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In this study, empathy was critically examined through the lens of the Catholic inspired lived empathy of Dorothy Day, Edward Flanagan, and Saint Edith Stein through personal writings and scholarship of note. Common themes have emerged expressing their outwardly focused empathy in the following ways: empathy as reflective of figurative motherhood, empathy as a valuing of the individual, empathy as an expression of moral vision of the common humanity of people, and empathy emerging as a component or force in challenging times to foster social justice.

Day co-founded the Catholic Worker; Flanagan created Boys Town, and Stein was a gifted writer and speaker. All three people tenaciously and actively worked for the welfare of others. This biography of empathy synthesizes the Catholicism and Catholic inspired, action oriented empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein to glean some new discoveries about empathy and to decide if there is such an expression of humanness as Catholic empathy. In looking at Day, Flanagan, and Stein and how they authentically lived so others could live with dignity, we can learn more about the value of empathy and why it is so important to act when injustice occurs—rather than merely sympathizing with sorrowing people. Day, Flanagan, and Stein flow through this study; their empathy holds pride of place, and so does the teachings of Catholicism. Catholicism, writ large, may be considered as important a main character in this biography as Stein, Flanagan, and Day.

A STUDY OF EMPATHY AS LIVED BY EDITH STEIN, EDWARD FLANAGAN,  
AND DOROTHY DAY: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

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This study is dedicated to my love, my husband, Charles Arthur Lorelli.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Pamela Fitzpatrick, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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## CHAPTER I

### EMPATHY MATTERS; CATHOLICISM MATTERS; DAY, FLANAGAN, AND STEIN MATTER

#### Empathy Matters

“Empathy puts the ‘human’ in ‘human being’” (Agosta, 2010, p. xiii).<sup>1</sup> Yet, what is empathy? Is it an unknown, unquantifiable phenomenon because the person who “gets” humanness obtains it from someone else in the empathetic exchange? The emphasizing parent, for example, who “gets” his empathy, and as per Agosta (2010), also obtains humanness, from his or her child in, perhaps, a conversation about making friends at camp.

Zahari and Overgaard (2012) insist “the concept of empathy is notoriously ambiguous” but worthy of study because empathy shepherds humans to care for sorrowing people compassionately (2012, p. 3). Is empathy important because without it people would not care for the most fragile members in their community?

Could Ingarden<sup>2</sup> be correct about empathy? Can it be partially defined as “a special kind of perception of the psychological states” (as cited in Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012, p. 4), or is it an important component, a “core characteristic of any caring relationship” (Cliffordson, 2001, abstract), and one of “the most important variables in social relationships” (Cliffordson, 2001, p. 7)?

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<sup>1</sup> This writer makes no negative judgments about people who cannot feel or overtly express empathy due to a medical condition. Of course, they are still human.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Ingarden was a close friend of Edith Stein.

Is empathy even more profound, more integral to human nature? In empathizing, is one person imagining she is another person, as Coutu (1951) describes, as the empathizer “projects himself into the perceptual field of the other person”? (as cited in Goldstein & Michaels, 1985, p. 2).

Possibly, is empathy, as Stein unveils, in *The Problem of Empathy* (1917), more finely-tuned in females and a “feeling-in” to another person, a subjective “I” to another “I” where human closeness, connectedness, and self-understanding of the empathizer develop?

Is it as simple, or as complex, depending on how one considers it, as the adage, “Never judge a man until you have walked one mile in his moccasins”? Does empathy matter? What else matters for the purpose of this study? For the purpose of this study, the understanding of Catholicism does.

### **Catholicism Matters**

As per Vatican figures, there are approximately 1.2 billion Catholic adherents, and Catholics are in every continent (“How Many Roman Catholics,” 2013). Latin America has 41.3% of the Catholic population; Africa has also seen an increase of Catholics growing from 6.8% of the world population to its present 15.2%. Asia has 11.7%; North America has 7.3%, and Oceania has 0.8% Catholics. Significantly, between 1970 and 2012, there has been a decrease in European Catholics from 38.5% of the world population to 23.7%. This is part of the “global shift southwards” of the faith (“How many Roman Catholics,” 2013, para. 3). Catholicism matters. Catholicism, that

extraordinary historical sweep of people rooted in Christ has a well-articulated philosophy of human worth and is the largest religion in the world.

As the oldest form of Christianity, it goes back to the life of Christ (Crocker, 2001) who is the source and summit of the faith. It is also a religion of action, seeing problems and trying to solve them. As maintained by Padraic O’Hara, “The Roman Catholic Church is the largest and most productive nongovernmental organization in the world accomplishing good works”<sup>3</sup> (as cited in Carroll, 2009, p. 9). This is positive, as the Catholic faith is expressed by reaching out to people in need. Further, I concur, as a practicing Catholic,<sup>4</sup> with Barron’s joyful assessment, “Catholicism is a celebration, in words and imagery, of the God who takes infinite delight in bringing human beings to the fullness of life” (2011, p. 5).

Alternatively, is it, or was it, a suspect faith, as Blanshard avers in *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (1949)?<sup>5</sup> He describes “secular as well as the religious policies of their Church are made in Rome by an organization that is alien in spirit and control” (as cited in Massa, 1999, p. 1). Did faithful Catholics take orders from the Pope in 1949? Do faithful Catholics do so now? As per Massa, in *Anti-Catholicism in*

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<sup>3</sup> I believe Carroll was paraphrasing O’Hara, not quoting him. Carroll writes, “I owe this observation to Padraic O’Hara of Merrimack College, North Andover, Massachusetts” (2009, p. 332).

<sup>4</sup> A practicing Catholic adheres to the tenets of Catholicism which will be detailed later in this chapter. In my case, following and celebrating the teachings of the Church is by choice. The practicing Catholic is conversant with tradition, follows rituals, and attends Mass in the hope of improvement, never perfection. “In all of this we are practicing, which is the only way we know to be Catholic” (2009, p. 10).

<sup>5</sup> *American Freedom & Catholic Power* (1949), which was a bestseller, is debatably the liberal classic about Catholic rule by the Vatican hierarchy.

*America: the Last Acceptable Prejudice* (2003) Catholicism is *still*, to some, a dangerous or suspicious religion.

However, for the purposes of this study, the Catholic empathy of Day, Flanagan and Stein will be unveiled to answer the question: Is there such a thing as Catholic empathy, or Catholic inspired empathy, and if so, what is it? Why does it matter?

### **Day, Flanagan, and Stein Matter**

Empathy matters. As this study unfolds, it will be obvious why the Catholic action oriented empathy of Day, Flanagan and Stein not only mattered in their lifetime, it is profoundly important now; their empathy demanded action: to do, to preach, to teach, to build, to write, and to insist for rights and fairness for people in conjunction with empathizing. Day served poor people and demanded justice; Flanagan literally saved thousands of boys through Boys Town, and Stein taught high school students, lovingly and devotedly, even though she desperately wanted to be a college professor. The empathy they lived and presented to the world built, expanded, and burgeoned; consequently, their empathy led to more empathy in themselves and others.

### **What is Empathy?**

#### **A Brief History of Empathy**

In this section, I will include the empathy scholars who I maintain are the most important as they relate to this study and can contextualize the Catholic influenced empathy of Day, Flanagan and Stein. Lipps, a German like Stein, is a good beginning point.



From 1900 to 1920, the concept of empathy was led by Theodor Lipps. In his book, *Aesthetik*, (1903) “empathy” (*Einfühlung*) coincides exactly with what we now call ‘projection’” (as cited in Agosta, 1984, p. 44), and Lipps connected empathy closely with notions of beauty in art. In explanation, Lipps was looking at a sculpture, and he wanted to understand the feelings of the artist. Lipps describes empathy as his association with his artistic reaction to the work of art in collaboration *with* his awareness of the artists’ sentiment and purpose (Garza & Bruhn, 2011, p. 168). Hayward (2005) importantly points out that Lipps’s empathy is in conjunction with objects (as cited in Garza & Bruhn, 2011, p. 168), not people, which is the subject of this study.

By the 1940s, according to Reik, a psychoanalyst, empathy needed a more succinct definition, and he defined it as a four step process: identification, which included total attention; incorporation, where the therapist takes in the emotional wants of the patient; reverberation, which is an experience the therapist has himself, and detachment. In detachment, the therapist moves back to himself which allows for a reaction that is both cognizant of the other’s experience and separate. The therapist identifies as himself or herself (as cited in Garza & Bruhn, 2011, pp. 168–169).

Moreover, empathy, on its face, is a fairly simple notion, but according to Hodges and Wegner (1999) it is a very multifaceted interchange involving “both conscious and non-conscious processes” (as cited in Laurent & Myers, 2011, p. 2) and can be “automatic and effortless, or deliberate and troublesome” (Laurent & Myers, 2011, p. 26). Astell’s scholarship would suggest that Stein contrasts with Laurent and Myers

because she believes empathy to not be contagious or something that can be caught—it is the “I” of the human person; it is not merely of the environment (Astell, 2004).

Agosta places empathy in the front and center of human connectedness as he analyzes the correlation between empathy—which he believes to be so essential to humanity that “no human interconnection would exist at all without the empathic function” and intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is defined as “our interrelated being together with one another in the interhuman world of regard for and sensitivity to the feelings of other persons” (1984, p. 43). So, to Agosta, it is empathy which “makes sense” of intersubjectivity because through empathy we understand human beings as being able to demonstrate and acquire the feelings of others (1984, p. 49). Importantly, too, Agosta admits a more generalized empathy exists, and it is the “general interhuman competence, a functional capacity attributable in principal to all humans” (1984, p. 46).

Agosta’s definition of empathy is important because Day, Flanagan, and Stein lived empathy in human-to-human connectedness, and they also had a generalized empathy that connects with Agosta’s theory. Day, Flanagan, and Stein had the “interhuman competence” that Agosta details (1984, p. 46) and in using it, they moved the world towards a more empathetic outlook.

**Carl Rogers.** Another important empathy scholar, as pertaining to this study, is Carl Rogers because his empathy involved the activeness of the “doing.” Since the action orientation of Catholic empathy is so important to this study, and Rogers’s empathy required action, his empathy is worthy of examination. Additionally, he valued and respected the individual as Day, Flanagan and Stein did.

Rogers's "conception and application of empathy is unparalleled" (Clark, 2004, p. 149). Rogers, who applied "the earliest therapeutic application of the term" detailed the construct of empathy in 1957 as "one of six *necessary* and *sufficient* conditions for positive personality change to occur" (Hackney, 1978, pp. 35–36). His 1959 definition of empathy is "to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings" (as cited in Hackney, 1978, p. 36).

Moreover, to Rogers, empathy is the "power of listening" and empathy is one of the "most delicate and potent tools that we have" (Rogers, 1974). He developed his definition by listening to a social worker colleague who advised that he "listen for the feelings and emotions that were behind the words . . . a little bit concealed" and (he thinks) she suggested he reflect these feelings back to the patient (Rogers, 1974).<sup>6</sup>

A look at Rogers's original 1957 journal article<sup>7</sup> may further illuminate the meaning of the empathy construct. He describes empathy in terms of the therapist/client relationship. He insists for "constructive personality change to occur" the therapist must be in empathy with the client by not only being connected mentally to the troubled client and being incorporated into the needs of the patient, but the therapist must have "unconditional positive regard" and an "empathic understanding of the internal frame of reference." The therapist must also communicate regard and empathy to the patient (1957/1992, p. 827). This is a reasonable standard for any empathic exchange, even in

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<sup>6</sup> Rogers felt he learned a lot from the social worker, but she learned "very little" from him (Rogers, 1974). This writer wishes he would have named her in his presentation.

<sup>7</sup> The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change was originally published in 1957 in the *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, Vol. 21, pp. 95-103.

relationships outside of doctor/patient, in that it requires action or investment in the other from the empathizer.

Further, and importantly, Rogers, like Stein, whose empathy I will go into in more detail later in this chapter and in chapters II and III, does not suggest the experience the “empathized with” person has had is the empathizer’s own, after the contact. The empathizer does not unerringly relive the experience. It is still the emotional property of the “empathized with” which connects closely to Stein. She believed the empathizer does not have the empathic experience in exactly the same way as the person who is sharing with the empathizer. It is the listener’s own experience and has its own characteristics (Rogers, 1957/1992; Stein, 1917/1989).

Rogers makes clear “to sense the client’s private world as if it were your own, but without ever losing the ‘as if’ quality—this is empathy” (1957/1992, p. 829). Further, empathy is to understand the person’s emotions “as if they were your own” absent of the empathizers own feelings of distress. So if the “empathized with” has fury, the listener does not bring personal fury into the mix of the experience; this is so the listener’s fury will not be an impediment in this contact (Rogers, 1957/1992, p. 829).

