

And acceptance is a freedom to select what one would like to make as one's own artefact—that is, what one wants to include as ingredient in one's continuing life. And, although the mechanical metaphor is unintended, there will be 'remainders' from this 're-membrance'. And these remainders are but materials for yet another meeting; yet another meaning, another making.

Thus, rather than being held captive by the groove of the text, one has to participate in its 'effective history,' which is the staging of real resistance. Nevertheless, the studies get to pursue the very question that animated the book's contribution, and it may be rendered thus: 'Why is it that devotion to saints is so entrenched?

The chapter on Cebu's Sto. Nino devotion argues that the natives have re-fashioned the saints, introducing 'tri-cultural components' (the pre-Hispanic, the native, and Chinese) and that, there is a hidden script in these transactions of the native. This script might as well be this significant claim that shows agency not only at the individual but in the work of culture itself; an 'inter-cultural agency.' A contemporary appropriation is the notion of *batobalani sa gugma*: it is because the *santo* in question is a magnet all its own, a 'magnet of love,' because he walks with the Cebuanos in the bittersweet realities of life.

The three chapters on the aforementioned images of Mary in the Tagalog-speaking places have a similar provenance, where the author traces authorship of image, and the evolution of titles that discloses difference between the native point of view and that of the colonizers. In all these, it is the native experiences, thought- images and narratives that are valorized. Filipinos, during this cultural encounter in the sixteenth century, were changed from such an encounter. However, they also changed the terms of the encounter whilst traversing unchartered social relations, mainly through idioms of kinship - with nature, with the divine, and with human beings. In so doing, they have tapped differential terms of power, knowledge and authority as they charted arising enmities or arising amities.

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**Guerrero van der Meijden, Jadwiga. *Person and Dignity in Edith Stein's Writings Investigated in Comparison to the Writings of the Doctors of The Church and the Magisterial Documents of the Catholic Church*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019. pp. 369. ISBN: 978-3-11-065942-9.**

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Scholarly works on St. Edith Stein keep on coming in. This book is an addition to an already relatively huge output about her. It shows that interest in the St. Edith Stein's thought is growing and does not give signs of waning. A German by nationality and Jewish turned Catholic by religion, this Discalced Carmelite woman martyred by the Nazis transcends the

bounds of historical and often painful circumstances she found herself in and yet still offers pertinent lessons in today's world.

This book is not just "another addition" to a huge collection of publication on St. Edith Stein. It is itself a *contribution* to make St. Edith Stein known, at least not in a popular way, for the work of Meijden is not meant to scratch the surface of Stein's thought nor to present who she is and her background. Numerous publications were already in place to answer this need. Meijden's book is a contribution for it answers a particular lack for English language readers: a more comprehensive, faithful, holistic, and in-depth analysis of St. Edith Stein's written works in German and accessible for the Anglophones. The advantage of Meijden is that at the time of her book's writing and eventual publication, most of St. Edith Stein's works in German were already in print and critically edited (cf. p. 24) which the reader can find in the book's bibliographical section and meticulously listed by the author. The bibliography is a veritable mine of primary and secondary sources on St. Edith Stein's thought put together in a single book for future investigations. This is something that scholars of Stein ten or twenty years ago generally lack. Moreover, Meijden has a facility of the German and Polish languages which is an added important factor for those specializing in her thought. These points put weight on the scholarly value of this book.

Meijden herself gives the reasons why the book is significant. She claims that Stein's thinking on person and dignity has something to offer as a possible solution on the contemporary discourses and *aporiai* on human dignity which many thinkers on personhood at present find insoluble. It can be fairly said that Meijden argues very well in supporting this claim. Readers are invited to read until the book's last part to see how Meijden lays down her reasons to support this claim. Though the book uses technical language and is heavy on philosophical and theological principles, readers will be motivated to read the whole work for the author not only writes in clear English but also has the knack of guiding the reader even when concepts and terms seem to overwhelm the latter.

Meijden's work gains another importance because it wants to put forward a more holistic and consistent reading of Edith Stein's works compared to a partial and biased reception of St. Edith Stein which led, according to Meijden, to an academic neglect on Stein's philosophy. Most commentators focus on her hagiographic and religious writings whose catastrophic effect led to the diminution of her status as a first-class philosopher. For instance, many thought that after St. Edith Stein's conversion to Catholicism in 1922, she left philosophy and rational thinking. However, Meijden puts it reasonably to counter this way of thinking: "Many of Stein's key anthropological terms can be misunderstood or misinterpreted if their philosophical context remains unrecognized." (p. 74) Her book is a response to a need in order to purge a bias shared by not a few that St. Edith Stein cannot seriously be considered a high caliber philosopher.

Another feature of Meijden's book which is typically not found in previous scholarly publications on Edith Stein is her attempt to compare the latter's thinking on personhood and dignity to the works of the Doctors of the Church and magisterial documents of the

Catholic Church. As far as we know, this is the first time that a book on Edith Stein was published with this in mind. In so doing, the author traced and situated Edith Stein's thinking within its overall place in the Christian philosophical and theological anthropology. It may be an overstretch to say at this point but an idea keeps on coming up: Is Meijden's attempt to compare St. Edith Stein's writings on the works of the Doctors of the Church her own way of putting forward that St. Edith Stein be granted the title Doctor of the Church which for some time now is gaining ground? Meijden did not explicitly say this but a keen and well initiated reader (of Stein's works) cannot think otherwise or would have more reasons to believe that it is so as he peruses this volume. We can cite pages 302 to 308 of the book (among others especially page 308) to prove this point. Meijden's conclusion after comparing Edith Stein's way of understanding dignity to the Doctors of the Church is that her thought is aligned with them and more enriched at the same time since Stein's thinking on dignity can be proposed as a possible solution to contemporary debates on human dignity. Stein is well rooted in Catholic philosophical and theological traditions but likewise, her contemporary relevance cannot be denied. Meijden gave solid arguments for this based on Stein's critically edited writings.

A rundown of the list of the Doctors of the Church shows the seriousness of Meijden's scholarly output. St. Edith Stein is compared with Irenaeus of Lyons, Augustine of Hippo, Leo the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila among others. (NB: Irenaeus of Lyons is recently proclaimed by Pope Francis last January 21, 2022 as a Doctor of the Church, earning the title *Doctor Unitatis* to stress his role as a bridge between Eastern and Western Christians. Irenaeus, whose name means *peace*, is the first martyr of the Catholic Church to be declared a Doctor of the Church. One may say that the way is now clear for martyrs to be given the title.) Of note here is the influence of the Dominicans and St. Thomas Aquinas in particular on the thought of Edith Stein. This another proof that the power of the Angelic Doctor's thought exerts itself even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stein lived and taught for 9 years in the Dominican school in Speyr (Germany) after her baptism to the Catholic Church in New Year's Day of 1922 whose centenary last year. Though she belongs to the Discalced Carmelite Order, Stein cannot exclude the influence of the Dominicans in her way of thinking and spirituality.

Meijden correctly projects St. Edith Stein as a teacher. Indeed, Stein is! Meijden's tome can be said to be a medium of what Stein wants to say on personhood and dignity, which can be studied as a possible topic on *eminens doctrina*, one of the criteria to proclaim someone a doctor of the church. Stein teaches something relevant and Meijden's book proves this point.

As we celebrate Edith Stein's centenary of her baptism (1922-2022) to the Catholic Church, this book is a welcome gift which helps the readers and those interested on St. Edith Stein to know her better in order to love her, and God, more.

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