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St. Edith Stein: What Kind of
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Introduction

When one reflects upon the life and death of the now canonized Edith Stein, the Roman Catholic Church's choice to declare her a saint may at first appear to be unproblematic. The Church canonized Edith on October 11, 1998, on the grounds that she displayed a heroic love for the suffering Christ and died as a Catholic martyr in 1942 in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. In the homily of her canonization Mass, John Paul II declared, "The love of Christ was the fire that inflamed the life of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross...[She] is offered to us today as a model to inspire us" (#5; #8). What does the Church find so venerable about Edith? She exhibited an immense intellectual capacity as an atheist and a philosopher who eventually converted to Christianity in 1922, entered the Carmelite order at Cologne in 1933, and was targeted as one of the 300 Jewish-born Catholics taken from Holland and murdered by the Nazis in 1942. In short, then, a female atheist philosopher who eventually came to see herself as sacrificing her life *imitatio Christi* during the Shoah appears quite attractive to the Church in its quest to discover extraordinary lives testifying to the power of Christ.

Furthermore, greater reflection upon the Church's decision will illuminate certain aspects of her identity which distinguish her: she was born Jewish and, after surmounting her atheism and converting to Christianity, saw herself as returning with even greater loyalty to Judaism through her Catholic identity. In the homily at her beatification Mass on May, 1, 1987, John Paul II quoted Edith's own reflections about the relationship between her Jewish and Christian identities: "I had given up my practice of the Jewish religion as a girl of 14. My return to God made me feel Jewish again" (qtd. in #7). Edith thus understood herself as embodying a sort of synthesis between Judaism and Christianity: in her eyes, it was only when she converted to Catholicism that she could rediscover the spiritual value of her Jewish roots. And John Paul II, in emphasizing Edith's Jewish and Christian identities in his beatification and canonization homilies, marked the supposed conjoining of these religions in Edith as a particular reason

for Christians and Jews to admire her. She lived as a “great daughter of Israel who found the fulfillment of her faith and her vocation for the people of God [i.e., Israel] in Christ the savior” (*Beatification Homily* #8). In this mindset, Jews and Christians should look to Edith’s life as a model for improving their relationship by recognizing their common “spiritual patrimony” as illustrated in her life (*Nostra Aetate* #4).

However, further examination into Edith’s life and canonization reveals a generally negative reaction from the Jewish community which frustrates an uncritical Catholic veneration of her. Edith’s niece Susanne Batzdorff begins to articulate the many reasons for the unenthusiastic Jewish reaction when she explains that “[Edith] was abandoning her Jewish people, her Jewish family...By entering a cloister, she was proclaiming to the outside world her desire to dissociate herself from the Jewish people” (qtd. in Friedmann 118). Although the reasons for Jewish disapproval of Edith’s canonization are diverse and multifaceted, one can begin to gain a sense of them when one point becomes clear: the Jewish community does not want the Church to promote Edith as a full Jew and thereby to ignore her separation from the Jewish community. The Church’s desire to promote an apostate to the Jews as their representative for Jewish-Catholic relations has understandably outraged and disappointed them. In the wake of this seemingly intractable interreligious problem, one may wonder what should now be done regarding Edith. I hope that examining the Catholic motivations and the Jewish reactions surrounding Edith’s beatification and canonization will shed light on this question.

Such an examination clarifies one crucial point with two important consequences. One can view the figure of Edith as a sort of *gauge* for the general climate of Jewish-Catholic relations in the latter half of the twentieth century: her canonization shows an unprecedented desire on the part of the Church after Vatican II to honor and respect Judaism as a sacred religious community. However, the canonization also brings to light many of the deeply-entrenched historical tensions and suspicions still plaguing the Jewish-Catholic relationship. When one grasps this complex point, two conclusions can be drawn. First, Edith is best left untouched in negotiating this delicate interreligious relationship (as has been attempted thus far). The Church’s promotion of her seems ultimately to have caused more discord than reconciliation, and

such an outcome defeats the purpose of appealing to Edith in the first place. Second, rejecting Edith as a symbol and promoter of Jewish-Catholic reconciliation does not foreclose the possibility of Catholics finding *any* spiritual significance from her life and death. From the Church's standpoint, Edith displayed heroic faith, hope, and love in her vocation as a Carmelite nun. Moreover, the Church has argued that she died as a Catholic martyr.¹ Reasons to venerate Edith do thus exist. However, Catholics should be attuned to the ambiguities raised by her life and death: she lived under a regime of terror in which many Christians participated, and she died because of racial and religious hatred. Venerating Edith should automatically raise Catholic consciousness about the sins perpetrated throughout Christian tradition and the dangers of allowing such atrocities to occur again.