Rogers’ theory of empathy, even though it is described in a clinical patient/client relationship, still pertains to this study which is about human-to-human contact, not doctor to patient. Why? Because Rogers is by degrees helpful, clear, and pragmatic as he describes the empathizer pushing away his own needs, a selflessness that would characterize Day, Flanagan, and Stein, with, for example, a friend, and allowing the other person to share. He describes empathy as an almost emptying of one person, the listener,

so the person who is being empathized with can “tell” without the encumbrance of the listener’s own issues and concerns stopping the flow of the contact. Moreover, Rogers offers an appropriate and helpful explication of the distancing of the empathizer—even though the relationship has a close, understanding quality. It still allows the listener to do the heavy emotional lifting of empathy by being “with” another without having to bear the burden, if the interchange is a poignant one, of actually inhabiting the experience. This empathy is a listening, attending, feeling towards, feeling with support, and connecting with another in an experience of emotional touching.

**Davis and categories of empathy.** Empathy, according to Davis, can also be further delineated into three categories of empathy people experience. The first category is cognitive empathy or perspective taking. This is an understanding of another person’s perspective. The second category is personal distress; this is feeling another person’s emotions or a type of emotional contagion. This type of empathy may have negative effects on the empathizer if it happens too much (as cited in Riggio, 2013). To be in a constant state of personal distress could be debilitating. The third type of empathy is empathic concern. In this empathic exchange, the empathizer is cognizant of another’s emotions and comes into contact with them and expresses suitable concern (as cited in Riggio, 2013).

This breakdown of types of empathy is pertinent to our study because in looking at empathy we have to understand that it is not always the same all the time. If we look at how it works, we can see that empathy can sometimes be a type of perspective taking; we might do this all day long as we meet with friends and family. We might move into

the personal distress type of empathy where feelings are profoundly and intimately connected to what the other person is expressing. We experience deep personal distress which might affect our ability to function well throughout the day. An example of this might be a teacher/student contact with the teacher coming to a realization that a child is being cruelly ostracized, and the teacher feels she cannot do anything else before she takes care of the painful situation. The teacher might also experience empathic concern where she might understand her student's feelings about a problem with, for example, a friend, and listen appropriately and show concern without becoming personally distressed.

Therefore, in looking at empathy, to find out what is inside of it, we must realize that it is not always the same with every encounter; that is why it is so difficult to succinctly define. After all, we are looking at the complexities of human nature when we look at empathy. For the purposes of this study, we will be looking at the empathy of three multifaceted people, Day, Flanagan, and Stein and trying to sort out what their empathy means. Nevertheless, I will try to pull some threads together, so by the end of this study, I will articulate my own view of empathy.

Another perspective on empathy comes from Coutu, who was mentioned in the opening of this paper. Coutu's definition is important because his definition is in stark contrast to a scholar whose theory of empathy is important to supplementing this study: Noddings, who I will address shortly.

He gives empathy a divergent definition. To Coutu, "Empathy is the process by which a person momentarily pretends to himself that he is another person, projects

himself into the perceptual field of the other person . . . in order that he may get an insight” (as cited in Goldstein & Michaels, 1985, p. 2). To this notion of projection, Noddings is in clear disagreement.

**Noddings’s empathy.** In 1984, Noddings<sup>8</sup> very specifically distanced herself from the masculine definition of empathy from the *Oxford Universal Dictionary* because this definition included the *projection* of the empathizer into the empathized, thereby garnering understanding in the empathizer. Noddings contrasts empathy with her explanation of engrossment; she does not ask how she would feel in a caring exchange with another person. Rather, in empathy, she does not scrutinize; she does not prepare to respond; she does not go into the other person. She received them. As an illustration, Noddings describes a mother caring for a crying infant. The mother does not ask how she would feel if she was the infant; she feels and shares with the infant by comforting him or her before trying to solve the problem. This is Noddings’s sort of empathy; it receives the other; it does not infiltrate (1984, pp. 30–32). It does not penetrate or project (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Noddings connects her empathy with Buber’s (1970) *I and Thou*. She is receptive to the other, and she is with the other. There is also a “motivational shift,” and her “motive energy flows toward the other” (1984, p. 33) and in doing so, she is more vulnerable because she opens herself up to potential hurt. Contrarily, she describes the empathetic caring exchange within the context of strength and hope for the empathizer (1984, p. 33). The receiving of people and associations with them appears necessary to

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<sup>8</sup> Even though Noddings is primarily a care ethics scholar, her discussion of empathy is pertinent to this study.

living life completely (Noddings, 1984, p. 35). This notion of living life completely points to Day, Flanagan, and Stein. They lived for others receptively without barriers and brought their empathy into play; they brought it to life, as a part of their moral vision.

Empathy is a component of care theory as detailed by Noddings in the *Maternal Factor: Two Paths of Morality* (2010), Noddings employs the word “empathy” to elaborate on what stimulates people to care for others (2010, p. 51), and she attaches empathy in the direction of sympathy (2010). Empathy begins, to Noddings, with attention, then thinking understanding, followed by sympathy and the attachment to the sympathetic organization to self (Fitzpatrick, 2010; Noddings, 2010). Importantly, though, and pertinent to this study, Noddings asserts empathy, in some circumstances, births more empathy (2010). This is significant because the empathetic focal group of this study, Day, Flanagan, and Stein, would be sterling examples of the truth of Noddings’s assertion about empathy building on itself. In some ways, “empathy begets empathy” (Noddings, 2010, p. 56), and this will be apparent as I unveil the lived empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein. Their legacy was built on their expanding, connective empathy.

This version or explanation of empathy is essential to understanding this study because Day, Flanagan, and Stein, in forging forward with their Catholic motivated empathy, both exhibited empathy in the one-to-one exchanges between people and expressed a love of humankind that was more all-embracing. Therefore, their empathy moved outward to places where they could never be physically; it was part of their moral vision and was integral to their revelatory message about humankind. While this may be



true, of Day, Flanagan, and Stein, only Stein is an empathy scholar, and she is the intellectual leader in the subject. This will best underlie the discussion of all three thinkers and develop a more evolved definition of empathy as I unfold the world of Catholic infused empathy.

What really is empathy, and why is it so important? Stein suggests a three step method that both respects the person we are listening to while acknowledging the transfer that can take place in an empathic exchange (Stein, 1917/1989). Stein's steps are

- active listening and putting oneself in another's place
- identification merging; clearly understanding the person's emotions
- sympathy and self-discovery (Määttä, 2006, pp. 5–6)

Therefore, Stein's philosophy of empathy is a logical and clear patterning to follow an empathic exchange and is an intellectual exploration of empathy, a theory of empathy, which can underlie the lived empathy—empathy in action, and the Catholic inspired empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein.

Empathy will be further delineated as this study progresses, but I hope the reader now has a basic grounding in empathy to better understand the information that follows. Using the definitions of empathy scholars, I offered definitions of empathy. So, I shall illustrate the Catholic empathy of Day and Flanagan in chapters II and III, including the philosophy of empathy and lived empathy of Edith Stein. I shall synthesize this understanding in chapter IV and come to some conclusions about empathy, and my definition of empathy, in chapter V.

However, it is not enough for the reader to get a foundation in empathy; the reader must also have a basic grounding in the Catholic faith to better understand the Catholic centric choices made by Day, Flanagan, and Stein. This brings us to a shift in the paper in this section; Catholicism will take the spotlight.

I know the centrality of my faith in my life, I would say it is the most constituent aspect of who I am; it defines me. I would like to come to the same understanding about Stein, Flanagan, and Day in connection with their philosophy of empathy. In this chapter, I will uncover answers to the following questions: What does it mean to be Catholic? Who were Dorothy Day, Edward Flanagan, and Edith Stein? What is the direction of this paper?

### **What Does it Mean to be Catholic?**

Dorothy Day, Father Edward Flanagan, and Saint Edith Stein were three Catholic luminaries of the twentieth century. Their moral force and their powerful empathy are still felt today, long after their deaths; however, they should be better known. Yet, in writing that, it is imperative that their very Catholicism—which imbued their core—be unpacked so you, the reader, may best understand and contextualize them as people. Since their Catholicism was largely who they were, as adults, and who I am as a person, I will explain the faith before I detail why they are worthy moral visionaries of the twenty-first century. This is necessary background to understanding the Catholicity of their empathic lives and writings.

Is it true that “The Catholic Church is, arguably, the most controversial institution on the planet; it is certainly the most controversial religious institution” (Weigel, 2001, p.

2)? I would say Catholicism is truly a way of thinking, a way of looking at the world, which offers one a way of life: a life pattern.

Certainly, on many levels, the Church is countercultural in that it asks its members to think of others before self and to sacrifice for others willingly and lovingly in the name of God. Ultimately, though, Catholicism is about the avowal of the human person—every single human person, because God is profoundly in love with those he made. Because of the depth of his love, he sent his only son to save the world (Weigel, 2011, pp. 2–3).

Yet, what specifically makes one Catholic? According to Catholic theologian Father Robert Barron, the “Catholic thing” is the Word of God which left the heavens and came to dwell in the messiness of our world. This Incarnation, or the Word made flesh, Jesus is a conduit for God to tell truths about humans and God while God remains himself. God sent his son, Jesus, who is both God and man, and he did so to lift up the world and to be of the world. This original Christianity, Catholicism, expands this doctrine of the Word becoming flesh to its completion (Barron, 2011).

### **The Incarnation**

This Catholic Incarnation takes God through all time, and God is continued or present in the bread and wine of Eucharist, the music of the Mass, the books and arguments of Catholic scholars, the authority of the popes and bishops, and the humanness and tribulations of the saints. Moreover, all of this is encased in the beauty of the art and magnificence of the cathedrals (Barron, 2011) that, to me, represents the splendor and majesty of the faith to the world. This variety of attributes make the Church

not only the original Christianity, and a Christianity with an involved God, but also rich in symbols, examples, and rituals to help carry me through life—a life that the Church teaches me has value no matter my age, health, or productivity. The intrinsic value of each human life is the essence of Catholicism.

Essentially, too, the Catholic Church instructs her followers “to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength” and to spread the Good News about him (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 7). Catholics can be witnesses to the beliefs of their faith, if they so choose.

### **What are the Principles of Catholicism?**

The principles of Catholicism are best summed up in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994).<sup>9</sup> The beliefs of Catholicism, the profession of the faith, the sacraments, the life in Christ and Christian prayer are clearly spelled out; our desire for God is clearly delineated; it “is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 13). Humans are the people of God, created by him, and they never cease to seek him. The seeking of God, in the Catholic tradition, is an innate and natural aspect of humans; it drives them (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994).

Nevertheless, the tenets of Catholicism can be best summed up in the following beliefs: Christ is the foundation, and he should be the model for living. As his followers, Catholics are to take care of people, particularly poor people, and share what they have

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<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, the *Imprimi Potest* (which means it can be printed) for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was given by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who is now the retired Pope Benedict XVI and the current Pope Emeritus.

with society near and far as loving servants—we are one with Catholics throughout the world. Additionally, all human life is intrinsically valuable and must be protected from conception to natural death.

Because of the love of God, working towards peace and justice is an integral component of our faith. Catholics should adhere to Jesus' teaching and love one another in a spirit of reconciliation whilst attempting to eliminate injustice, racism, and poverty (Archdiocese of Boston, n.d.).

Moreover, and truly, God's love is immeasurable, so much so that He sent his only son to die for humanity thereby forging our salvation in Him in the Holy Spirit. Catholics practice the sacramental life, going to Confession and attending Mass on Sundays and holy days and receiving the Eucharist (Communion), which is central to the faith. Deeply connected to the sacramental life and well-developed faith is prayer and Bible reading (Archdiocese of Boston, n.d.).

The Church is hierarchical, and the Pope is the head of the Church; the bishops are under him. The Pope has a teaching authority which demands respect from the Catholic faithful. Proclaiming and living the Gospel, in word and lived life, is deeply imbedded in the faith, and Catholics must be willing to suffer for stating beliefs publicly. Devotion to Mary and the lives of the saints as examples of holiness are constituent to Catholicism (Archdiocese of Boston, n.d.).

These devotions add immeasurably to the sacred and celebratory nature of the faith for practicing Catholics. Of course, many people who are Catholic do not adhere to

the principles of Catholicism but practice a faith that is more a fusion of their beliefs and the Church's teachings.

Additionally, some Catholics have become increasingly negative towards the faith of their youth because of Church abuses including, for example, clergy sexual abuse. Even though only a very small number of priests sexually abused children and adolescents, to steer clear of ignominy, bishops and others protected the abusing priests and not the innocent children (Carroll, 2009). This was a tragedy, as some Catholics saw "the Church we loved" reeling from the scandal. A new kind of Catholic was forged, in some, with an evolved identity as Catholics (Carroll, 2009, p. 8).

