truth; not one iota of Scripture will fall short.²⁵

Based on this passage it was clearly that the grace of God was working within her because “she could feel in her heart something that her mind did not quite understand something that most surveyed phenomenology from external reality, but from deep within her heart touched by grace.”²⁶ “It is an experience of enlightenment which is indelible in the life of Edith Stein. This enlightening epiphany of God overcomes all resistance, and any uncertainty collapses.”²⁷

“Encountering God, Edith Stein met herself and felt a new hope. It is a knowledge of life, an experience that starts from within: it is the finding of an event indelibly etched in itself.”²⁸ Finally, Edith discovered the truth that she sought for years to studying philosophy when she opens up to the grace of God who was working in her heart while reading a book of St. Teresa of Avila.

With the philosophy of phenomenology which she learned from the philosopher Edmund Husserl and confirmed by the experience of faith while reading a book St. Teresa of Avila, “she realized the truth of God's existence, and its essence is love” because God is Love. Therefore, for her, **“the Truth has a name that is, Jesus Christ”** in the unity of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who brings her to the truth itself because “He is the Truth, the Way and the Life” (Jn. 14:6). Therefore, during the canonization of Edith Stein, Saint Pope John Paul II said:

For a long time Edith Stein was a seeker. Her mind never tired of searching and her heart always yearned for hope. She traveled the arduous path of philosophy with passionate enthusiasm. Eventually she was rewarded: **she seized the truth**. Or better: she was seized by it. Then she discovered that truth had a name: Jesus Christ. From that moment on, the incarnate Word was her One and All. Looking back as a Carmelite on this period of her life, she

²⁵ Kieran KAVANAUGH, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington D.C. 1976, 354.

²⁶ Tiziana CAPUTO, *La ricerca della verità...* 33.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

wrote to a Benedictine nun: "Whoever seeks the truth is seeking God, whether consciously or unconsciously."²⁹

From the message of Saint Pope John Paul II, it is important to realize the presence of God who speaks to us in every day of our lives; or live in consciousness. This is the purpose of the philosophy of phenomenology taught by Edmund Husserl. He also became an important tool in bringing Edith Stein as she sought to find the truth. She writes:

The goal of phenomenology is to clarify and thereby to find the ultimate basis of all knowledge. To reach this goal it considers nothing that is in any way "doubtful," nothing that can be eliminated. In the first place, it does not use any results of science whatever. This is self-evident, for a science which proposes ultimately to clarify all scientific knowledge must not, in turn, be based on a science already extant, but must be grounded in itself.³⁰

In Edith's above statement is seen that every person who seeks the truth with consciously or unconsciously is looking for God because a person only can find the true meaning of his or her life in God, the Creator. In fact, man will never find the true happiness before united with God who actually lives in deepest of heart as experienced by St. Augustine: "You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."³¹

"After being baptized on January 1, 1922, she begun a new life, in everything is geared towards the implementation of the 'I am' in response to God's call. She was now open to the reception of grace and to openness to the Truth, of the revelation of the mystery of God."³² Therefore, "Edith responded to the call of God promptly." She loved God totally giving herself and entered the Contemplative Carmelite Monastery. In Carmel,

²⁹ JOHN PAUL II, "Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein", no. 5.

³⁰ Waltraut STEIN, *Edith Stein, On the Problem of Empathy*, ICS Publication, Washington D.C. 1989, 3.

³¹ SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confessions: Book 1:1*, a New Translation by Hendry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, New York (NY) 1991.

³² Tiziana CAPUTO, *La ricerca della verità...*, 34.

her desire to live only for God, living in silence of Carmel and embrace everyone in her through prayer is fulfilled.

Sharing Her Sufferings: Meaning of the Cross

Edith's love for God is increasingly become concrete with the expression of her love for her own people. "Although Edith was in the monastery, she was sharing with the suffering of her people when in 1935 the persecution of the Jews peaked."³³ "Her search for the truth goes hand and hand with her sacrifice of her life, united to the sacrifice on the cross."³⁴ She was, after all, suffering as a German and a Christian as well as a Jew. But with great faith to Christ, he offered her suffering as the vocation to participate in the Lord's suffering for the salvation of the humankind. "Her prayers were for all humanity: that Germany would be delivered from the Anti-Christ -- Hitler -- and that the world would find peace. As a Red Cross nurse during World War I, she had learned the misery of war, the bitter torment of both soldiers and civilians."³⁵ In letter of 1932, she had spoken of this desire:

This is a vocation to suffer with Christ and thereby to cooperate with him in his work of salvation. When we are united with the Lord, we are members of the mystical Body of Christ: Christ lives on in His members and continues to suffer in them. And the suffering borne in union with the Lord is his suffering, incorporated in the great work of salvation and fruitful therein. That is a fundamental premise of all religious life, above all of the life of Carmel, to stand proxy for sinners through voluntary and joyous suffering, and to cooperate in the salvation of humankind.³⁶

³³ Tiziana CAPUTO, *La ricerca della verità...*, 12.