Edith: Gauge for Jewish-Catholic Relations After Vatican I

Why Edith? Catholic Hopes Motivating the Beatification and Canonization

There are two facts which need to be held in tension with each other: John Paul II can be interpreted as honestly harboring respectful (i.e., largely historically unprecedented) intentions in canonizing Edith, and yet many in the Jewish community understandably and legitimately interpreted the canonization as a piece of the larger narrative of Christian persecution of the Jews. One can refer to these two basic facts as a framework for understanding the discourse surrounding Edith.

Regarding the Church's perspective on Edith, one should first look to John Paul II's belief in what he is accomplishing by proclaiming Edith a saint. Though various interpretations surround John Paul II's actions regarding this issue, many commentators, both Christian and Jewish, do see his focus on Edith as a genuine and positive overture toward the Jews. Eugene Fisher, a longtime player in Jewish-Catholic relations, reminds Jews and Christians that "On May 13, 1986, Pope John Paul II, continuing his papally unprecedented quest for reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People, became the first pope ever to visit the Great Synagogue of Rome, and not just to visit, but to pray with

¹ Whether Edith died because of her Jewish roots or because of her Catholic identity remains contestable. Many Jews (such as American journalist James Baaden) believe that Edith died because the Nazis viewed her as a Jew regardless of her conversion. However, Fr. Ambrose Eszer, the relator for the cause of Edith's beatification, argued that the Nazis murdered her also in retaliation against the Dutch churches' protest of the Nazi regime. The Church officially supports Fr. Eszer's argument about Edith's Catholic martyrdom (Woodward 139).

its...congregation” (“Edith Stein and Catholic-Jewish Relations” 166). There does seem to be some general recognition that John Paul II has made a special attempt to enhance the Jewish-Catholic relationship.² Moreover, John Paul II himself wanted to be understood in this positive light; throughout his homilies, he makes reference to the continuity and beauty existing between the two religions,³ thus indicating that he truly wants Christians to respect Jews as coexistent sharers in their spiritual inheritance (*Beatification Homily #7-8*).⁴

In employing this charitable reading of the Catholic intentions motivating Edith’s canonization, one can now enter into the Church’s self-understanding and can thus grasp the Church’s conscious intentions regarding Edith, especially as articulated in John Paul II’s homilies. In considering these homilies, one notices how he repeatedly refers to Edith as a “daughter of Israel and [a] faithful daughter of the church” (*Canonization Homily #2*). First, John Paul II describes Edith in this way to offer a Catholic gesture of *solidarity* with the Jews, particularly in their sufferings during the Shoah. For him, Edith was a Christian who died also because she was correctly viewed as a member of the Jewish community.⁵ Furthermore, John Paul II believes she embraced this difficult dual identity with a sense of purpose for the sake of the Jews: “With her people and ‘for’ her people Sister Teresa Benedicta of the

² Some of Edith’s relatives such as Susanne Batzdorff (Edith’s niece) and Waltraut Stein (Edith’s great niece) who witnessed the beatification in 1987 have expressed gratitude for John Paul II’s attention to Edith and to the Jews. They have thus seen John Paul II’s activity as a hopeful step in the Church’s stance toward the Jews (Cf. *Never Forget*, ed. Waltraud Herbstrith.) Furthermore, other commentators such as Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich have noted that John Paul II has made various positive gestures such as insisting on using “Shoah” rather than “Holocaust” out of sensitivity to Jewish preference (Ehrlich 131).

³ John Paul II is able to make such a claim about the continuity between Judaism and Christianity because of the official self-understanding which Christians hold about their religion: Christ, the founder and foundation of Christianity, is the fulfillment of the promises offered to the Israelites in Jewish Scriptures. Thus, when Christians strive to have spiritual intimacy with Christ, they are seeking such intimacy with a Jew and thus embracing Judaism rather than rejecting it (cf. *Beatification Homily #7*). (However, such an attitude assumes that the last legitimate Jew was Jesus, so there still exists an implicit rejection of post-Jesus Judaism in such a view. This point will be clarified in greater detail later.)