### **The Nicene Creed**

A thorough study of the Nicene Creed (325 AD) gives a succinct overview of the Catholic belief structure. It was created at the Council of Nicaea, which is now in Turkey, and was convened by Emperor Constantine who wanted to resolve the controversy about Arian beliefs concerning the Holy Trinity which are that Jesus and God are not the same fundamental nature. In approving the Nicene Creed, the Council asserted that Jesus and God are of the same quintessence (TeSelle, 2005). Remarkably, the Nicene Creed is very similar today as when it was created in 325 AD, and its importance lies in its foundational nature; it is the Catholic belief statement. Its words are:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation, he came down from

heaven, and by the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013, “The Nicene Creed,” paras. 1–3)

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) maintains that within the Nicene Creed “Our profession of faith begins with God, for God is the first and the last” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013, “What We Believe,” para.1) which is a good summation of Catholic theology.

### **Catholic Diversity**

Even though these are the tenets of the faith, within the American Catholic Church, there is a wide variety of opinion and practice amongst Catholics. Some follow or support the Church’s teaching about sacramentality and the male only priesthood, for example, and some do not.

Moreover, some, or even many people who were born Catholic (cradle Catholics) think of their “church as family” (Nixon, 2011, para. 29) even if they disagree with the prohibition on artificial contraception or the role of the Pope. They want to stay with their faith and still consider themselves Catholic.

A variety of people in the United States label themselves as Catholics, but many have no loyalty to the Pope or the bishops, although 74% view the former Pope Benedict XVI in an affirmative light. A Gallup Poll reported that even though Catholic teachings insist to the contrary, the preponderance of American “Catholics found divorce, premarital sex, stem-cell research, out-of wedlock births, the death penalty, and homosexual relations morally acceptable (“American Catholics and the Pope,” 2013). In fact, regular Catholic Church attendees were more liberal on these subjects than non-Catholic church goers (“American Catholics and the Pope,” 2013).

So, American Catholics may adhere to the teachings of the faith, or not, and still consider themselves Catholic. This has great meaning because some Catholics who adhere to the faith but do not support the leadership may be doing so to make the Catholic Church better, or they may have found something within the Church that they felt they had to address, no matter how painful.

The reform movement, Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) is asking for, nay demanding, changes in the Church. VOTF members are a well-educated group with ninety percent having a college degree and sixty percent having a graduate degree, with a majority having attended Catholic schools. In their way, they are devoted Catholics. Sixty-two percent regard the Church as “the most or among the most important parts of their life” (D’Antonio & Pogorelc, 2007, pp. 52–55). VOTF reports that it has 25,000 members worldwide (“Voice of the Faithful,” 2009) which is an indicator of VOTF’s reach.



These educated Catholics want a greater participation in the way the Church is governed, and they are willing to give their time to make this happen. They are also tremendously supportive of three goals of VOTF, “to support victims of clerical sexual abuse (86 percent), to support priests of integrity (85 percent), and to shape structural change in the church (91 percent)” (D’Antonio & Pogorelc, 2007, p. 59). According to D’Antonio and Pogorelc, VOTF members are willing to take action, “when the hierarchy is unresponsive to the views of the laity on matters which concern the good of the church, withholding financial contributions is an appropriate means for getting their attention” (2007, p. 59). VOTF members are very displeased with the way priests and bishops handled the sexual abuse crisis; they felt the children were not protected from predatory priests. In fact, VOTF was birthed in the aftermath of the clergy sex abuse scandals, and for many reasons, priests and church leadership are not held in lofty esteem (D’Antonio & Pogorelc, 2007, pp. 99–100).

The controversies surrounding the clergy sex abuse crisis are beyond the scope of this study; nevertheless, the crisis has deeply impacted the Catholic faithful, myself included. One parishioner who is quoted in the *Voice of the Faithful: Loyal Catholics Striving for Change* (2007) summarizes my feelings by asserting, “The news got worse every day. When you thought you heard the worst there was more. I think many Catholics thought it was really awful . . . but it just kept hurting, for weeks and months” (as cited in D’Antonio & Pogorelc, 2007, p. 12).

So, this well-educated and articulate group is taking issue with the Church forthrightly while still loving the Church, deeply. Why is this significant? Because

Catholicism is not a set of beliefs; it is not just a Creed. Catholicism is a people immersed in a world of ideas, beliefs, and a way of life. For someone who was raised in Catholicism, I can understand how it could be excruciatingly difficult to leave it—which may be challenging to understand for the reader who does not know and have attachment to Catholicism. The rituals and beauty of the faith and the sacraments and depth of scholarship in the faith can provide a meaning, a beauty, and a pattern to life that can make life richer and more meaningful.

It is also essential for the reader to understand that the Catholics presented in this paper (Day, Flanagan, and Stein) were practicing, devoted Catholics. Yet, to varying degrees, they took the Church to task. Day insisted on the primacy of serving the poor and advanced Catholic pacifism; Flanagan demanded Catholic run orphanages in Ireland be substantively changed because of children being emotionally and physically abused, and Stein suggested that female priesthood could be possible.

Yet, in asserting that Day, Flanagan and Stein were devout, was there a specific Catholic philosophy that they followed? Is there such a thing as Catholic philosophy?

### **What is the Philosophy of Catholicism?**

Certainly, there are Catholic philosophers, many of note, like Thomas Aquinas and Jacques Maritain, but specifically determining Catholic philosophy and labeling it *the* Catholic philosophy is not possible. Detailing it as *a* Catholic philosophy is clearer. Therefore, I will define Catholic philosophy from a position that accepts that faith and reason can be intellectually converged; it is possible. Egan explains this as two

classifications of knowledge, one comes from reason and the other emerges from a revealing God (2009, p. 10).

Nevertheless, what is Catholic philosophy? As stated by Hittinger, “Catholic philosophy serves the essential aim of the Church—evangelization . . . by the authentic search for truth” (2010, p. xxxiv). Consequently, the Catholic philosopher, who lives in and for Christ, and is governed by both faith and reason, does philosophy differently than secular philosophers. Jacques Maritain insisted that the life of the Catholic and the life of the philosopher cannot be estranged. While they may be “distinct, they are not separate” (as cited in Hittinger, 2010, p. xxxv).

The Catholic philosopher’s work does not detach from Catholicism; he or she brings the entire self into work and faith (Hittinger, 2010, p. xxxv) -- which develops a new entity. No longer is the person a Catholic who works as a philosopher; he or she is a Catholic philosopher—always both. This distinctive type of philosopher is never scholar or Catholic. This philosopher is scholar *and* Catholic.

Faith and life, life in its fullness, has a beautiful flow of movement, a magnificent synergy that makes Catholic philosophy stable and trustworthy because it is parts of a whole. The Catholic philosopher, conjoined with faith and reason and a life in Christ, can be thought of as two hands folded together in simple, prayerful gratitude. If these hands forever stayed gently folded, that would be a metaphor for the faith infused and faith dependent Catholic philosopher.

Hence, Catholic philosophy is work that is both in the world and in the Church; yet, philosophy is its own discipline and has its own conversation, procedures, and

discerning focus. Still, in following its Socratic origins and discerning focus, it leans towards and moves closer to theology (Hittinger, 2010, xxxiii). If the adage “Philosophy is the handmaid of theology” is true, then this is a natural following of one well-developed belief system into another.

### **A Prominent Catholic Philosopher**

In moving towards theology, the Catholic philosopher must, according to Hittinger, recognize the scholarship of a giant of Catholic thought: Thomas Aquinas (Hittinger, 2010).<sup>10</sup> Aquinas (1225?–1274) was born in Roccasecca, Italy and became, over family objections, a Dominican priest. Starting in 1245, Aquinas studied, and apprenticed under, the great Aristotelian thinker Alfred the Great at the University of Paris (Barron, 2008). Aristotle presented a “clear notion of the real” and both Albert the Great and Aquinas used this Aristotelian philosophy efficaciously (Egan, 2009, p. 89).

Asserting that the beliefs of Christianity and reason were in no way incompatible because both philosophy and theology come from God, Aquinas developed five proofs to show that God existed. However, faith alone was enough to prove to Aquinas that God existed (Burrell, 2005, p. 581).

Aquinas, a Scholastic and one of the weightiest saints in Catholicism, said “Happiness is the natural life of man” and “Each man marvels to find in the divine Scriptures truths which he himself thought out” (Tomlinson, 1991, p. 291; as cited in Tomlinson, 1991, pp. 17, 111). Still, in the world of Catholic philosophy, how important was he? Pope Leo XII in *Aeterni Patris* (1879) demanded the Scholastic philosophies be

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<sup>10</sup> Aquinas’s philosophy is also called Thomism, and its adherents are called Thomists. There is a question mark after Aquinas’s date of birth because the exact date is not known.

used in Catholic theology. He found “Thomism and the classical tradition useful” because of its clear and steady offering of the faith. However, Pope Leo XII’s insistence was quite unusual in Church history. Other than at that time, the Church has never demanded a specific philosophy for its theology (Egan, 2009, pp. 88, 121).

Pope John Paul II, too, valued Aquinas. He believed Aquinas to be so eminent he proclaimed, “Looking unreservedly to truth, the realism of Thomas could recognize the objectivity of truth and produce not merely a philosophy of ‘what seems to be’ but a philosophy of ‘what is’” (as cited in Egan, 2009, pp. 91–92). This practical realism of Aquinas appealed to Pope John Paul II as a reflection of truth. Pope John Paul II reasoned about Aquinas, “In his thinking, the demands of reason and the power of faith found the most elevated synthesis ever attained by human thought” (as cited in Hittinger, 2010, p. 159).

Aquinas maintained if we can discern the integral natures of things and the laws behind each thing, we can understand God’s plans for his world and the people in it (Law, 2007, p. 44). Aquinas insisted we can work with God to understand his plan. Understanding God’s plan is part of the orthodox Catholic’s religious search experience.

Nevertheless, what is most basic about the understanding of Aquinas? Aquinas is asking people to lose themselves in God, to find self by losing self. According to Barron, this invitation by Aquinas reveals his understanding of God as a power “ungraspable, uncontrollable, unreachable . . . that surpasses all the categories of thought . . . in whose presence *awe and wonder* [italics added] are the only proper responses” (1996/2008, p. 33). Why does God reveal himself to us? It is simple; it is to save us (Barron, 2008).

Another aspect of Aquinas's theology that illuminates God is his writing on the Incarnation as surprise. That God would visit the world and live among us as Jesus "in all of the weakness and suffering of our finitude" is astounding. God becomes one of us. This meeting of an astonishing, "ever greater" God "and a self-transcending human being" present in the Incarnation, reigns over Aquinas' writings about God. To Aquinas, Jesus communicates the endless mystery of God and our eternal travels towards God (Barron, 2008, p. 25). Additionally, to better understand the complexities of how Aquinas developed his theology, it must be understood that Aquinas depended on Aristotle.

In desiring to illuminate why Aristotle's philosophy was compatible with Catholic thought, including, for example, objects created by people have a function, natural things like hands are for touching and clouds make rain, Aquinas was building to a point. Therefore, things exist for a reason. Aquinas took this "purpose-driven world" of Aristotle and added that God created the purpose. God is the creator of the world; integral in this is his hand in its purpose (Law, 2007, p. 44).

As we live in this God-created world, he further demanded that the state has an ethical responsibility of service to its people; Aquinas also believed the state must help its people dwell in the world righteously. It also was imperative that state's laws not go against God's law because laws must be just (Burrell, 2005, p. 581).

**Aquinas's influence on Stein.** This coalesces with Stein's philosophy about the intimate nature between the state and the person. She explained, "The nation . . . doesn't simply need what we have. It needs what we are" (Edith Stein, n.d.).

Aquinas was integral to the philosophy of Edith Stein. For example, as a seventieth birthday present, Stein wrote a piece for her dissertation chair, Edmund Husserl, that positioned Aquinas's thought with that of Husserl's. Moreover, Stein wrote the translation of Aquinas's *De veritate* into German (Calcagno, 2007, pp. 19–20). This translation was also called *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate (Disputed Questions on Truth)*. She believed Aquinas's book, with which she was tremendously impressed, was an avenue to build an understanding of his thinking (Courtine-Denamy, 1997/2000, pp. 23–24).

Why is it significant to this study to understand Stein was a student of Aquinas? For this reason: to find out what is inside a thinker, you need to look at their canon; in Stein's case, her philosophical canon. This canon highlighted Aquinas.

She was confident enough to speak on Thomism in Juvisy, France, and Jacques Maritain was impressed with her (Calcagno, 2007). What does this tell us? This tells us that she was sure enough of herself to speak at Thomistic congresses with an eminent philosopher like Maritain in attendance. More than that, it tells us that Stein continued her intellectual pursuit of Aquinas throughout her adult years. She was 41 in 1933 and because we know she was still studying and admiring Aquinas at this time, we know he had a continuing and deep influence on her. If you look at a person's area of study, the subjects they spend their time hovering near, with working, thinking, searching, and questioning, one can learn a lot about that person, as we can learn more about Stein by knowing more about Aquinas.