³⁴ Waltraut STEIN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, ICS Publication, Washington D.C. 1992, 2014, xi.

³⁵ Freda Mary OBEN, "Saint Edith Stein and the Meaning of the Cross", in <http://archive.wf-f.org/07-1-Stein.html>, (accessed on 8th February 2017).

³⁶ The Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province, "Pillars of Carmel: Modern Carmelite Saints" ..., 32.

“Edith’s pilgrimage induced her to place herself not only into the shoes of the oppressed, but, in the very shoes of Christ, to walk in His footsteps to the end. For, “The path of human destiny is a path from Christ to Christ”.³⁷ Hence, St. Edith Stein saw herself as “Queen Esther’s shoes”; “a little Esther” in modern times. According to the Bible story, Queen Esther had been made queen to save her people (Jews) and of course suffer passively through it (cf. Est.2). Likewise with St. Edith Stein’s position. This she writes in a letter in 1938. She said:

I also trust in the Lord’s having accepted my life for all 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. That is such a great comfort (Stein, Self-Portrait 291).³⁸

Edith Stein had personally experienced the meaning of redemption when she accepted the Catholic faith. She had been an atheist from the age of thirteen to twenty-one years, and she always remembered somewhat sadly her “**radical sins of disbelief**”.³⁹

“Edith’s fate is mirrored by something she wrote in a letter a few months before her arrest: “A Scientia Crucis” [Knowledge of the Cross] can be gained only when one comes to feel the Cross radically.”⁴⁰ Then one commentator has suggested that Edith’s death was “the sign of a sacrificial holocaust, atoning for those responsible and, as Edith believed, turning the hatred into the blessing. We can say that in the fullest sense of the word, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, as she was known in Carmel, was indeed “Blessed by the Cross”.⁴¹ She writes in *The Hidden Life* a beautiful reflection which she wrote for the feast of John of the Cross as:

The Sight of the world in which we live, the need and misery, and the abyss of human malice, again and again dampens jubilation

³⁷ Freda Mary OBEN, “Saint Edith Stein and the Meaning of the Cross”....

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Freda Mary OBEN, “Saint Edith Stein and the Meaning of the Cross”....

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

over the victory of light [...]. The battle between Christ and the Antichrist is not yet over. The followers of Christ have their place in this battle, and their chief weapon is the cross.⁴²

Therefore, the cross is “that sign which stands upright for all eternity as the only way to heaven.”⁴³ “The cross which she said is an expectation, led her from this world to heaven.”⁴⁴ She embraced the Cross of Jesus with deep faith, love without limits and meaningful expectations. She received the Cross with love and with great faith of the persecution of the Nazi-German troops until her last breath.

Edith loved the Cross so much because she believed that “*The Cross greets us through the heart of the Saviour*”⁴⁵ and this she says, is what she asks us:

The Crucified One looks down on us and asks us whether we are still willing to honour what we promised [in our vows] ...dishonour... Therefore, the Saviour today looks at us, solemnly probing us, and asks each one of us: Will you remain faithful to the Crucified? Consider carefully! The world is in flames, the battle between Christ and the Antichrist has broken into the open. If you decide for Christ, it could cost you your life. Carefully consider what you promise.⁴⁶

“Edith suffered silently and bore the burden of the cross of Jesus, carrying it with faith and hope in Christ because she realized that she not only has a relationship with Jesus spiritually but also she is related to all humanity, namely as a Jew to the Jewish nation, a nation in which Jesus Himself was born, and she felt proud to belong his people.”⁴⁷ “St Edith Stein says to us all: *Do not accept anything as the truth if it lacks love. And*

⁴² Waltraut STEIN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein...*, 91.

⁴³ Freda Mary OBEN, Oben “Saint Edith Stein and the Meaning of the Cross”

⁴⁴ Edison TINAMBUNAN (ed.), *Perempuan Menurut Pandangan Edith Stein...*, 22.