⁴ Although Edith’s cause for beatification was argued as a case of Christian martyrdom, John Paul II was attuned to the danger of offending the Jews by ignoring the role that Edith’s Jewish identity played in her death. Henry James Cargas explains, “There is a feeling among a lot of Jews that to deny even one *Jewish* death at the hands of Hitler is to betray the Holocaust even in some way” (“Edith Stein: Yes, But Not Now”). John Paul II thus makes sure to emphasize Edith’s Jewish roots alongside her Catholic religious identification as a way of acknowledging the suffering of the Jews during the Shoah.

⁵ It is also a given for John Paul II that Edith was murdered as part of the Nazi retaliation against the Dutch bishops’ protest of the Nazi regime. Thus, for John Paul II, Edith died by virtue of being both a Jew and a Christian. However, as was stated in the previous footnote, he especially wants to acknowledge in these homilies the crucial role that her Jewish roots played in her life and death.

Cross traveled the road to death with her sister Rosa” (*Beatification Homily #8*). In the Foreword to her autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family (1891-1916)*, Edith explains that her motivation for producing an autobiography focusing specifically on her Jewish background stems from her desire to combat the anti-Semitism becoming endemic to Germany:

Recent months have catapulted the German Jews out of the peaceful existence they had come to take for granted. They have been forced to reflect upon themselves...I was urged to write down what I, child of a Jewish family, had learned about the Jewish people since such knowledge is so rarely found in outsiders...From [the] sources [of the new dictators], a horrendous caricature looked out at us...[But in the Jews is] such goodness of heart, understanding, [and] warm empathy (24).

This passage, which frames her entire autobiography, reveals both Edith’s opposition to racial hatred of the Jews as well as her belief that she exists as an insider who can represent German Jews and Judaism accurately, i.e., in a truly positive light.⁶

Her affection for the Jewish community and her desire to locate herself within that community continued into the 1940s when she was dragged to her death by the Nazis. Edith describes herself in a personal letter from 1938 as Queen Esther of Jewish Scriptures who intercedes on behalf of the people so that King Ahasuerus does not exterminate them: “I have to keep thinking of Queen Esther, who was taken from her people precisely that she might represent them before the [K]ing” (qtd. in Krochmalnik 75). In this snippet of Edith’s writing, one can track Edith’s desire to identify as a full member of the Jews to intercede for them not only before her fellow Germans, but also *before God*.⁷

Edith’s self-understanding as a sort of atoning, sacrificial intercessor has been praised by various Christian commentators as illustrating the ideal stance of the Christian individual toward the sufferings of any group.⁸ Thus, Catholics see Edith as atoning not for something the Jews did, but rather, for the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis and all who participated in the Shoah. In short, then, John Paul II praised Edith for her solidarity with the Jews in two basic respects: first, she understood her Christian identity as

⁶ Edith wrote the Foreword to her autobiography in Breslau on September 21, 1933, which means that she had been Catholic for almost 12 years (she was baptized New Year’s Day of 1922) and that she would be entering the Cologne Carmel within a month (she became a Carmelite nun on October 14, 1933). In other words, Edith was speaking on behalf of the Jews from the viewpoint of being a devout Catholic.

⁷ However, as Michael Signer points out, this identification is more typological than actual (Commentary on paper).

⁸ Cf. Freda Mary Oben, “Holiness in the 20th Century” in *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein*.

allowing her to enter into Judaism with greater honesty and fidelity than before her conversion; second, in embracing her martyrdom *imitatio Christi*, she could express solidarity with the Jews in their suffering.

More specifically regarding the second point, the Catholic perspective holds that this suffering somehow gives meaning to and helps the suffering of the Jews: “After she began seeing the destiny of Israel from the standpoint of the cross, our newly beatified sister let Christ lead her more and more deeply into the mystery of his salvation to be able to bear the multiple pains of humankind in spiritual union with him” (John Paul II *Beatification Homily* #8). John Paul II was articulating a particular aspect of the Christian tradition’s notion of the Church as Christ’s mystical body: Christians can choose to bear their sufferings as a way of participating in the suffering of Christ, particularly on his cross. And, in so doing, they actually unite their burdens to those of Christ and thus subsequently receive Christ’s glorification and redemption. Catholics see Edith as atoning for the sins of humanity in the Shoah and suffering *imitatio Christi* for a particular purpose: to join the suffering of the Jews to the suffering of members of the mystical body.