### **Catholic Philosophy as a Quest for Understanding**

“If philosophy is experience in search of understanding” (Peperzak, 2005, p. 53), then Catholic philosophy is the Catholic experience in search for understanding—within the context of faith. In my mind, the Catholic tradition respects the search for truth and offers its members a well-formulated reasoned and reasoning philosophy that is both intellectually respectful and scholarly in approach.

If, as MacIntyre suggests, in our pursuit of truth, we flow into a search for God (2009, p. 167) the role of the Catholic scholar is to explicate this search. This search for truth transferring into a search for God is related to a restlessness of heart and goes back to Aquinas. This restlessness can also cause agitation, producing discord amongst people; one group may believe they are *of* God and distance or discount groups of people they want to either marginalize, subjugate, or disparage.

As Aquinas held, we have much in common with other people, “How can we live in harmony? First we need to know we are all madly in love with the same God” (Thomas Aquinas, n.d). This “same God” can be a God of connectedness between people, not a God of distancing.

Catholic philosophers, therefore, have a mighty responsibility because the Catholic laity is not conversant with Catholic philosophy, and MacIntyre insists they should be. “An educated Catholic laity needs to understand a good deal more about Catholic philosophical than it does now” (2009, p. 1).

If that is true, and I think MacIntyre is right, then how would that goal best be achieved? Philosophers should concern themselves with the most pressing human



trepidations with intensity and intellectual thoroughness (MacIntyre, 2009, p. 176), but they should do so in a way that the philosophical lay person can understand.

This means making Catholic philosophy intriguingly wondrous, which I think, Edith Stein, for instance, does, and she does so with clearness of purpose. Her womanhood, too, comes through her philosophy with an unfolding, vulnerable delicacy, and that is why, as a woman, I find such meaning in it. She defined herself absolutely as a Catholic woman, and so do I. However, Stein never denied or stopped admiring her Jewish roots.

### **What Makes Me a Catholic Woman? Why Do I Define Myself as Such?**

I would define myself as Catholic before I would explain myself in any other way because it imbues my selfhood. I am a Catholic mother, a Catholic teacher, a Catholic wife, a Catholic daughter, a Catholic student, and a Catholic friend. How closely have I identified as Catholic throughout my life? In 1960, I was playing the now politically incorrect game of Cowboys and Indians on a summer's evening in Chadwick Beach, New Jersey. When a playmate ran up to me and breathlessly asked, "What are you?" (He wanted to know if I was friend or foe in this game.) I immediately answered, "I'm a Catholic."

Nevertheless, even though I was raised in a working class Irish home, my father's Catholicism was more cultural than religious. He completely embraced the Catholic social teaching of lovingly serving the poor, but he did not actually go to Mass. My mother, born a Methodist, did not go to Mass either. In spite of this mixed message, they

sent me to Saint Anastasia's Catholic School in Teaneck, New Jersey, and from a young age, I fell in love with my faith.

As an adult, I came to a mature understanding about Catholicism and eventually decided to get a master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola, a Jesuit university. Moreover, I chose to be a practicing Catholic in a world where Catholicism was viewed—by many—with derision. I still chose to attend Mass, say the rosary, and follow the teachings of my faith with a full understanding of what this meant to me, my husband, and our four children.

Rather than find it confining, as some people might, because Catholicism is a faith with much dogma, I found it freeing. I studied every Catholic teaching with which I came into conflict and still decided to be a faithful Catholic. *The decision was mine.* For example, I cannot understand intellectually or spiritually why women cannot become Catholic priests or deacons, and I have had spirited arguments on the subject with theologians. Still, I will not abandon or disparage what I adhere to in the whole—my faith—even though I do not agree with a certain teaching or part within it. When someone I love is imperfect, I do not stop loving them. It is the same with the Church. It is a flawed institution run by humans, and it will have failings, as institutions will. Nevertheless, I stay Catholic.

### **What Motivates Me to Practice My Faith?**

Catholicism is one of the greatest and most profound parts of my life. I rest in it and in the teachings about God and his beloved people. As I rest in my faith, burdens are removed from my heart, and I know I am being helped by God. This is spiritual stress

relief. I believe; this gives me the strength to traverse a life that has had many difficulties. Truly, I do not know how I could have navigated the stream of life that is the human condition without it. Moreover, I could not imagine being a married woman and mother without my faith at the fore. My family life bellwether has been Catholicism, and its rituals, feast days, calendar, prayers, and teachings have patterned my life. My children benefited from this upbringing because they grew up as something, as Catholics. They knew who they were, and I can see the influence of their faith in their moral adult choices. Two of my children teach in Title I schools and the others practice loving, respectful outreach to those in need. My husband served as the chairman of a well-known Catholic philanthropy.

Catholicism positively influenced my children, and God guides me. My ancient religion that goes back to Christ foundationalizes my life with purpose; my faith is my strength.

### **How Does One Live Catholicism?**

People live Catholicism in a variety of ways depending on the level of orthodoxy. A practicing Catholic would attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation, go to Confession, read the Bible regularly, avoid sin, follow the ten commandments, lead a prayerful life, adhere to the Creed, be conversant with the teachings and dogmas of the Church and lovingly and respectfully give alms, or help, to those in need.

He or she would also adhere to the Church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage, the welcome of children within the marriage, and the prohibition of abortion. These hot button issues are what many people who are not Catholic, or who take a negative overall

tone towards the faith, think Catholicism is, but I believe this is too simplistic, broadly misses the point, and is based on inadequate understanding of the faith. The Church is so much more than a passionate voice against abortion. It is a stalwart voice pleading and teaching about the innate dignity of people and the right each person has to live a life of freedom with whatever is needed—the necessities—to simply live.

### **What is Catholic Empathy?**

This question will be answered by a close examination of three people who lived Catholic empathy to the full. Stein wrote about it and lived it as a caring teacher and friend (Stein, 1986). Day was the most powerful, influential American Catholic advocate for pacifism in the twentieth century, and she co-founded the Catholic Worker hospitality houses (Miller, 1982) which are still lovingly serving poor people. Flanagan fully lived empathy, and he was the creator of Boys Town, in Omaha, Nebraska, a home and school for wayward and homeless boys. The home he created was, and still is, an exemplar of residential homes for troubled youths. Boys fortunate enough to go there grew, learned, and thrived in a congenial atmosphere of love. He literally salvaged the future for thousands of boys (Reilly & Warneke, 2008). Within this paper, it will become clear why I picked these three people, and how I connect them to empathy.

### **Prologue: An Introduction to Day, Flanagan, and Stein**

Why have Edith Stein, Edward Flanagan, and Dorothy Day taken such a hold on me and birthed my dissertation topic? Is there something about their passionate Catholicism in concert with my own faith that has drawn me to them? I think so because my Catholicism, heritage, and background as a working class Irish Catholic certainly

would draw me to such individuals, but there are many such individuals. Why them? I will explain why I have researched these personages, and I will begin with the one of the influential people of my childhood: Dorothy Day.

### **Why Dorothy Day?**

I remember going to the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in New York City where Dorothy Day had her shelter for the poor in the 1970s. She seemed to me as almost a mythical figure, certainly a saintly figure. I had heard of her all my life as a person who personified holiness coupled with outreach to the poor. Her relatively liberal stances, as related to poor people and pacifism, also appealed to me because of my relationship with my father, who was almost a Socialist on political issues, and we were extraordinary close. My father, Vincent DePaul Fitzpatrick—who was named for a saint, Saint Vincent DePaul, who advocated serving those in need, was an admirer of hers because she loved God's people with a simple dignity, and she lived the life she espoused, as one *with* the poor. The fact that she was such a devoted Catholic appealed to me because I have been a lifelong practitioner of the faith, and her stance about poverty made sense to me as one who advocated social justice. I, moreover, found it intriguing that she had come to this elevated place in the minds of so many Catholics after having such an unconventional, some would even argue sinful, past. She had a child out of wedlock (O'Connor, 1990). Also, I was unaware as a teenager that Day had terminated one of her pregnancies; that was another moral absolute: abortion was forbidden.

Nevertheless, Day was a powerful source of pride for me because she consistently served others before herself, and could still pray the rosary with a special devotion. This intriguing juxtaposition of social activism and heartfelt piety drew me to her; she was in certain ways like me. Moreover, she lived the life she championed as one with destitute people. *She did what she said she would do.* I find this inspirational since so many people pontificate on the value of social justice and empathy but actually do so little. Day patterned her life as a follower of Christ and lived the highest moral precepts of the Bible.

### **Why Father Edward Flanagan?**

Edward Flanagan was a figure I knew from my youth. I was aware of Flanagan as the founder of Boys Town and as an empathetic man who took an improbable idea of using love to help homeless boys and turned that belief into a valuable institution—where lives were literally and figuratively saved. I came from a world where love was in abundant supply even if money was not, and I think Flanagan's lifework and unadorned idea of compassionately working with disadvantaged youth was in a way very Irish. If children make a poor man rich, as I used to hear as a child, then those who are born must be loved and cared for by responsible adults.

He was tenacious in his belief that children needed protection, and he was a fighter who opposed anyone who would stop him from helping homeless or wayward boys. In other words, he lived his philosophy; he was his philosophy. He was not a preacher but a doer as he lived the Gospel—as he perceived it—to serve homeless boys.

He was taking care of the least ones as Jesus commanded because when you care for one of the least ones you care for him (Matthew 25: 31–46).

### **Why Edith Stein?**

Edith Stein was the first of the three I studied in depth. She emphasized women as scholars and believed women should be educated to the full. I also found her 1917 dissertation on empathy fascinating. (In fact, I held and examined an original copy of her dissertation at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky.) Stein lived a life searching for truth, and for the most part, exemplified an empathic human-to-human response. For instance, she worked for years as a high school German teacher offering not only sterling instruction to her students but the gift of herself as a careful and concerned listener and advisor. How far did her empathy extend in her adulthood? It extended to her death in a malevolent camp created for the purpose of murder—the murder primarily of Jews.

By way of illustration, during World War II, when she was taken to Auschwitz to be slaughtered as retribution against the Dutch bishops who protested the Germans behavior towards the Jews (Fitzpatrick, 2012), of whom did she think, herself? No, she thought of others and spent her time caring for the distressed and sometimes mentally unhinged mothers and children with whom she was being transported to Auschwitz. Stein, who eventually became a Catholic nun and was by then Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, was calm during the transport, and she was “full of trust and in total surrender to God . . . She cared for the children whose distraught mothers did not look after them. She washed them, combed their hair, gave them something to eat and drink” (Hamans, 2010, p. 83). A man at the police transit camp for Jews, Camp Westerbork, asked her,

“‘What are you going to do now?’ And she answered: ‘So far I have prayed and worked, from now on I will work and pray’” (as cited in Hamans, 2010, p. 83).

This behavior speaks profoundly to Stein’s fatalism. She was not surprised she was on her way to a labor camp because she never thought she would be spared the fate of the Jews by becoming a Catholic. This indicates she did not leave the faith of her birth (Judaism), for Catholicism, to be outside the parameters of anti-Semitism, and in the case of Hitler’s Germany, edicts that marginalized and murdered Jews.

Stein understood Hitler’s plan for Jews “the final outcome right from the beginning” (Herbstrith, 1971/1992, p. 116). Additionally, she believed she had a “unique vocation, the merging of Judaism and Christianity into a single redemptive unit” which some would argue is impossible, and I will unpack in chapter IV (Herbstrith, 1971/1992, p. 117). Moreover, she felt she would be willing to suffer in the name of the Jewish people “If he [God] would only show me how” (as cited in Herbstrith, 1971/1992, p. 119).

What common assumptions about human life are unsettled by her willingness to suffer and die for her people? On its face, it seems counterintuitive: Why should she suffer and die for people she has abandoned? Also, she left Judaism, for a religion, Catholicism, which has within its history instances of prejudice and violence towards Jews. After making such a choice, why should she be willing to sacrifice to her death?

Clearly, this attitude explains her sanguinity as she was transported to Auschwitz. Her remark to her sister who was working at the convent, “Come Rosa. We’re going for



our people” (as cited in Herbstrith, 1971/1992, p. 180) points toward calm (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

However, this statement and her internal composure indicate that even though she broke with her people, even though she became a Catholic and she was carrying a metaphorical cross, she still felt the tug, the disequilibrium, which came from leaving Judaism. Judaism is more than a religion; it is a way of life and a system of thinking; even though she left officially, she did not fully leave emotionally and intrinsically.

Importantly, Stein was killed, too, because she was born Jewish. Had she been a nun who was born Christian, she would not have been in this specific death transport to Auschwitz; this specific transport was a punishment to the Dutch bishops for speaking against German treatment towards Jews. Stein, being born Jewish, was included in this snare. However, even in this time of such emotional violence, she was empathetic towards others.

