

## Stein

Continued from page 1

Despite such papal sentiments, the canonization of the Carmelite nun stirred mixed reactions from Catholic and Jewish observers — and her relatives, Catholic, Jewish and Protestant, including one in Fairport (see accompanying story). Some observers see her as a potential instrument of reconciliation between Jews and Christians. Some don't.

"If the Catholic Church needs to establish her as a saint, fine. That's not my role, my position," commented Rabbi Laurence Kotok of Temple B'rith Kodesh, Rochester. But he noted the canonization seems to be a "very confusing statement."

"Mother Teresa to me seems a better candidate. I would have moved her along a lot faster. She is what she appears to be and died in the midst of it."

As for the 11 nuns at the Carmelite Monastery of Rochester, they were excited about the canonization of one of their own.

Sister Magdalen Praetz said that Stein's canonization will serve as a model for many people searching for God today.

"God kept on calling her," she said. "It's very good for nowadays, because there is so much of this striving, people really looking for the truth, having her for a saint will help everyone."

Another Carmelite, Father Jack Healy, counselor and teacher at McQuaid Jesuit High School, Brighton, has followed the saint's career as a philosopher. He has even translated some of her work.

"I'm attracted to her because she was an intellectual. Hers was an intellectual journey based on the truth," he said.

Father Healy noted that from 1916 to 1918 she was a research assistant for Edmund Husserl, a founder of the philosophical system called phenomenology.

Stein wrote her doctoral dissertation in 1917 on the phenomenon of empathy, helping her to take a fresh look at reality, Father Healy said.

"It was how she really discovered God," he said, explaining that she could not ignore the phenomenon that people believed in God. "Her genius was, we do have these indicators that tell us there are other things out there, that bring us in contact with other reality."

However, most people will appreciate St. Edith for other qualities, Father Healy said. Stein's story, he suggested, "is the drama that attracts people: Here was a decent woman who made her way, discovered her own identity as a Jew but her deepest identity as a Christian, who was able to offer her life for her faith and her people."

"From a Jewish point of view I would not think they would understand what that means," he said. "From a Christian point of view, it is sharing Christ's redemptive suffering. She identified with the cross ... with



Cindy Henderson

his redemptive grace to the world."

The canonization of the new saint points up such differences, noted Sister Susan Nowak, SSJ, assistant professor of religious studies at Nazareth College, who hopes that Catholics will understand the larger picture of Catholic-Jewish relations.

She noted Jewish criticism that Stein is presented as a "model for what it means to live a Christian life," for her piety, her writings, her good work and her execution.

"That (execution) is when the problem comes in," said Nowak, a researcher/writer on the Holocaust. "You are talking about redemptive suffering. It doesn't work in Judaism the same way."

The point seems to be that "some good, redemption, sanctification can occur out of this (Holocaust)," she said, in a connection to Christ. "In the Jewish context, the danger is you have lost all the suffering, the catastrophe, the persecution."

The Holocaust continues to be a center of conflict, she noted. The church may be seen raising up a Jewish convert as a model of Christian discipleship before it has adequately expressed repentance for a history of anti-Semitism and has sufficiently spoken out on the Holocaust, she said.

"Why scholars are so concerned, is it seems premature at best," she said of the canonization. And while some say the canonization will encourage interreligious dis-

course, she noted, scholars debate whether that is good.

"The question is who do we want to raise up, that is a debate scholars are in the midst of," she said. "Scholars will tell you, 'Do we want to instigate significant discourse on controversial issues as our goal?' As a church we have to ask ourselves if this is the appropriate function for those we canonize as saints."

It does seem an important step, she said, that the church recognized the dangers — that veneration of St. Edith might lead to organized conversion attempts and the appearance that the church is appropriating the Holocaust for itself.

"But I don't think they're apparent to most Catholics," Sister Nowak added. The church needs to develop ways to teach its people about these concerns, she said.

In his statement, Cardinal Keeler maintained that educational and devotional materials developed in recent years "are free of both theological and historical 'triumphalism,'" an attitude that could have been interpreted in this situation as meaning Christianity triumphed over the evil of the Jewish Holocaust. He stated:

"Rather they stress that the killers of Edith Stein, that is to say the perpetrators of the Holocaust, were, by and large, baptized Christians whose consciences, in the Holy Father's phrase, had been 'lulled' by centuries of negative theological polemics against Jews and Judaism emanating from all levels of the Christian community."

He noted both the 1987 advisory and the Holy See "urge further joint studies and dialogue between Catholics and Jews on the Holocaust and on Edith Stein and their

implications for the future."

Rabbi Michael Herzbrun, a counselor at St. John Fisher College and spiritual leader of the Reform Temple Emanuel in Irondequoit, noted that Rochester area Jews and Catholics have a history of working together and don't seem to be experiencing conflict over Stein's canonization.

But, he said, "I don't think we in the Jewish community understand the (Catholics') process of sainthood. We just can't appreciate it."

"I certainly wouldn't want to believe they focused on her life and death as a way of generating dialogue. I would want them to say it was theologically determined first and the dialogue came as a result."

Cardinal Keeler, in his foreword to the 1998 English edition of *Never Forget: Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein*, wrote that the book's essays by friends and relatives of Stein's and scholars may help answer questions the pope's canonization of St. Edith will raise.

In one essay, Rabbi Daniel Polish, who won a Catholic Press Association award for his reflections on the saint's beatification, stated that he does not see St. Edith as a bridge to Catholic-Jewish understanding. Rather, he hoped she will serve "as witness to the very real differences of perspective that still characterize these two communities of faith."

