

Reflection Wednesday Week 18 St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross 2023

She was born (1891) into a practising Jewish family. She had a distinguished career as a philosopher and received a doctorate at the University of Freiburg, 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 1st January 1922. She taught at a Dominican girls' school and studied Catholic philosophy. She became a lecturer at the Institute for Pedagogy at Münster but was thrown out of her post in 1933 as a result of the Nazi regime's anti-Semitic legislation. She entered a Carmelite monastery in Cologne and took the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Her order moved her to the Netherlands to keep her safe from the growing Nazi threat. While a Carmelite, she wrote an important philosophical book seeking to combine the phenomenology of her former teacher Edmund Husserl with the philosophy of Aquinas. She also wrote on St John of the Cross. On 20th 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 9th August 1942.

- "For by doing what God demands of us with total surrender of our innermost being, we cause the divine life to become our own inner life. Entering into ourselves, we find God within ourselves."
- "God Himself teaches us to go forward with our hand in His by means of the Church's liturgy."
- "Let go of your plans. The first hour of your morning belongs to God."
- "The nation... doesn't simply need what we have. It needs what we are."
- "The limitless loving devotion to God, and the gift God makes of Himself to you, are the highest elevation of which the heart is capable; it is the highest degree of prayer. The souls that have reached this point are truly the heart of the Church."

What kinds of hats do you wear on your legs? **A:** Knee caps.

Why did the girl need a ladder to go to school? **A:** Because it was high school.

What do you call a silly doorbell? **A:** A ding-dong.