Empathy and an outwardly focused mien were strong character traits of Edith Stein—others and their needs, not hers. “Others, not I,” could have been her mantra. She continued reaching out to other people as one “I” to another “I” until her murder with her sister Rosa at Auschwitz on August 9, 1942. She was gassed and dumped into a pit serving as a communal grave (Hamans, 2010, pp. 83–94).

Stein, moreover, was a “philosopher of the trenches” (Borden, 2003, p. vii). Many of her speeches and papers were not written in or for the academy (Fitzpatrick, 2012). She was reacting to issues as she lived through them; her responses read as genuine, even today. Her storied writing on women was in concert with the German

women's movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Additionally, she analyzed the responsibilities of the state after the downfall of the German Republic post World War I (Borden, 2003).

This is one of the reasons I believe her writings speak so clearly; in fact, her voice and passion seem to surge from the pages. She was a woman of profound intellect, and she was vastly accessible as a philosopher, and so many philosophers are not (Fitzpatrick, 2012). This, too, is one of her strengths and an aspect of her character and teaching bearing scrutiny.

### **Direction of This Study**

Thus, it is apparent that my connection with these three Catholic luminaries goes quite deep; however, this study will be as objective as I can offer. I researched the empathy of Stein, Flanagan, and Day in the context of all parts of their lived lives: writings, speeches, letters, books, actions, and relationships. How they lived their empathic philosophies will be a focus of this study in conjunction with how their passionate Catholicism and view of people as children of God influenced their philosophy of empathy. I uncovered and interrogated their integral structure to discover how their faith developed into empathic lifestyles and how their lifestyles were nourished by faith, an action oriented faith.

### **Why Should Educators Care?**

Still, why should readers care about the empathy of these three Catholic luminaries? Understanding their philosophies is elemental; their work is important to empathy scholarship, and their ideas resonate today in an educational world that is often

times not empathic. Moreover, knowing about these compassionate leaders is inspirational to teachers and community leaders who do extremely challenging work, which at times can be massively frustrating. We are sorely in need of a light to look towards in our work as educators to envision what *could be* as we work with students. The reason I feel so strongly about having an example of excellence with which to aspire is because of my reliance on examples of human excellence. By way of illustration, if Flanagan could change the way people look at and respond to wayward or homeless youths—a seemingly Herculean task—could I do something much simpler? Could I help change the attitude in my school about youths from poor homes?

So, in knowing Day, Flanagan, and Stein’s philosophies, I have found myself uplifted as person and as a Catholic, and I believe people of other religions or no religion would find Day, Flanagan, and Stein relevant because their journeys positively impacted the lives of so many people—Catholic or not. (However, these were truly human people with flaws and failings who lived and loved through the messy complexity of life.)

Catholic teaching about the dignity of people and our requirement to serve others is a message that is desperately needed in our society, even if it is understood secularly, and Day, Flanagan, and Stein offer this message. Also, I believe the mainstream press is vociferously hostile toward the Catholic Church and always eager to pounce on any negative press while largely ignoring positive aspects of her mission. The Church, this ever reaching but flawed institution (all institutions are in some way flawed because they are run by imperfect humans) was elemental in creating the philosophies of the three

biographies of empathy I am including in this study, and in my mind that speaks volumes to the Church's significance as a moral force for good.

### **Conclusion of Chapter I**

Therefore, in unveiling Day and Flanagan's empathy and the vitality of their lived experiences—versus Stein's theoretical and lived empathy, the empathic life can be better explored.

So, in Chapter II, I will explain the empathic philosophies, within the context of the lived lives of each person I am investigating. I will position Day, Flanagan, and Stein as life changers, as powerful forces, as society influencers, and as action oriented people who lived empathy in the forefront of the stream of life.

Also, in Chapter II, I will also interrogate using other scholars' work on Day, Flanagan, and Stein whilst answering questions and drawing conclusions about each person's empathy in terms of their history, legacy, Catholicism, faith, mentors, character, and writings—all the while exploring patterns or themes that have emerged. As I introduce chapter II, I will outline what will be included in the chapter to best unfold each biography of empathy.

Chapter III will be the development of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's empathy using their own words. They will speak for themselves with distinctive passion, verve, and tenacity, and this will be a complement to chapter II to better bring their empathy into focus.

Chapter IV will be a synthesis of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's empathy, the overarching structure of their Catholic empathy, and Day and Stein's conversion stories.

Included in this chapter will also be an answer to the question, “What is Catholic empathy?”

Chapter V is my discussion and conclusion chapter, and I will define empathy within contexts pertinent to this study including: empathy and social justice, empathy and power, empathy and arrogance, empathy paradoxes, and empathy as a negative component of humanness when one subgroup is favored and another is disparaged.

I also unveiled my definition of empathy. To add depth to the study, within the appendix, is my discussion of my methodology, which is biography.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW: PART I

#### **Scholars Demarcate the Catholic Inspired Empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein**

In Chapter II, I will present scholarship on the Catholic inspired empathy of Dorothy Day, Edward Flanagan, and Edith Stein while critically reconstructing the three or four themes that converge in the empathic lives and writings of my subjects. My subjects' words shall not take precedence in this review, as I will unpack how the best scholars delineate their empathy. Therefore, to open, because of the prominence of her philosophy of empathy and the impact that philosophy has had on my understanding of social justice, I shall begin with Dorothy Day—a Catholic who lived what she espoused—being one with the poor.

#### **Dorothy Day: A Life Lived in Empathy**

To some, Dorothy Day (1897–1980) is considered a saintly person. Actually, to many people “Dorothy Day is already a saint” (The Catholic Worker, n.d.); to scores of admirers of Day, the canonization process is unnecessary. Moreover, she is, according to Stone, “the most significant, interesting and influential person in the history of American Catholicism” (as cited in Fitzwilliams, 2009, p. 183).

However, as reported by the *New York Times*, her cause for sainthood was supported by the Roman Catholic Bishops at a meeting in November of 2012 (Goodstein, 2012), but her possible sainthood is controversial. Some argue that she would have

eschewed the notion of becoming a saint, and her empathy would have demanded that any money used for the process should be given to the poor (The Catholic Worker, n.d.). One of the main characteristics of Day that may suggest sainthood was her profound empathy coupled with physical and emotional outreach to the poor and marginalized of the world.

She lived as one with the poor for over 50 years of her life, and she is a standard bearer, even in her death, of compassionate Catholicism and unswerving pacifism (Coles, 1987; Egan, 1988). Her embrace of voluntary poverty and her insistence that Catholic Workers live in poverty is a hallmark of the movement (N. Roberts, 1984, p. 10).

Notably, in 1933, as Day was starting the Catholic Worker, which is a charity and newspaper co-founded with Peter Maurin, she went to parish priests to tell them about her plan and “many priests and nuns listened and were impressed”.... “The great majority of contributions came from those who were in religious life—a dollar bill or two, but sometimes just a quarter folded up in a piece of paper” (Miller, 1982, p. 261). Her success with Catholic priests and nuns in supporting the Catholic Worker was because she made an impression on them as a woman of “honesty and integrity” (Miller, 1982, p. 261). Her authenticity, moral vision, and sense of action to help poor people came through her persona.

Her empathy is foundationally her moral conviction of how people should treat each other, and it was absolute revelation. According to O’Connor (1991), Day was a radical who not only worked for the poor but worked against the policies of the state she

disagreed with like nuclear proliferation and the waging and advancement of war. She protested and showed her disapproval with minimal fears for the consequences.

This showed remarkable courage in standing against the state in time of war, and this reveals her inner resolve and authenticity; Day contacted life and reacted to it. She understood living meant to be God loving, available, and genuine; it also meant being human. She was not only authentic; she was not only empathetic; she also lived a life based on action that required good works (Fitzwilliams, 2009).

Doing good works intimately coalesced with Catholicism and goes back to Biblical principle such as Psalm 34:15, “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition, 1995). Her empathy of action brought her outside of her comfort zone and into intimate contact with poor people, doing good works for people she at first may not know. Her empathy of action also moved her to seek peace in all of war’s ugliness and evil, to those who were behaving justly—and those who were performing evil acts. Luke 6:33 explains, “And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same” (The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition, 1995).

By going back to Biblical principles, Day was not expressing her empathy as Zahari and Overgaard would detail empathy, as something that is “notoriously ambiguous” (2012, p. 3). No, to Day, her principles and her empathy go directly and simply back to the life of Christ; there is no ambiguity.

Importantly, Day highlighted a childhood experience when she found a Bible in the attic of her home. Reading the Bible out loud to her sister, she reflected on the



Bible's strength. She instantaneously realized, "I was discovering God . . . It was as though life were fuller, richer, more exciting in every way. Here was someone that I had never really known about before and yet felt to be One whom I would never forget, that I would never get away from" (as cited in O'Connor, 1991, pp. 53–54).

This childhood recollection is significant on two counts: one, she reflects very positively on reading the Bible and being moved by it; two, it indicates the importance of the Bible in her life. So, we may interrogate Day as someone who took her Catholicism back to Biblical principles. We may also examine Day as someone who moved well beyond helping only friends and moved out into the world of empathetic works with her Catholic inspired empathic pacifism and her love of God's disenfranchised.

Therefore, and significantly, Day was vehemently against war and injustice, and she was jailed numerous times for her physical presence and vociferous vocal dissent at antiwar demonstrations (Egan, 1988; Klejment, 1988; O'Connor, 1991). Day felt war was counter to her beliefs in the works of mercy because of the destruction of war.

The works of mercy are closely connected to Catholic identity and include giving food, clothing, and shelter to those in need and visiting the sick and imprisoned (Delaney, 1911).

### **Day the Pacifist**

Another look at Day and her empathy for people in war, both the active participants and peripheral observers, is that she was the "preeminent and senior Catholic pacifist in America" and an advocate of protest against air raid drills (which supposedly protected people during an offensive attack by an enemy country) (Klejment, 1988, p.

278). Day acted as an empathetic mother figure protecting her “children” from the physical, emotional, and psychological fury of war. Regarding war as immoral, Day’s empathic position and the Catholic Worker position is based on the primacy of the person and the value of the individual; people should not act in violence—even in the event of war (Coles, 1987; N. Roberts, 1984). A Catholic Worker has the responsibility to be moral always and must not commit carnage because one is merely “following orders” (LeBrun, 2001, p. 449).

Her empathy for all parties in war led her to suggest that men try to stop war by being willing to go to jail in protest. Her empathy led her back to Biblical principles to favor and advocate the higher standards of God’s law over the rules of the state. She also championed the peaceful viewpoints of St. Francis of Assisi and other saints (Klejment, 1988; Sicius, 1996) and brought in her empathy and love from a motherly perspective.

There was a seamlessness to Day’s motherly empathy, coalescing with Laurent and Myer, who believed empathy can be “automatic and effortless” (2011, p. 26). While Day’s history does not indicate an effortless empathy, she was so consistently empathetic that “automatic” could be, or is, an apt adjective to describe her empathy, an empathy grounded in early Christianity.

Going further back in Church history, Day embraced the “eschatological theology of the early Christians” (Sicius, 1996, p. 69) to bolster her empathic arguments. It was the power and presence of her moral vision about the oneness of mankind that forwarded her pacifist empathic vision.

This means Day's empathetic Catholicism was a process that went back to Biblical principles and the early Christians and then moved forward, with action, to her life as a pacifist during World War II. Here, her insistence on loving rather than hating, and valuing human life rather than disparaging it, was patently evident. So, she pressed her pacifism with the Catholic Workers after World War II, including during the Vietnam War.

Day cajoled all Catholic Workers to accept that war was wrong, and she was intimately involved in and offered support for, by way of illustration, the so named Catholic Worker Catonsville Nine who stole and burned selective service files near Baltimore in 1968 (Klejment, 1988).

Peter Maurin, Day's mentor, insisted that Christ was the dynamite that exploded the Catholic Church into the reality of life (Baxter, 2001)—reality like the Catonsville Nine. Day processed her empathy into an intertwining of her radicalism and past history with Socialist and Communist causes.

All of this connects to Day's moral vision of the unity of humankind, and her empathy heralds her belief that we are all one in God: a communion of people throughout the earth (Cavanaugh, 2001)—the Mystical Body of Christ which “does not hover above the national borders which divide us; it dissolves them” (Cavanaugh, 2001, p. 457). Her moral vision about the unity of man, all people, male and female, and all races and religions, is firmly and emotionally involved in her empathy.

We are all in her mind, too, of God. The people she showed empathy for were, “the broken and torn bodies” who came to Catholic Worker houses as well as the soldiers

in the wars in Europe (Cavanaugh, 2001, p. 464). All children of God—which includes all people in the world—are deserving of empathy; they warrant an unbroken pacifism.

Therefore, Day disconnected with any cooperation with the military (Mize, 2001) springing from her faith in God and empathy inspired belief in the value of the individual—and her embracing, protecting motherhood as a context for her empathy.