Why does Edith’s canonization represent a distinctly *contemporary* Catholic attitude toward the Jews? Regarding the Catholic perspective, John Paul II’s promotion of Edith as a reconciling figure for Jews and Catholics illustrates a specifically post-Vatican stance toward the Jewish community. I have already alluded to *Nostra Aetate*’s mention of the common spiritual patrimony existing between Jews and Christians; additionally, *Nostra Aetate* states: “according to the apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues...[This] sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend...mutual understanding and respect” (#4). From the Church’s perspective, John Paul II promotes Edith as a positive figure for Jewish-Catholic relations because she embodies the hope of this conciliar statement: though Edith herself is preconciliar, her life and writings witness to the Christian belief in the intrinsic and ongoing sanctity of the Jews. Overall, John Paul II’s explicit endorsement of the two religions’ continuity in the midst of their remaining differences seems to be what characterizes him as a distinctly post-conciliar pope attempting to obey *Nostra Aetate*’s injunctions in his canonization of Edith.

Why Not Edith? Jewish Pain Over Her Beatification and Canonization

The Jewish community criticizes the Church's canonization of Edith because such a gesture expresses a supersessionistic attitude deeply entrenched within Christian tradition: namely, that because Christ fulfills God's promises in the Jewish covenant, the Church has replaced the Jews as God's chosen people and has thus obviated the need for the continued existence of Judaism. In the Jews' eyes, the Church's admiration of Edith's spiritual trajectory from Judaism to atheism and finally to Christianity serves only to reinforce politely a supersessionism denigrating to Judaism. Judith Hershkopf Banki, a major player in Jewish-Christian dialogue, explains this perspective:

Though perhaps not deliberate, there is an inescapable triumphalism implicit in using the name/example of a person who has abandoned your community of faith for another's purposes of reconciliation. Reconciling what to what? Supersessionist convictions cannot provide the foundation of Christian-Jewish understanding and mutual respect. (47)

Banki thus clarifies the divergent Catholic and Jewish interpretations of the canonization: on the one hand, John Paul II canonized Edith to honor Judaism and Christianity's unique spiritual connection to it. On the other hand, Jews reject Edith as a figure for Jewish-Catholic reconciliation because the Church's praise of her manifests a supersessionism placing Judaism and Christianity in an offensive precursor-fulfillment relationship.

One may now understand the specific fears that the Jews expressed in reaction to Edith's beatification. First, many Jews fear that canonizing Edith is an implicit attempt to convert Jews to Christianity. Although Pope John Paul II has never explicitly articulated the desire to utilize Edith as a conversionary tool, it is troubling that he and other Church representatives seem unaware on an official level of their having aroused this fear within the Jewish community. Furthermore, Edith herself expressed a desire to convert the Jews. In her handwritten last will dated July 9, 1939, she writes, "I ask the Lord to accept my life and death to his honor and glorification...for the expiation of the unbelief of the Jewish people and so that the Lord may be welcomed by his own people and his kingdom come in majesty" (qtd. in Friedmann 112). Edith does not explicitly say that the Jews should convert to Christianity, but she does accept their supposed unbelief as requiring expiation before God. Moreover,

this passage shows that Edith does not simply view herself as an atoning intercessor before God for the sins of humanity against the Jews—she characterizes the Jews as possessing an unbelief which also requires her atonement. This sentiment differs markedly from the way that John Paul II portrays her; as he presents her in his homilies, she seems to be a figure trying to protect the sacred Jewish community against its Nazi aggressors. However, Edith herself directly implicates the Jews as part of the reason for her atonement. After the November 1938 pogroms, she reportedly lamented, “That is the shadow of the cross which falls upon my people. Oh, if only they could see the light! That is the fulfillment of the curse which my people have called down upon themselves!” (qtd. in Krochmalnik 74). This particular statement, supposedly overheard by a fellow Carmelite nun, has never been confirmed. Nevertheless, it does highlight a very real strand in Edith’s thought: namely, that it is lamentable that the Jews have not embraced Christ, and their “unbelief” thus requires some sort of meritorious atonement so God may forgive them.

