

Our Lady, Star of the Sea and St. Drostan

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St. Mary's

64 St Peter Street
Peterhead
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Our Lady Star of the Sea & St. Drostan Church, Fraserburgh, and St. Mary's Church, Peterhead, are currently closed until further notice, due to Government regulations in connection with action taken to combat the spread of the Covid 19 coronavirus.

Sun 14 th Mar	4 th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)
Mon 15 th Mar	Monday in the 4 th Week of Lent
Tue 16 th Mar	Tuesday in the 4 th Week of Lent
Wed 17 th Mar	Saint Patrick, Bishop - Feast
Thur 18 th Mar	Thursday in the 4 th Week of Lent
Fri 19 th Mar	Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary - Solemnity
Sat 20 th Mar	Saturday in the 4 th Week of Lent
Sun 21 st Mar	5 th Sunday of Lent



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Women. Thanks be to God!

A number of events this last week have set women at centre stage. One thinks of Women's Day, celebrated in the UK last Monday. And of course there's Mothers' Day this Sunday. But the news has also been dominated by the tragic events involving Sarah Everard, who was abducted and killed, another victim of male violence. In response to her senseless death, a praiseworthy movement of women and men is taking shape that aims to highlight the problem of women's safety. At the same time, there are examples of courageous women taking a stand for justice and peace: the Catholic religious sister, for example, in Myanmar, who [knelt in front of armed police](#) and begged them not to harm the children, but take her life instead.

Bitter-sweet. Like the Stations of the Cross. So much tragedy. Heroic love too.

What is clear is that the world is very much in need of a genuine respect, even reverence, for women, based on a solid understanding of their dignity, their gifts, and the special contribution they are called to make to the good of individual persons and society in general.

Our faith teaches us that Jesus Christ is "perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity".¹ And of Mary, Bl. Pope Pius IX stated, in his 1854 Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, that

far above all the angels and all the saints, so wondrously did God endow her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts poured from the treasury of his divinity that this Mother, ever absolutely free of all stain of sin, all fair and perfect, would possess that fullness of holy innocence and sanctity than which, under God, one cannot even imagine anything greater, and which, outside of God, no mind can succeed in comprehending fully.

Jesus and Mary stand, together, at the centre of God's work in the world. They are the New Adam and New Eve that heal and restore humankind, harmed in the fall of our First Parents, and bring it to share in God's life now and in eternity. We were made for heaven. This is God's loving plan. Jesus and Mary make our attainment of heaven possible, and also show us in their own persons what that fulness of life looks like. It will always be in the light that faith sheds on these two most wonderful persons that we are able to see what we really are: what great dignity is ours, what hope is offered us, and also what we presently lack of God's goodness and justice.

"When He comes [the Counsellor, that is, the Holy Spirit], He will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (see John 16:8).

Since Bl. Pius IX and the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception (that "fulness of holy innocence and sanctity" referred to above), the Church has increasingly pondered and proclaimed the mystery of woman. God tends to act *symphonically*, with an *ensemble*, and so, alongside the trumpet of the Magisterium, there are also those of the many holy persons who by word or action have faithfully proclaimed the same truth. One of the most important of these is Edith Stein, otherwise known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