In fact, according to Fitzwilliams (2009), referring to Riegle and Forest, the Catholic Worker was an organization of people that “she ‘mothered’ for close to 50 years” (p. 183). Day protected and sometimes pushed those she loved; this sounds like one description of a good mother.

This links to Noddings’s (1984) philosophy of empathy, as she writes of empathy as being receptive to the other; it does not infiltrate, and she also includes the maternal nature of natural caring. In fact, Noddings (2010) believes “The mother-child relation, as the original condition, is the primary example of natural caring, but unlike other relations of natural caring, it still has firm roots in instinct” (p. 58). Therefore, Noddings describes a natural female caring; she also asserts that current scholarship avers that women are more empathetic than men, and this should not come as a shock to us because of the “thousands of years of female caregiving” (p. 57). However, she strongly reminds us that this “increased capacity for empathy has come at a cost—acceptance of subordination and sometimes enthusiastic endorsement of their own subservience” (Noddings, 2010, p. 57).

Therefore, the maternal nature of Day’s empathy must be viewed in terms of her own personal cost. In mothering the Catholic Worker, she made extraordinary personal

sacrifices. Not only did she live as a poor person but she lived without the love of a husband or partner, a choice she made because God was her spiritual partner, and she thought people were one in God.

Since God is one with his people, Day maintained that we could not fight our fellow man or woman; we should instead offer love. Day's philosophy of empathy extends and expands even when it is excruciatingly difficult to empathize (Mize, 2001, p. 472) because individuals deserve such concern. Moreover, Day stood firm against war even during World War II when her opinions were very much in the American minority, and she was harshly criticized and personally marginalized for her vision.

### **Day and World War II**

Day raged against the Vietnam Conflict which, incidentally, is a war in which her grandson soldiered (Photos of Dorothy Day, 2012). Clearly, there was emerging and growing support across the United States that bolstered her position against the war—not so during World War II. Interestingly, the first draft card burner was a Catholic Worker, David Miller, who was jailed for the violation (N. Roberts, 1984). Miller was following in Day's philosophy in opposition to war.

Day vehemently fought for the rights of objectors and was the lay Catholic moral beacon of the rightness and moral absoluteness, in her mind, of not going to war. She spoke and acted thus on behalf of conscientious objectors in the face of not only profound societal opposition but in the face of institutional Church opposition (Coy, 1988; Klejment & Roberts, 1996).

According to N. Roberts (1988), “Several bishops forbade Dorothy Day from speaking to religious groups . . . the paper was sometimes banned from churches,” but the Catholic Church never stopped her. Why? The Catholic Worker philosophy and the Church philosophy had the same “doctrinal purity” (pp. 126–127). Moreover, interestingly, the Catholic clergy was excused from conscription (Coy, 1996), so Day’s pacifism may have resonated with some Catholic priests and religious.

In illustration of Day’s doctrine, she felt the sections of the law that protected conscientious objectors did not protect Catholics as it protected Quakers or Mennonites because the Catholic Church did not have a nonviolence tenet in its creed. Contrasting to Day’s philosophy, the American Catholic Church presented its people as patriots ready to fight (Egan, 1988). However, in 1983, the United States National Conference of Bishops stated in *The Challenge to Peace* that the just-war doctrine and the pacifist position are both within acceptable limits in Catholic dogma. This was mainly due to the influence of Dorothy Day (McNeal, 1996). Significantly, during World War II, when Day was called to Bishop McIntyre’s office in New York, he offered no objection to her articles in the *Catholic Worker*. As a follow up, he obtained the services of a Jesuit theologian, Joseph O’Connor, to assess the merit of Day’s pacifism. O’Connor was doctrinally supportive and full of praise for her position (Coy, 1996).

How did it happen that a lay person, a woman, would have such power with the Church hierarchy? Day’s empathy was resolute, persuasive, and tenacious. She did not back down on her Catholic and empathetic pacifism; her insistence and prestige created an avenue for other Catholic pacifists.

Her compassionate moral vision, her empathetic motherliness, and her respect for the individual moved her agenda forward—particularly in challenging times when public opinion went against her. She continued her vociferous advancements of her moral vision no matter what the obstacles.

### **The Catholic Worker Advances Peace**

The Catholic Worker movement, alternatively, did not quietly wait for the Catholic Church to embrace a pacifist stance; the Catholic Worker espoused peace itself (Piehl, 1988) and led the charge as a moral absolute, in empathy for all those (soldier and noncombatant) suffering in war. Day raged against what she believed to be the immorality of conscription and fought for conscientious objectors in the *Catholic Worker* newspaper (N. Roberts, 1987).

Her arguments for conscientious objectors were, in 1942, considered extreme. She maintained that people should not participate in the draft at all, not register for conscription—even though they would be risking jail. Therefore, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker were *the* American Catholic group that offered support during World War II to the individual who refused to fight. Why? Due to this: Day's profound caring sensibility and Christian personalism extended to the rights of the individual because of her reverence for the individual (McNeal, 1996).

The Catholic Worker's standards were on the side of the single human life and the individual's conscience in becoming a conscientious objector (Coy, 1996). Her empathy was a reflection of her respect for the rights and needs of the individual even when society was not supportive.

Moreover, in championing the individual, Day actively, in word and deed, raged against the draft and illuminated the difficulties of conscientious objectors in her newspaper, the *Catholic Worker* (N. Roberts, 1987). The *Catholic Worker* was the *Catholic Worker* of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin—a prophetic voice of moral rightness that questioned our basic values as Americans concerning the treatment of the poor (DiDomizio, 1988), and it was cocooned in an idealistic and empathic mien. The *Catholic Worker* encouraged people to become part of the “nonviolent gospel” which is an example of “a new way of living for the sake of life itself” (Douglass, 1988, p. xii).

Indeed, Day’s empathy was profound. But what of the pacifist Catholics who refused to serve in the military during World War II and decided to serve in an alternative capacity as workers in the Civilian Public Service (CPS)? What of the 162 Catholics who served in the CPS even though their religion had a just-war theory, and most eligible American Catholic men willingly served in World War II? The *Catholic Worker* created, fronted, and funded the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors, so the men could live in a camp even though most had no connection with the *Catholic Worker*. The camp was eventually funded by the Historic Peace Churches (O’Sullivan, 2001). Here, again, Day’s organization championed the needs of unknown individuals because of their value—empathy in action.

### **Coles’s Thoughts Concerning Day’s Pacifism**

Alternatively, one scholar who knew Day well, Robert Coles (1987), presents Day’s pacifism as hard for him to accept in “the face of mass murder” because it “went beyond mere witness” in World War II when civilization itself was in danger of



imploding (pp. 99–100). Coles also argues with Day’s pacifism because he thought it unrealistic to think that there is anyone who has “perfect love to offer to the world” when Hitler was in command (p. 100). Therefore, to Coles, Day’s empathy and love for peace was unrealistic in a deranged world, was not viable, and was dreadfully hard for him to understand or appreciate—but that would not sway Day, even after the war. She held firm against World War II while American society, for the most part, held the opposite view.

Still, it was not only scholars, like Coles, who knew Day who were against her pacifist stand during World War II; many of the devoted Catholic Workers broke ranks with her. Jermone Drolet, a labor priest and Catholic Worker in Louisiana, exclaimed that the war was needed “to preserve our civilization . . . so it will not be set back a couple of centuries by the Nazi Iron Heel” (as cited in Sicius, 1996, p. 67). So in this case, Day’s generalized empathy, extended to all people, throughout the world.

Agosta writes about generalized empathy and a “general interhuman competence” (1984, p. 46), and this is the kind of empathy Day had; it was not limited empathy. To draw lines around Day’s empathy and explain where it existed would be almost impossible. Her value for the individual and her sweeping Catholic moral vision encompassed people everywhere.

Therefore, her empathy was not only theoretical—it was a living and breathing symbol. She advocated for people when they needed her; she did not merely talk about it. Her empathy was her morality, and she consistently extolled empathy even when she was seemingly alone and criticized in the institutional Catholic world or her society. In

being a pacifist, Day was expressing her demand that people look at the life of Christ as an example of how to live whether they agreed with her, or not.

### **Day's Empathy and Peace Advocacy**

Because Day's empathy and peace advocacy were a part of her morality, she brought words and self to the argument in public places be it lecture halls, the *Catholic Worker* Newspaper, or civil authorities. For instance, in 1976, Day lectured before the International Eucharistic Congress of 1976, in Philadelphia, and she felt compelled to pass judgment on the organizers of the conference. When she spoke, she first expressed her love for the Catholic Church, and then her empathy for all people touched by war broke forth. Because it was August 6, which was the anniversary of the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, and the International Eucharistic Congress was offering a Mass for the military, she begged God to forgive our society. She insisted people must do penance because Americans created instruments of death like the nuclear bomb (Egan, 1988). It was because of our callousness towards people that the twentieth century was a time of multiple holocausts including the Armenian and Jewish holocausts (Miller, 1982).

Again, she shows her empathic philosophy as a moral vision even when doing so marginalized her. She could almost be compared with a medieval knight charging forward for a cause, regardless of the risks.

Yet, why was Day the way she was as a leader and advocate? For this reason, she had a personal force, "a 'presence' about her, a controlled strength, unobtrusive but still a force . . . She had a 'take charge' approach to things . . . people were convinced immediately of the honesty and integrity of this plain but well-spoken woman" (Miller,

1982, p. 261). Her integrity, authenticity, and moral vision came through, and her reach was to people around the world.

However, Day not only reached out to those who supported her beliefs or those who were Americans. Her empathy extended to disenfranchised people—even those Americans were fighting. Day insisted, “We are on the side of the poor” during the Korean Conflict, for example, and the poor included the Korean soldier and the Korean-noncombatants (N. Roberts, 1987, p. 15). She believed all individuals on both sides of the Korean Conflict were of God; therefore, they deserved a world without war.

In fact, Day’s love for the poor was not only evident in her vociferous denunciations of war; it was in her practical and daily hands-on care for the poor for over fifty years. Her houses of hospitality took Christ’s requirement to love and serve the poor—at a sacrifice to oneself—to ground level with love and empathy exuding from its storefronts, buildings, and houses.

People could come for food or clothes and were treated as children of God. These houses were soup kitchens and “filled with society’s often angry castoffs” which kept the Catholic Worker movement “rooted in the concrete” (O’Gorman & Coy, 1988, p. 239). Empathy was a lived and acted upon part of life with some of God’s most insolent people who were not always grateful for the help they received.

Nevertheless, she valued the single human life even if that person was excruciatingly difficult. Day was calm but firm when the people who came to her for help became belligerent—when the challenging challenged. For example, one man staying at a Catholic Worker farm in the 1930s began cursing and spewing venom when

his egg was taken (Miller, 1982). Still, she reacted with empathy towards the individual, and it is worth noting, this type of seemingly irrational outburst was not unusual.

Moreover, her leadership in empathy was evident to people who came to one of the Catholic Worker houses, St. Joseph's, because of the way they were served as valuable individuals. Even though hungry people could get more food at another soup kitchen, "they prefer the Worker because they are treated like human beings and not herded like animals" (N. Roberts, 1984, p. 13).<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, Day was a woman whose empathy championed the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. Her singular empathy which was action oriented, and purposefully driven, may be best expressed in four themes: empathy as an outgrowth of her moral vision; empathy as practiced in the midst of societal opposition, even if it is challenging to foster social justice; empathy for the individual as essential, and empathy as an outcropping and an expression of motherhood.

Her life was a life lived within these empathic expressions in the delights and turmoil's of the world. In Chapter III, I will go more in-depth about Day and her empathy using large numbers of her first person accounts while I explore her life as a—some would argue "the"—American Catholic standard-bearer for the poor and marginalized during the twentieth century.

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<sup>11</sup> At the Catholic Charities 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Washington, DC, in September of 2011, Cardinal Dolan, of New York, said that people liked coming to Catholic Charities soup kitchens because people treated them better than the government soup kitchens. Catholic outreach emphasizes serving poor people with respect and dignity.

### **Edward Flanagan's Empathy: Scholars and Witnesses Illuminate Him**

Another remarkably empathic person and the second person of focus in this study is Father Edward Flanagan (1886–1948) who founded Boys Town, a home for homeless and wayward boys in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1917.

His fervently lived Catholicism, in conjunction with his united family who encouraged him in a life of service, was the groundwater that nourished his flourishing empathy thereby helping so many homeless and wayward boys. His vision is still helping young people today in Boys and Girls Town institutions around the United States; his legacy lives on in young people salvaged and redeemed (Graves, 1972).

### **Flanagan: A Progressive on Race**

In December of 1917, Flanagan opened his first home for boys in Omaha, Nebraska, with five homeless boys who had been paroled by the courts. Within two weeks, he had 25 boys; they represented the Jewish, Protestant and Catholic faiths, and they represented a multiplicity of races, ethnicities, and skin hues (Oursler & Oursler, 1949). There was to be no racial or ethnic segregation at Boys Town, and Flanagan's empathy was evident in his profoundly progressive views about racial justice and his moral vision about the equality of man.