In addition to the suspicion that the Church is using Edith as part of a polite conversionary measure, the Jews harbor another suspicion: namely, that the Church’s praise of Edith as both a Christian and a Jew is a way of deflecting attention from many Christians’ complicity in the Shoah. Rabbi Polish explains the Jewish perspective, stating that:

[there] will be the presumption that in focusing its anguish about the Shoah on the fate of one saint, [the Church] is seeking to avoid coming to terms with its own role in creating a culture of Jew-hatred in Europe, and its complicity, in some measure, with the fearsome events of the Shoah itself. (“The Canonization of Edith Stein” 174)

In other words, the Church is attempting to cover up its guilty conscience concerning its entire history of persecution and aggression toward the Jews which culminated in the mass murder of the Shoah (Benhayim 133).

In explaining this deflection, Professor Joachim Köhler views Edith’s concern for the suffering of the Jews in marked contrast to the disinterest, apathy, or even implicit approval of the events of the Shoah not only by German Catholics, but also by German bishops. On the one hand, John Paul II lauded Edith for expressing such extreme solidarity with the Jews, even to the point of embracing persecution and

death with them.⁹ Even more, Edith actually requested a private meeting with the pope in 1932 to convince him of taking some sort of action on behalf of the German Jews by issuing an encyclical condemning anti-Semitism. On the other hand, the majority of Catholics did nothing in response to German anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews. The pope did not take Edith up on her request for a meeting. Moreover, many German bishops actually seemed to promote a theologically supersessionistic attitude in the 1930s and 1940s. Köhler presents a snippet from one of the 1933 homilies of Cardinal Faulhaber, archbishop of Munich, in which he argues for the spiritual disinheritance of the Jews along with the spiritual validity of Jewish Scriptures: “At that time [of Christ’s resurrection] the curtain in the Temple in Zion tore and with it the covenant between the Lord and his people...[But] a dislike of the Jews of today must not be transferred to the books of pre-Christian Judaism” (qtd. in Köhler 151). Köhler avers that such a supersessionistic attitude plagued many German Catholics and thus facilitated the events of the Shoah.¹⁰

Third, some Jews fear that Edith’s canonization is a subtle way for the Church to re-appropriate for itself the attention surrounding the Shoah. Rabbi Polish states, “Jews are Jews because we share that anguish [of the Shoah]. The Roman Catholic Church...has the capacity for appropriating the *sancta* of cultures and traditions which it incorporates and supersedes...The Church appropriated the name and role of being the true Israel to itself” (“A Painful Legacy” 15-16). Thus, for many Jews, the Jewish-Christian relationship is characterized by the Church taking and claiming for itself aspects and parts of Judaism, and these things range from Jewish Scriptures to the claim of being the true Israel. It is thus legitimate for many Jews to interpret the Church’s elevation of Edith as a way of claiming an expansive territory in the Shoah and drawing attention to the suffering of Christians.

⁹ From a Catholic perspective, Edith openly and deliberately embraced her martyrdom. However, from a Jewish perspective, enough evidence suggests that Edith attempted to escape her impending persecution and death. Ehrlich explains that Edith tried to escape to Switzerland but was denied a Swiss visa (130). Moreover, she reportedly dropped notes at stops where she had lived signaling for help en route to Auschwitz. In short, many believed that Edith wanted to live.

¹⁰ However, Köhler, among many commentators of Catholic action during the Shoah, does acknowledge that the Dutch bishops were outstanding in their opposition to the Nazi regime. By way of example, he cites how the bishops warned Catholics about the dangers of Nazism, threatened to deny the sacraments to members of the Nazi movement, and, of course, issued the letter denouncing Nazism in August of 1942 which led to the deportation of 300 Jewish-born Catholics, Edith among them (152-154).

