



*Edith Stein*

GESELLSCHAFT DEUTSCHLAND

**Prayer for Peace in Europe**  
**Oswiecim / Auschwitz,**  
**August 9, 2015**  
**on the Feast Day of**  
**St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross - Edith Stein,**  
**Patron Saint of Europe**

Edith Stein was born on October 12th, 1891, the Jewish feast of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. On August 9, 1942, she was murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Before her arrest, she said, "Why should I be an exception? If I cannot share the fate of my brothers and sisters, my life is as if it were destroyed." It was her innermost desire to live as a follower of Jesus in His way of reconciliation, to bring His work of love into the present. Who could have been more appropriate than she to stand before God as did Queen Esther to plead for the salvation of her people and to offer her own life for it! Who could have been more appropriate to offer her own life, born under the sign of Atonement, so that "His kingdom come in glory ... for the peace of the world"! - as she wrote in her last will on June 9, 1939.

In October 1999, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross - Edith Stein was declared patron saint of Europe by St. Pope John Paul II. "Today, when Edith Stein is declared a co-patron of Europe, there will be raised a banner of mutual respect, tolerance and

hospitality on the horizon of the old continent, inviting men and women to understand and accept each other beyond all ethnic, cultural and religious differences to form a truly fraternal community. ... The Europeans are called, to overcome at last the historic rivalries that have often made their continent the arena of devastating wars. At the same time they must endeavor to create the conditions for greater solidarity and cooperation between peoples. They face the great challenge of building a culture and an ethic of unity." (St. John Paul II., *Motu proprio* from October 1, 1999)

Now war has returned to Europe, to Ukraine, a country that in the past was crushed between East and West by dictatorial systems.

In addition, many wars that are being waged worldwide have an impact on our European societies, propelling us increasingly into a state of unrest.

Expressions of xenophobia, racism, anti-semitism and nationalist chauvinism are cause for concern and demand a clear response.

In the past years and decades friends of Edith Stein from all over Europe and beyond have established cordial relations, growing together in a bond of friendship, in the spirit of Edith Stein, and also involving many friends of Edith Stein in Ukraine.

We all are invited and encouraged to express our solidarity with this European country, now buffeted by war, in the sense of empathy as Edith Stein described it, to share in feeling the suffering, sadness and fear that befalls the people of Ukraine.

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross - Edith Stein is the patron saint of Europe. Let us ask her for her help and intercession with God for the peace of "her" continent, for respect for justice, freedom and the dignity of all peoples! Let us express compassion and solidarity for all people affected or threatened by war, also for the

refugees seeking a haven in our countries! Let us raise our voice for peace!

Let us offer our prayer for peace!

On the anniversary of the death of St. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross - Edith Stein, August 9, 2015, we will gather in Auschwitz-Birkenau, in the place of her death, to pray for peace in Europe and in the world. We cordially invite you to participate there in this prayer.

At the same time, on that day we ask people all over Europe to join us in prayer for peace through the intercession of St. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross - Edith Stein in church services, devotions and in the public and private prayer of individual believers.

Inviting institutions:

The Edith Stein Societies of Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary and the Stichting Dr.

Edith Stein, The Netherlands