By 1921, 1,300 boys had lived at the home and diversity was evident. Three hundred eighty-six Catholics, 900 non-Catholics, and 55 Jewish boys had been in attendance (Ivey, 2000). This mix of boys was Flanagan's intent. It was normal, to him, for boys from a variety of races and ethnic groups to live together. On the pillars at the

entrance to Boys Town was a prominent sign heralding welcome to boys of all races (Ivey, 2000).

In fact, his empathic philosophy collided with the Ku Klux Klan; this is a white supremacist group known to hate African Americans, Catholics, and Jews—among others. In 1923, there were 45,000 members in Nebraska. The Ku Klux Klan was against Boys Town because Black and white children lived together as equals; it was run by a Catholic priest, and African Americans and women had positions of leadership at the home (Reilly & Warneke, 2008). One of the reasons Flanagan had Blacks and whites living as equals was because of his philosophy of the primacy of the individual; each person mattered.

To Flanagan, the individual mattered, and his empathy was deeply intertwined in each person—even if parts of society challenged his vision of humankind as equal. He was in the vanguard of race relations, and he did not adjust his position to be politically or societally pragmatic. Flanagan’s truths were simple—what was right, was right, and he was willing to act to make his truths realities.

Testimony about Flanagan’s progressive attitude about race could be considered legendary, and witnesses repeated the reports in multiple Flanagan histories and biographies. One example would be in the 1920s when he was traveling around the country with his boys who were advanced as “America’s Greatest Juvenile Entertainers” (Ivey, 2000, p. 74). A member of the troop, an African American child, Oscar Flakes, was told he would not be able to eat with his friends in a café in South Dakota—he was told to eat in the kitchen. Flanagan responded with a resounding no and commanded, “If

we don't eat with him, we don't eat" (as cited in Ivey, 2000, p. 72). Another powerful indicator of his empathy as a moral vision of the equality of people is the words on a pillar at the entrance to Boys Town: "All Races All Creeds All Colors" (Ivey, 2000, p. 50).

### **Flanagan: Recognition of the Primacy of the Individual**

It would be hard to discuss Flanagan without highlighting his stress on the value of the individual as connected to the depth, breadth, and universality of his empathy.

Fortunately, for the advancement of human rights, Flanagan's empathy did not only extend to waifs who might benefit from a better life at Boy's Town in the United States. He also reached out to the children who were incarcerated in reform schools in Ireland, at great personal risk to his popularity. Why so? Some of the reform schools were run by the Irish Christian Brothers, and some thought that as an Irishman, he should not criticize his own. The conditions in these schools "has been that they have not been very successful in developing individuality, Christian character, and manliness, because they are too much institutionalized" (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 149).

Importantly, he raged against the Irish reform schools in the 1940s. When he visited one institution in Artane, Dublin, he left, "sick at heart" (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 149) which was indicative of Flanagan's empathy.

Flanagan not only felt the child as an individual was not being considered—which was one of his primary interests, but the children were not being given an experience that approximated the best of a good home—what an empathetic mother and father would give. Empathy was clearly in the forefront of his pronouncements in Ireland in 1946

when he said, “Reform schools have nothing to offer . . . It is detention and punishment . . . We have not advanced in that direction since the days of Charles Dickens.” He went so far as to call the Borstal system, which was Ireland’s youth reform program, “a scandal, un-Christlike, and wrong” (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 151).

### **Flanagan Champions Human Rights**

He, moreover, raged against the beatings that boys suffered in these Irish schools. One particularly abusive example was a fourteen year old youngster, Gerard Fogarty, who was in Glim Industrial School around the same time Flanagan was in Ireland (Arnold, 2009).

Fogarty escaped from the school, and when he was caught, he was beaten with a cat-o’-nine tails on his bare arms and back and then made to swim in the salty Shannon estuary. After this torture, Fogarty ran away again, and his mother sought help from a councilor, Martin McGuire, who requested help from Father Flanagan. Flanagan “described the Irish industrial schools as ‘a national disgrace’” (Arnold, 2009, p. 57). Due to Flanagan’s denunciation of these brutal, inhumane schools, he was forced by the Catholic Church and the Irish Department of Education to leave Ireland (Arnold, 2009, p. 58). However, even that challenge did not stop Flanagan’s denouncements because he knew he was fighting and acting for social justice.

In attempting to understand Flanagan’s denunciations of the Irish reform school system, a question worth asking is, what process led to his willingness to be ostracized by his own people, for criticizing his own people? How did this process take place? Importantly, by the time he went to Ireland in 1946, he had been working with homeless



and wayward boys in the United States for most of his adult life and had a body of successes that proved his empathetic, loving, pragmatic, and individual centric methods worked. Therefore, when he went to Ireland and discovered children were being savagely beaten and mistreated, he bravely stated that he could never adhere to the notion that “fear can ever develop a child’s character” and that if his speaking out against this ill-treatment of children “is intemperate and offensive, I’m afraid I’ll have to plead guilty” (as cited in Raftery & O’Sullivan, 2003, p. 109).

Referring to the industrial and reformatory schools as “institutions of punishment,” he asked a crowded audience of people at the Savoy Cinema in Cork, Ireland, to persist in preventing children from going to these places. On July 23, 1946, The Irish Minister of Justice, Gerry Boland, insisted that Flanagan was employing “offensive and intemperate language”, and he was making statements about “conditions about which he has no firsthand knowledge.” (This was not the case; Flanagan did have first-hand knowledge.) He also insisted that Flanagan was overstating the truth (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 2003, pp. 107–108).

Flanagan would not relent; Moreover, he was widely critical of the Christian Brothers, who ran reform schools in Ireland. Why? In addition to what he saw in Ireland, he had other evidence against them. He would not allow them to continue to work at Boys Town, after having them work with him for five years. They left after they discovered they could not “punish the children and kick them around” (Raftery & O’Sullivan, 2003, p. 112).

Essentially, even when he was working with people that were just like him, Irish Catholics, his empathy still led him to value the individual and refer back to Christian principles that should not allow abuse of children. Because his Catholic empathy was action oriented, when he saw abuse of children, he had to take action; he had to speak; he had to share his moral vision about the equality of humankind—no matter how much he was criticized for doing so.

Flanagan's type of empathy, as he reacted to the Irish reform schools, was one of individual suffering. This is like the empathy as described by Davis as empathy of personal distress and a feeling of another person's emotions (as cited in Riggio, 2013). What is interesting about Flanagan's empathy with the Irish reform schools is that he did not actually know any of the children involved. Therefore, his empathy also connects to Agosta's definition of a more generalized empathy that extends out from the person based on an "interhuman competence" (1984, p. 46) and to Noddings's assertion that empathy builds more empathy (2010, p. 56).

As Flanagan moved through Ireland, his empathy compounded. Noddings (2010) insists that empathy births more empathy in some cases, not always. Nevertheless, Flanagan's action in Ireland and his building of Boys Town indicate that Noddings's theory is true in Flanagan's case. Each empathetic pronouncement or action seems to lead to more, and in the case of Ireland, his empathy mushroomed and moved outside of himself into an arena of personal danger; he could be, and was, vilified for his stance against the Catholic run reform schools.

Before Flanagan stood up for the imprisoned children of Ireland, he defended and showed empathy to the Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II by Executive Order #9066 signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. When Flanagan heard about Japanese Americans being held at the Santa Anita racetrack until more permanent accommodations could be built, his empathy was evident. He was against the internment of the Japanese. He immediately wrote and offered homes to eight Japanese American families if they came to Boys Town. Katsu Okida wrote back, “It is certainly heartening to know of someone who has taken an interest during these trying times” (as cited in Hyland & Reilly, 1995, pp. 50–51). Okida found Flanagan to be a progressive and “a man of strong convictions, and he thought what was happening to us was wrong. He was determined to do whatever he could to help” (as cited in Hyland & Reilly, p. 52). Another Japanese American, Toshio James Takahashi (2005), wrote to Flanagan after he was called up for internment, and Flanagan told him to come to Boys Town to help take care of the grounds. Takahashi explained that Flanagan “was very, very loving” (p. 1).

These are examples of both Flanagan’s empathy as a moral vision in the equality of people and his lived empathy in challenging times to advance social justice. Flanagan’s empathy included all people and eschewed racial prejudice of any kind—he was a visionary, and his dreams for the youths of Boys Town were boundless. His empathy and Catholic sensibility in the equality of humankind is evident in these vignettes, his life story, and his school and home: Boys Town.

### **Flanagan's Empathy as an Offshoot of Motherhood**

What was the schooling like at Boys Town? Was empathy in evidence? It clearly was. Nevertheless, at a practical level, the education at Boys Town was both academically and trade oriented in Flanagan's day; each boy was prepared to make a living in the world. Moreover, the employees and teachers who came in contact with Boys Town children had to tow the mark with Flanagan's philosophy of empathetic, gentle, loving, and respectful care giving. Anyone who was even too harsh with the boys was fired or encouraged to leave (Rafferty & Sullivan, 2003).

Moreover, Flanagan, as noted previously, was adamantly against chastisement, and he was often disparaged by those who did believe in physical punishment. "His usual approach was one of patient kindness" (Stevens, 1967, pp. 112–113). His advice to parents and manner of speaking to the boys was conveyed in a mode of the kindest and gentlest of mothers. Even though Flanagan was a male and could be quite firm—as women can of course be—his maternal care of the children was legendary.

In illustration, a boy, Chris, kicked a teacher at the home, yet Flanagan still responded empathetically, not punitively. Chris told Flanagan that he was not a good boy, as Flanagan always insisted. As evidence, Chris offered the fact that he kicked the teacher. Flanagan countered that Chris was a good boy in that he was obedient to his teachers, but his whole life he had listened to the wrong teachers, criminals and wayward people. If Chris attended to the teachers at Boys Town, and did as they bid, he would be a good boy (Stevens, 1967).

Flanagan could also be very gentle with his boys; he consistently referred to them as “dear” (Oursler & Oursler, 1949). By way of illustration, according to a Boys Town resident Leo Magers, when he was caught “breaking into the post office” he faced expulsion from the school. Magers went to see Flanagan, who had a Nebraska congressman or senator waiting for a meeting. Flanagan insisted on seeing Magers first, before the personages, as he always did when his boys needed him, and allowed him to stay at Boys Town. Magers eventually became a colonel in the United States Army (Magers, 2005, p. 1).

Flanagan’s exemplary empathy is evident in this human exchange; this is an example of Flanagan’s empathy as an extension of motherhood in that a caring mother would be forgiving of transgressions and would offer an opportunity for child amendment.

He wanted people to consider the transgression the child committed as wrong while viewing the offender as a child of God who should be tenderly and empathetically cared for at all times, as a loving mother ideally would. Again, Flanagan turned back to the need to respect and develop the individual, so the youngster could be a part of society, not become an embittered, timorous person who would thunder against it.

An article in the *Irish Digest* in January of 1947 clearly spelled out Flanagan’s beliefs about lovingly, selflessly, empathetically, and pragmatically helping wayward boys. He explained that no person could believe a boy who was sick with pneumonia should be placed back in the snow, but some accept as true that a child who has become delinquent can become socialized by more abuse (Father Flanagan Says, 2005, p. 1)

which is a ridiculous and damning assumption. Therefore, Flanagan built a home that reflected his philosophy—his moral, empathic vision.

Yet, why is this significant, and what does this evidence about Flanagan's moral empathic vision mean? It means that Flanagan seriously attended to Biblical teachings, and he embraced the forgiving nature of Catholicism. It also means his family life and youth had a profound impact on his development into the man he became.

### **Flanagan's Youth**

He came from a large Irish family of seven sisters and three brothers, and even though he was not a strong child, one of his jobs, when he was six, was to take the sheep to pasture. One of the small lambs became entangled in a briar patch, and Flanagan's hands started to bleed from the thorns, as he tried to free the lamb. While his mother fretted about his bleeding hands, his father, though, praised him for putting the lamb's protection ahead of his own. Another time, when he was in school, in Sligo, Ireland, he was quite upset that one of his friends, Mac, was expelled for smoking a cigarette. He thought his friend should have been disciplined in some other way because now he would not be able to be admitted to another school and would not be educated. This would make life hard for him because lacking an education would make it difficult to make a living (Graves, 1972).

This suggests that Flanagan took his lessons from childhood and carried them into his adult years. Metaphorically, the lamb of his youth became the homeless boys of his adult years whom he tried to protect. His friend Mac, who he felt deserved another chance and not school expulsion, became the boys who were engaged in criminal

activity. He felt their actions merited forgiveness and not punishment; his early influences impacted his adult actions.

