

Edith Stein was a German Jew and was born shortly before the dawn of the 20th century in Germany. She was brilliant and became an outstanding philosopher. As she pursued her studies she became an agnostic, a person who claims neither faith in God nor disbelief in God.

With the arising of Hitler in Germany in the 1930's the hatred of Jews (anti-semitism) became very strong among the German people.

While visiting a friend Edith came across the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. Immediately she recognized it as the truth. Shortly after she was baptized and soon after that she became a cloistered Carmelite nun. Because of the hatred of Jews in Germany and fear for her safety, Edith Stein, now known as Sister Teresa Benedicta; was transferred to a convent in Holland. The Nazis arrested her and sent her and her sister to Auschwitz. She said to her sister "We go for our people". She and her sister were executed shortly after they arrived at the concentration camp. She was declared a saint by Pope John Paul.

There is a marvelous story about Jesus in the St. Mark's Gospel. He went into pagan territory. While there a Greek woman came to Jesus and begged Him to cure her daughter. Jesus resisted because she was not a Jew. But then for the first time Jesus healed a person who was not a Jew. It became clear at this moment "people will come from the east and the west...the north and the south and be welcomed into the Kingdom of God"... The call, the message, the love of Jesus is for all people.

These two stories make it so clear that Jesus is inviting all people to the banquet of heaven. St. Paul tells us "There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female. You are all one in Christ Jesus"

We tend to separate ourselves from people who do not believe as we do or look the way we do. We tend toward separation even prejudice. But Jesus makes it clear that we are all sisters and brothers, united in His love, His life. "People will come from the east and the west, the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God."

One of the most wonderful things about our parish is that we are different in language and even color and yet we love one another. We are united in the Body of Christ.