"Whereas at one time, the focus ... was on the question of whether it was prudent or proper for the Catholic Church to beatify her, or later to canonize her, the question to be asked today is in what light she will now be viewed by the church, and in what terms presented by it," Polish wrote.

## Family

Continued from page 1

Even though his family talked little about her, Frank Stein learned about his great-aunt through a *Catholic Digest* article his mother in Utica sent him — he carries reprints for anyone who asks him about the saint. And a friend bought him a tape on Edith Stein from the Abbey of the Genesee that helped him understand the Catholic Church's recognition of her.

But after Stein saw a recent "48 Hours" television segment on miracles and how they are required for naming saints, he said, "It really meant a lot more."

"I'm lucky I was taping it," he said. "The phone rang so many times to tell me this was on. I would have missed half of it."

The program included accounts of the one miracle officially attributed to Edith — the saving of Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy's daughter from a drug overdose when she was 2, after people prayed to Edith. The Melkite priest, a co-founder

of Pax Christi, has spoken in the Rochester Diocese on nonviolence. On Oct. 11 he concelebrated Mass with the pope for St. Edith's canonization.

Father Kieran Kavanaugh, a Carmelite, now of Washington D.C. but formerly of Waverly and Elmira, was a vice-procurator who investigated the miracle. Only one miracle is needed (since church requirements were changed in 1985) for beatification — and none if the candidate is beatified as a martyr as was Edith Stein. Father Kavanaugh explained. One more miracle is needed for canonization.

Wolf Stein, 87, Frank Stein's father and Edith Stein's nephew, said the canonization "makes no difference to me."

"She was my aunt and will be my aunt," Wolf Stein said in an interview from his home in Utica. "You know, I'm Jewish and Jews don't have saints. I understand it is a big honor for her."

"I was in contact with her practically to the end," he continued. "We exchanged letters even when she was already in the convent in Holland."

Unfortunately, he lost the letters he'd

saved from her long ago when he loaned them to someone working on a book about her. The man died and the letters were never returned, he said.

Wolf Stein's family lived in the same house with Edith, her sisters and her mother, in what became Wroclaw, Poland, when he was a boy. "I was always doing errands for her, taking her manuscripts to the publisher," he recalled.

"My father — her brother — was unhappy about her conversion and it was never talked about in the family," he said. "For many years I didn't know that she was Catholic."

Susanne M. Batzdorff, a niece of Edith Stein's who has published extensively about her aunt, commented that for her family, Edith Stein is seen first as a relative, not a symbol.

"The pain of the way she died overshadows some of the glory of her canonization," she said from her home in California. "We know that's an honor, that's why we are going to pay honor to her memory (by attending the canonization)."

## COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

### GENERAL

#### Announcements

**ADOPTIONS** The Catholic Courier does not publish adoption advertising. To obtain a list of agencies that serve birth mothers and adoptive parents, call 716-328-4340. Agencies wishing to be included on this list may send information to the Catholic Courier.

#### Miscellaneous

Clean, safe, filtered **INTERNET ACCESS** Blocks bad sites before it enters your home. Call Family Voice 716.454.0450

### MERCHANDISE

#### Wanted to Buy

Furniture, Trunks, Clocks, Sterling and China, Linens. Wanted: complete estates and households. Sell to me for cash or I will conduct a sale for you. **Marilyn's Antiques** 716-647-2480

### PROPERTY

**Apartments Unfurnished** FOR RENT: CORNHILL charming, restored 2 bdrm, appliances, heat, \$600/mo. 716/454-5067.

### SERVICES

#### Ceiling Repair

**TEXTURED/SWIRLED CEILINGS** 9' x 12' ceiling only \$59. Water Damage, drywall, plaster repairs. Quality work; reasonable prices. 716-392-5076.

#### Financial Services

**MORTGAGES** • Purchase • Refinance **Riverview Mortgage Corp.** Registered NYS Mortgage Broker NYS Banking Department Loans arranged through third party lenders (716) 424-2040

### SERVICES

#### Home Improvement

**CARPENTRY:** Handyman service. Will do odd jobs. No job too small. Call Ken 716-247-8785.

#### Heating & Air Conditioning

**Hicks Home Heating** Call us for Winter Comfort! Heat & Air Conditioning Specialists • Sales • Service • Installation Family Owned & Operated 424-4848

### SERVICES

#### Masonry

**MASONRY REPAIR:** brick steps, sidewalks, basements, patchwork. Reasonable. 35 yrs. exp. etc. 716-323-1007. Al Meyvis, Sr.

#### Moving & Hauling

**K-D Moving & Storage, Inc.** Experience in office, household moving and deliveries. Big or Small, We do them All! 473-6610/473-4357 23 Arlington St. Rochester NY 14607 NYDOT#9657

### SERVICES

#### Painting & Wallcovering

**Al Meyvis Jr. Interior/Exterior** Painting garages, porches, small homes, basement walls repaired, wet basement problems, gutters cleaned, all types of home repair. Small jobs welcome • Senior Discount 716-382-4435 • 323-2876

#### Snow Plowing

**SNOW PLOWING** seasonal or per trip contracts. Fall cleanups, garden installation, maintenance & removal. Mulching & hedge trimming. Reliable & experienced. Call 716/239-6699 & leave msg.

MOMS "R" US newsletter for moms. For a free copy, please call Marie Marton at (716) 787-0474.

Call 716-328-4340 to advertise in the Courier Classifieds!