Edith's Proper Non-Role in the Delicate Jewish-Catholic Relationship

The previous presentation has led to one basic conclusion: Catholics should desist from using Edith in any way to promote Jewish-Catholic relations. The Jewish community has tended to view the Church's treatment of her as a source of neuralgia because she seems to be in line with the Church's execrable behavior toward the Jews throughout Christian tradition. One could decide that the Church's admiration for Edith simply crystallizes the fundamental ways Jews and Christians diverge and that Jews and Christians must simply agree to disagree regarding her. However, it seems that one should reflect upon Edith within the framework that John Paul II has provided: namely, that of improving Jewish-Catholic relations. And when Edith's role is evaluated from within this framework, it seems quite clear that the Church's use of her has failed as a successful overture toward the Jewish community. One cannot deem a dialogue fruitful if one participant rejects the points offered by the other.

Furthermore, the very act of positing her as a Jewish-Christian figure callously ignores the Jewish community's own self-understanding regarding the criteria for Jewish identity. In short, for a Jew to fall away from the Jewish community and thus convert to another religion, especially to Christianity, automatically precludes the possibility of such a person identifying herself as Jewish thereafter. Yet Catholics have not seemed to take much notice of this Jewish self-understanding. Rabbi Polish concisely explains the problem, stating:

Implicit in the Christian comfortableness with the locution "Jewish-Christian" seems to be the belief that one can embrace Christian faith and remain, in some way, part of the Jewish people. From the perspective of Jewish self-understanding, this is an impossibility. ("The Canonization of Edith Stein" 172)

From a strictly Christian perspective, it possibly makes sense to relish the continuity of the Jewish-Christian relationship (in the style of John Paul II). However, when attempting to make strides in fostering more amicable Jewish-Catholic relations, politely imposing the Catholic viewpoint upon certain issues and figures for inter-religious dialogue disregards the Jewish perspective and thus automatically forecloses the possibility of successful exchange.

If Catholics are to gain any ground in their relationship with members of the Jewish community, they must accept the Jewish self-understanding. The document “Guidelines and Suggestions for Jewish-Christian Relations” from 1975 demands such an acceptance: “Christians must...strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.” In the case of Edith, deferring to the Jewish self-understanding means accepting that the Jewish community does not consider her a Jew.

Carving out a Space for Edith in the Delicate Jewish-Catholic Relationship

However, in light of Edith having been canonized and thus made a public figure in both Jewish and Catholic circles, one may wonder if reflecting upon her can have any possible constructive role in Jewish-Catholic relations. Though she cannot be viewed as a point of Jewish-Christian reconciliation, there may be other possible ways in which her figure can be helpful. Even some Jews can understand how Edith’s life and death captures the hearts and minds of Catholics. Rabbi Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer reflects on Edith, stating, “[H]ere is someone who courageously follows what she takes to be her vocation from God, and who...clearly brings godliness into this world” (162). In offering this comment, Rabbi Fuchs-Kreimer specifically has in mind the testimonies of Edith’s co-prisoners at Auschwitz which praise Edith as an outstandingly loving, hopeful, and generous figure at the extermination camp (163). In light of such observations, what type of godliness can Edith bring into the Jewish-Catholic relationship?

I suggest that she can bring godliness into the Jewish-Catholic relationship by forcing adjustments in the Catholic-Christian perspective. First, Edith can help penetrate Christian consciousness about the darker side of the Christian tradition: “Edith Stein remained one of the great human symbols of how this Church largely abandoned Jews, persons of Jewish origin, whatever faith they may have had” (Ehrlich qtd. in Strehle 19). Edith died because she lived during the Third Reich, a regime of terror in which many Christians participated. Moreover, it is undeniable that Christianity’s long-held supersessionism helped lay the conceptual groundwork for Nazism to be persuasive to many German

citizens. If Catholics venerate Edith in a truly thoughtful way, they should not ignore the ways that her life and death implicate Christianity.

Second, reflecting upon what Edith's life and death suggests about the Christian tradition should help Christians make the resolution never to allow such persecution to be repeated. Carmelite Anna Maria Strehle states, "we cannot honor Edith Stein today...unless we ask ourselves: What is our attitude toward Jews and other minorities, guest workers and refugees...?" (17). Rabbi Polish explains, "That a Catholic nun should die among the Jews of Auschwitz is a cautionary symbol to which all can respond. Perhaps from such a shared understanding some modicum of hope may be derived" ("The Canonization of Edith Stein" 175). Catholics and Christians at large can use Edith to examine the darkness of their own tradition and then work toward greater racial and religious understandings of other groups. It is only then that the Jewish community *might* appreciate the Church's focus on Edith.

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