⁴⁵ Waltraut STEIN (ed.), *The Collected Works of Edith Stein...*, 94.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cf. Fr. Paul Schenck, Edith Stein: “*Daughter of Israel, Daughter of the Church*”, in <http://www.catholic.org/news/saints/story.php?id=51973>, (accessed on 11th November 2015).

do not accept anything as love which lacks truth! One without the other becomes a destructive lie."⁴⁸

This experience of faith so changed her whole life that her whole life was imbued with the love of Christ, as expressed by Pope John Paul II during her canonization by saying: "*The love of Christ was the fire that inflamed the life of St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.*"⁴⁹ Her loves show clearly during the week between her arrest and death in the concentration camp, Sister Benedicta of the Cross was an angel of consolation to the other prisoners. "The round-up on August 2, 1942, led to deportation of several hundred priests, religious, Catholic laity and thousands of Jewish origin as reprisal for the Dutch bishop's condemnation of the German occupation forces' anti-Semitism."⁵⁰ On August 9, 1942, Edith and Rosa Stein and their companions arrived at the Auschwitz concentration camp, where they were gassed and cremated. She was canonized as a saint and martyr by Pope John Paul II at the Basilica of St. Peter-Rome on October 11, 1998.⁵¹

The Relevance

Firstly, "**Faith and Reason**": Philosophy is the servant of theology, and theology is subject to faith. It is important to realize that even though philosophy is very important as a means of seeking truth but in fact people still in need of divine revelation to discover the real truth. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote:

It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God, besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: The eye hath not seen, o God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee (Isa. ix, vi. 4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain

⁴⁸ JOHN PAUL II, "Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein", no. 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 5.

⁵⁰ John SULLIVAN, *An Hour with Edith Stein, Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*, Liguori Publication, Missouri 2006, 8-9.

⁵¹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, "Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein", no. 2.

truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that, besides philosophical science built up by reason there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.⁵²

Edith Stein's experience of faith, as a philosopher and atheist, who had been guided by the grace of God and then experienced a profound conversion, proves the above statement of St. Thomas. "Edith persevered through life in seeking the truth of the existence of God and everything that existed for many years through the study of philosophy, and finally bowed to the mystery of the love of Christ that burns in her heart, and at last came to understand that God is not a God of knowledge."⁵³ God is love (1 Jn 4: 8). "God is not only known through knowledge, but also realized through the experience of faith."⁵⁴ This is very useful for the evangelization of the people of modern times.

Secondly, the discovery of the meaning of the Cross of Christ saves: "Edith Stein teaches that faithful should love the cross, and not try to evade it."⁵⁵ However, Edith also reminded that the mystery of the love of Christ is implied through His death on the cross. It cannot be understood only by the intellect alone, but it should be understood with the eyes of faith. Therefore, aware of what her Jewish origin implied, Edith Stein spoke eloquently about them: "Beneath the Cross! I understood the

⁵² THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, Volume 1a QQ.1-119, 1a II ae QQ. 1-4, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Christian Classics, Notre Dame, New York (NY) 1948), Q. 1, Art. 1.

⁵³ Edison TINAMBUNAN (ed.), *Perempuan Menurut Pandangan Edith Stein...*, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8

⁵⁵ The Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province, "Pillars of Carmel: Modern Carmelite Saints" ..., 33.

destiny of God's People.... Indeed, today I know far better what it means to be the Lord's bride under the sign of the Cross. **But since it is a mystery, it can never be understood by reason alone.**"⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

Search for the real truth is not enough just to look through the ingenuity of reason alone, but also necessary to openness of heart to realize the presence of God, who is the mystery in the heart. Therefore, St. Pope John Paul II gave a very important message to the Christian youth in modern times in his homily during the canonization of Edith Stein. He said:

Her experience is an example to us. The modern world boasts of the enticing door which says: Everything is permitted. It ignores the narrow gate of discernment and renunciation. I am speaking especially to you, young Christians, particularly to the many altar servers who have come to Rome these days on pilgrimage: ***Pay attention! Your life is not an endless series of open doors! Listen to your heart! Do not stay in the surface, but go to the heart of things!*** And when the time is right, have the courage to decide! The Lord is waiting for you to put your freedom in his good hands.⁵⁷

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⁵⁶ JOHN PAUL II, "Homily of John Paul II for the Canonization of Edith Stein" ..., no. 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

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