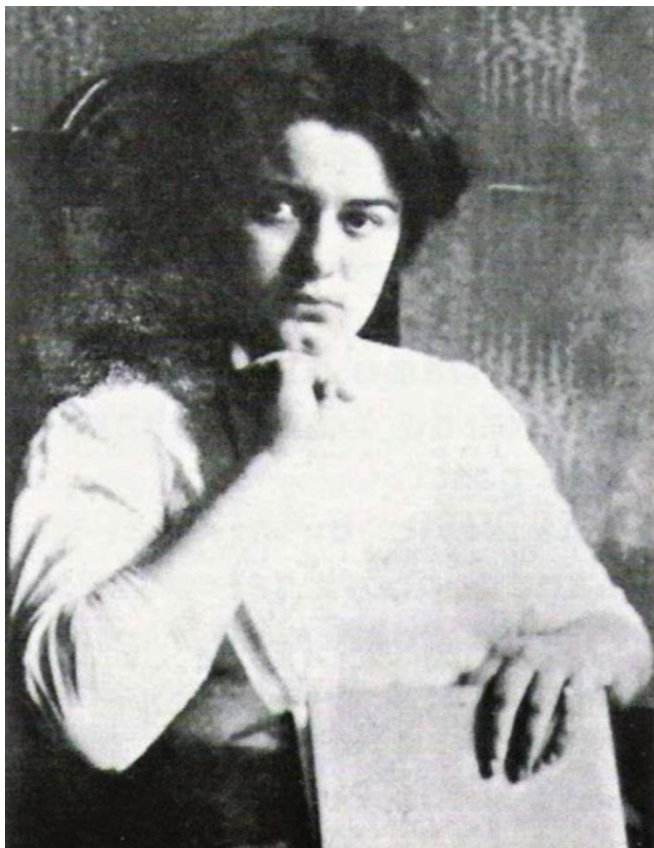
Edith was born in 1891 into a Jewish family in Breslau, a town in present-day Poland. She found the fulness of the truth and peace in Christianity after a long journey through practical atheism and the study of philosophy. She received Baptism in 1922, and became a Carmelite nun 1934, settling in the Carmel at Cologne in Germany, and later in Echt in Holland. She offered her life to God for the Jewish people and the world:

I ask the Lord to accept my life and my death ... so that the Lord will be accepted by His people and that His Kingdom

¹ Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, 451 AD. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] [n. 467](#).

may come in glory, for the salvation of Germany and the peace of the world.²

When the Germans retaliated against a public condemnation by the Dutch Bishops of Nazi racism, Edith was arrested together with other Jewish converts and deported to Auschwitz, where she died in the gas chambers in August 1942. She is honoured as a martyr.



Edith Stein, ca. 1913. Image courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#)

In the twenty or so years before she entered Carmel, Edith was active in academic and educational circles, gave high-profile lectures, wrote various works of considerable scholarly importance, and contributed to the feminist movement of her day. She also taught in a school for girls, which helped her to develop her thought about women and their place in society. That is where I would like to focus our attention now, because her understanding of women, based on philosophical analysis and the perspective of faith, as well as her own experience, is something that can bring a great deal of light to a difficult and often contentious area of contemporary life and thought.

Edith was convinced that the human person, reflecting on things known through the senses, is able to grasp *reality*, knowing things *in themselves*, and not only one's own consciousness.

² Teresa Benedict of the Cross Edith Stein (1891-1942) nun, Discalced Carmelite, martyr, on the [Vatican's website](#), accessed 13.02.21.

³ Edith Stein, *Die Frau, Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade* [Woman, Her Vocation According to Nature and Grace], Louvain: Nauwelaerts; Freiburg: Herder (1959), p. 138.

With that proviso, she sought to answer the question: **What makes a woman, a woman?** Edith was aware of the contributions of the sciences of her day: anatomy, physiology, psychology, sociology, and so on – but she was unwilling to accept that the difference between men and women could be entirely explained by the observable characteristics with which these disciplines concern themselves. Instead, remembering the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and others that **it is the soul that gives the body its characteristics**, Edith concluded that **the difference between men and women involves every aspect of the human person:**

It is not only the material body that is structured differently; not only are there different physiological functions, but the entire living-body life is something else; the relationship of soul and living-body is different, and within what pertains to the soul, the relation of spirit to sense faculty as well as the relation of spiritual powers to one another is different.³

This is important because it suggests that **what makes a woman a woman is something substantial, that is not altered by secondary factors** such as environmental, cultural or professional conditions.

An awareness of the real and far-ranging differences between women and men leads Edith to ask **what the specific gifts of women are, and what might be their vocation** or task in God's plan. Both men and women are, of course, fully human, made in the image and likeness of God. Their powers of knowing, enjoying and of creative making, reflect God's wisdom, goodness and power. But women exercise these powers in a typically feminine way. A woman's strength is

in the intuitive grasp of the living, inner world of others, of entering into their aims and ways of work. Feeling is her special gift... **Her special function is to nourish, shelter, and cherish.**⁴

This makes her an ideal mother and companion.

