

## Reflection Tuesday Week 19 St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross 2022

**St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (1891 - 1942)** was born into a practising Jewish family. She had a distinguished career as a philosopher and received a doctorate at Freiburg University, but her academic career was impeded because she was a woman. Reading the autobiography of Saint Teresa of Ávila brought about her conversion to Catholicism and she was baptized on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1922. She taught at a Dominican girls' school and studied Catholic philosophy. She became a lecturer at Münster Institute for Pedagogy but was thrown out in 1933 because of the Nazi régime's anti-Semitic legislation. She entered a Carmelite monastery in Cologne taking the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Her order moved her to the Netherlands to keep her safe from the growing Nazi threat. There she wrote a book seeking to combine the phenomenology of her former teacher Edmund Husserl with the philosophy of Aquinas and also wrote on St John of the Cross. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1942 the Dutch Bishops' Conference had a statement read in all churches condemning Nazi racism. In retaliation the authorities ordered the arrest of all Jewish converts to Christianity. Teresa Benedicta was taken to Auschwitz and killed on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

Because of extreme prejudice and racism Teresa Benedicta was unable to share her rich wisdom with others. In celebrating her feast today as a patron of Europe she raises the question why women are not given a strong enough place or authority in the Church to share their rich wisdom with us. Not only do they lose out but the Church is definitely poorer because of it. The hope is that through the recent synodal meetings a door will be opened to not only recognise the value and importance of female wisdom but that women will be given the opportunity to help guide the Church into a better and more wholesome future.

### Car stickers:

**"Sometimes I wake up grumpy; other times I let him sleep."**

"If we aren't supposed to eat animals, why are they made of meat?"

**Puritanism:** The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."

Why is '*abbreviation*' such a long word?"