Physical motherhood is a key part of the vocation of women in general, but it is not the length and breadth of it. According to Edith, **the whole reality of a woman, body and soul, is motherly** – and, as such, **her capacity for maternity extends beyond the biological even into the spiritual.** The vocation of religious sisters and nuns are a case in point.

This broad concept of maternity overlaps with a woman's gift for companionship. Edith writes:

It is her gift and her happiness **to share the life of another human being**, namely by taking part in *everything* that concerns him: in big and small matters, in joy and suffering, and also in tasks and problems.⁵

⁴ Mary C. Baseheart, SCN, *Person in the World – Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein*, Springer Science+Business Media, Dordrecht (1997), p. 82.

⁵ E. Stein, *Das Ethos der Frauenberufe* [The Ethos of Women's Professions] (1930), *Die Frau*, 19, quoted in Katharina Westerhorstmann, *On the Nature and Vocation of Women: Edith*

As a result, a woman's self-realisation characteristically involves going out of herself in order to be there for another. There is in her a profound desire to give and receive love.

Edith's understanding of woman was also very realistic. She was aware that femininity is expressed differently in different individuals. Every woman has her own particular talents and capabilities. Some may possess a personal profile similar in many respects to that of men.

Edith also strongly upheld the idea that, while femininity is associated with certain gifts, and one can speak of usual feminine vocations, there is no profession that *cannot* be practiced by a woman – be it scientific, technical, artistic, etc. It is important only that she be allowed to bring her feminine qualities to this work, and not be valued only insofar as she conforms to the male profile of aptitude.

Ultimately, it is in relationship with God that woman finds her full truth. Here she will be able to gain the strength necessary to overcome her limitations. Here too, participating with men in the mystery of Christ, she will be appreciated for expressing, in a way complementary to men, the riches of God, in whom is found the fulness of life and every perfection.

Notices

Plans for the re-opening of our churches

The Scottish Government has announced that, virus-related data permitting, **churches should be able to re-open on 26th March, with a maximum attendance of 50 people.** Covid-safety measures that were in place before Christmas, including using the Eventbrite system to book places at Mass, will need to continue for the foreseeable future. All in all, this is good news. It means that we should be able to celebrate Holy Week and Easter in a dignified way.

Since midnight Mass last Christmas was held at St. Mary's Peterhead, it seems opportune to hold the Triduum services of Maundy Thursday through to the Easter Vigil at Our Lady and St. Drostan, Fraserburgh, this year. Full details to follow.

UK settlement scheme

The following helpful information is from the Grampian Regional Equality Council:

UK SETTLEMENT SCHEME

If you are an EU citizen, you must apply to remain in the UK by 30/06/2021. Join us to learn more about your rights and responsibilities

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 30TH JUNE 2021

CHILDREN NEED TO APPLY SEPARATELY

You don't need an NI number

Join us on-line:
Tuesday 16/03, 7:30 pm
Thursday 18/03, 10:30 am

email us at language-cafe@grec.co.uk

Obituary

At approx. 6 pm in the evening of Saturday 13th March, Canon Raymond Coyle, previously parish priest in Fraserburgh and Peterhead, passed away. He had been ill for some time with cancer. He died peacefully at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, supported by his family and strengthened by the Sacraments and prayers of the Church. I know that he is fondly remembered by many of our parishioners. May God grant him the reward of his many labours in His service.

For any safeguarding questions or concerns, our parish safeguarding coordinator at Fraserburgh is Mrs. Anne Reilly (01171 623029); or contact the Diocesan Office on 01224 319154.

Items for the Newsletter, website and Facebook page should be sent to Bob Watson, email: rlambwatson@gmail.com

STATION MASSES IN LENT	
Date & Location 6.30pm: Stations of the Cross 7pm: Mass	Link to YouTube channel
19 th March St. Joseph's, Aberdeen	https://youtu.be/gwMuiSn9Paw
26 th March St. Peter's, Aberdeen	https://youtu.be/ekjlhyIBTNQ

Happy Mothers' Day,
and Happy Solemnity of St. Joseph on Friday!

Stein's Concept against the Background of a Radically Deconstructive Position (2006), p. 9, [accessed](#) 13.03.21.