Truly, Flanagan's early influences impacted his adult empathy, and his adult empathy required action or investment from him. This has some links to Rogers's philosophy of empathy. Rogers believed that a therapist must have an "unconditional positive regard" and an "empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference" (1957/1992, p. 827). Rogers further detailed the empathizer as someone who tamps down his own needs, so he can do the emotional heavy lifting of empathy and open space for the "empathized with" to share.

Hence, Flanagan's Catholic imbued empathy included the purposeful selflessness, an emptying, that Rogers describes to be a good listener. Moreover, Flanagan's empathy is characterized by purposefulness; to empathize was to act, and this action oriented empathy is indicative of Catholic empathy in general. It is not enough to talk about it; sympathy is not enough. The Catholic question would be, "What are you going to do about it to try to mitigate the suffering?" To a person with a deep understanding of Catholic theology, an anguished person is another Christ. Flanagan knew anguished boys, but he wanted to do more than sympathize; he sprang into action and built the boys a home.

### **Flanagan the Educator**

Flanagan wanted to build not only homes for his boys but schools, too. Flanagan became an educator of a privately financed orphanage and school. Some Omaha schools

did not want to enroll his boys—who were already behind in their studies due to how much school they had missed (Oursler & Oursler, 1949).

Furthermore, they were being ostracized and teased by local children, which Flanagan’s empathy would not allow. The boys were put down by peers because of their poor academic skills, and they were called names like “ruffians.” They were also labeled “Flanagan’s Hoodlums” (Ivey, 2000, p. 21; Reilly & Warneke, 2008, pp. 51–52; Stevens, 1967, p. 84).

So, he decided to create his own school in 1919, which was secular, but still had a religious component. He wanted all the boys to learn to pray—in whatever religious tradition they were familiar. Catholics and Protestants attended church and Bible study. Jewish boys went to Hebrew school and Sabbath services. He put his philosophy about caring and opportunity for the boys into action by developing and creating a nurturing school (Portner, 1996; Reilly & Warneke, 2008). Boys Town’s staff would also focus on the individual and the full development of each student as part of Flanagan’s empathic moral vision of social justice.

### **Empathy as a Moral Vision**

Fortunately for Flanagan scholars, there is a wealth of first person accounts about him because his boys wrote for the *Boys Town Times*. Many, if not most, of the boys who wrote for this paper during Flanagan’s lifetime knew Flanagan, so their observations of his character and empathy are particularly pertinent to this dissertation. Joe Schrantz, a member of the Boys Town class of 1947, wrote of Flanagan’s unselfishness. In fact, he wrote the following after listing some qualities of Flanagan’s:



. . . but above all, Father Flanagan is unselfish. It is through his unselfishness that our class of forty-one boys is graduating from Boys Town. . . . If there were no such man . . . many of us would not have a high school education. Some of us might even be in a reform school . . . Instead . . . we are as healthy as any boy in America. (Schrantz, 2007, p. 1)

This is an expression of Flanagan's empathy and Catholic sensibility which is clearly and definitively focused on care for the unfortunate, often referred to in Catholic documents as the "poor" person. "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 587).

This "love for the poor" is closely linked to empathy, as is unselfishness, and was part of Flanagan's moral vision; one flows out of the other. When Flanagan saw others as someone like him, he gave abundantly of himself and did not harbor his gifts and goods.

This love and empathy for others that Flanagan exemplified is also closely connected to social justice. According to McVerry, "What Fr. Flanagan did was not an act of charity, it was an act of justice. When we give someone what is their right, what they are entitled to, we do not call it an act of charity" (as cited in Nelson, 2002, p. 3).

This is what Flanagan implicitly believed; he thought his boys deserved good homes and good lives with all the basic necessities of healthy living. His philosophy was not complex but very straightforward—food, clothing and shelter, and respect and love for the individual, a quality education that prepared one for life—these are what young boys deserve because they are human.

Because the boys were human, they deserved opportunities and amenities of quality, period. While this seems uncomplicated as a philosophy, and it is, it is also a more generalized empathy as described by Agosta (1984).

Moreover, Flanagan's empathy for people had an affirming simplicity; it was his moral vision. As per Hyland and Reilly (1995), Flanagan would allow boys to come to Boys Town if a parent or interested party wrote a letter or if one of the "pilgrims" (a pilgrim is a boy who simply showed up at Boys Town and asked for admittance) arrived. For example, Walter C. Clark just arrived at Boys Town "off the road in the autumn of 1939" (Hyland & Reilly, 1995, p. 10). Flanagan's empathy did not include bureaucratic procedures that would delay a boy's arrival.

### **Empathy Narratives**

By way of illustration, in 1935, Julia Hynes from the St. Louis Department of Public Safety asked Flanagan if he would accept Donald and Ralph Monroe, whose parents were dead. Flanagan agreed and said they could come to Boys Town (Hyland & Reilly, 1995, pp. 8–9). To help, to be selfless, and offer empathy was a simple, Catholic moral vision to Flanagan.

Flanagan's empathy likewise flourished within his focus on the value of the individual. Each boy was to be treated as a unique person with special abilities to offer the world. That is why there were so many opportunities at Boys Town to learn trades of the period like baking, shoemaking, farming, or printing as well as potentially edifying and character building personal pursuits like football, wrestling, singing, or playing an instrument (Oursler & Oursler, 1949; Reilly & Warneke, 2008).

The testimony of what it meant for these oftentimes hungry, hopeless, and cast off boys to come to a place where there were three meals a day, warmth of body and soul, the chance for a first class education, and the intrinsic wealth of kindness could fill tomes on the subject. When Al Witcofski came to Boys Town in 1919 after his mother died in the flu pandemic, by way of illustration, he found a home where the boys had to perform much of the work to make it run. Witcofski worked, but he believed this to be a positive part of Flanagan's philosophy because he stayed out of trouble. Boys Town is in the countryside near Omaha, and as Witcofski relates, "Being 12 miles from town, what you gonna do?" (Hyland & Warneke, 1992, p. 13). Therefore, this also illuminates Flanagan's empathic focus on the individual in a quite practical way. Boys not only needed a home with the necessities of life; they needed schedules, routines, and rituals to help them harness their energies and talents in a purposeful fashion.

Another example of Flanagan's empathy as expressed in his value for the individual is exemplified in the testimony of Clifford Stevens who came to Boys Town in 1942 after stopping Father Flanagan in Brattleboro, Vermont, and asking the Irish priest if he could come to the home. Stevens's father had died in an industrial accident, and his "mother had difficulties caring for the family's seven children" (Hyland & Warneke, 1992, pp. 33–34). (This type of language concerning the mother being unable to care for her children after the loss of a husband is typical in the testimony of Boys Town charges.) Because the people of Brattleboro so valued the education and experience Stevens would receive at Boys Town, they banded together and gave him the necessaries for his trip.

This is best expressed in the local newspaper's caption: *Local Boy Wins Way to Boys Town* (Hyland & Warneke, 1992, p. 34).

This acceptance to the home of a boy suffering from want was typical of Flanagan. Stevens, who eventually became a Flanagan biographer and a Catholic priest, was an individual—not a meaningless boy in need. Flanagan's empathy extended to the individual in a way that encompassed all a person could become with the requisite help from others and a personal devotion to hard work. Flanagan did not empathize and walk away but joined with boys for the duration of their education and training to become productive human beings. People were another "I" to Flanagan, not an amorphous "them." In empathy, within the context of individuation, and in unselfishness, he believed he should share himself with others in deep respect for the other person's significance and intrinsic worth, to do so was unadulterated justice.

Flanagan also encourages the wealthy to share for their benefit and to forge social justice. Moreover, Flanagan's Catholicism backs up cautioning against being in any way selfish, callous, and disrespectful of others. People should not love riches and only consider self. A good example would be a teaching of St. John Chrysostom. He strongly states that we must distribute what we have with the poor because "not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprived them of life." What we have is "not ours, but theirs" (as cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 587).

This concept: the riches a person has are for sharing in empathy, is connected to Flanagan's moral vision which included getting people with riches to give to those who

have little. He was gifted in this arena, encouraging moneyed people to give to his boys for his charges' benefit and the givers' benefit, as well.

Flanagan found raising money for Boys Town very difficult at first because some people considered him a hopeless romantic about human nature who thought that delinquent children could change, and some people did not want to part with their money out of self-interest.

Because Flanagan thought so highly of his mission to save homeless boys, in 1917, he used his newspaper, *The Boys' Home Journal* "and skewered the rich men of the city by his subtle wit and naked honesty." He suggested in the editorial that the wealthy business people of Omaha were avaricious and cared little for the community (Stevens, 2012, p. 42). Due to his brutal and quite witty honesty that reflected empathy, and his quest for social justice for homeless boys in such challenging financial times, he was able to wring needed funds from the wealthy of Omaha—for the benefit of his home and for, in Flanagan's mind, the betterment of the giver.

Additionally, in the early 1920s, Flanagan wanted to build a bigger home for his charges outside of Omaha, more in the countryside. Huge sums were needed, and he was indefatigable about raising them. Flanagan was sure gifts would come in because his boys were valuable individuals who needed help. However, naysayers felt Flanagan was harboring and abetting young criminals who needed punishment—not love. Yet, Flanagan's empathy would not allow brutality, either physical or emotional, because he believed, according to Oursler and Oursler (1949) that "God would not blame mere children for being mistreated, misguided, and unloved" (p. 192). Challenging times or

societal opposition could not shake his caring, Irish tenacity because he felt he was on the side of God, and vice versa.

He explained in dollars and cents why it was important for society to care for the homeless boys. He talked about a “return on hard cash” when a boy became a productive citizen in Omaha, Nebraska, and business men who might care little for the homeless boys, generally, were willing to give him money because to do so was an “investment in the future” (Stevens, 2012, p. 43).

This is Catholic teaching in action: by helping a person move toward works of mercy, a person may change for the better and develop a deeper sense of duty toward God’s poor—immersed in a mantle of empathy and unselfishness. Catholic doctrine upholds “the Church’s love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 587). Essentially, from where does this tradition spring? It springs directly from the life Jesus led, which was a life of poverty, and the Beatitudes, and Jesus’ concrete example of connection to poor people (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, p. 587).

Therefore, by using principles deeply ingrained in Catholicism, Flanagan helped these no-nonsense businessmen show some selflessness and possibly begin to develop empathy themselves. This was part of Flanagan’s genius; he could see nobility and honor in men with money, and he helped by “making them heroes in spite of themselves” (Stevens, 2012, p. 43).

Moreover, it is neither liberal nor conservative, according to Weigel, that the Catholic Church “is formed by a rule of faith that is expressed in a rule of life . . . It is the

very condition for the possibility of true compassion” (2001, p. 88). So, to offer a more contemporary illustration, when Cardinal James A. Hickey, of the Archdiocese of Washington, (who retired in 2000) showed incredible compassion for people with AIDS, it was not *in spite* of his commitment to the Church’s teachings but *because* of those Church teachings (Weigel 2001).

### **Closing Flanagan**

Flanagan was grounded in reality. Therefore, I wanted to represent him as such. In this literature review, using his empathy as the focal point, I interrogated his empathy as presented by scholars who have researched him and people who knew him. In chapter III, I will further analyze Flanagan’s empathy primarily using his words and his voice. It will be rich in his philosophy of empathy and will offer more analysis of his crusade for youth.

Flanagan’s empathy and sincerity went deep. Like Day, he did what he said he would do, in his case helping homeless boys, with a full hearted empathy that reached out to boys across the world. He thought as he lived—to the benefit of so many in need.

Therefore, in this part of the review, I drew out the biographers, scholars, friends and charges of Flanagan analyzing his empathy. Four themes emerged and were elaborated upon: Empathy as recognition of the primacy of the individual, empathy as a moral vision, empathy in challenging circumstances to forward social justice, and empathy as an offshoot of motherhood. In Chapter III, I will expand on these themes, as I look primarily at Flanagan’s words.

### **Edith Stein**

The third person I am interrogating at length will be Edith Stein (1891–1942). She too exuded empathy; in fact, she wrote her doctoral dissertation on the subject. She is the most educated of the three, clearly the most intellectual. Because she is on multiple levels more important to analyzing the phenomenon of empathy, this Stein section will focus on scholarship related to her dissertation and her work as a teacher and an eminent Catholic speaker.

#### **Edith Stein: An Empathy Scholar**

Stein speaks to empathy in a way Day or Flanagan cannot because it was the subject of her doctoral dissertation in 1916 when she graduated from the University of Freiburg. In her life, she not only wrote of empathy, but she lived it as a scholar, teacher, and Catholic nun. In this section of the literature review, I will cross-examine the best scholars concerning Stein's philosophy of empathy as a writer, public speaker, teacher, and friend.

However, in trying to unearth Steinian empathy, one aspect of Stein's character must be understood. The depths of her interior life were her own. She was called "a book sealed with seven seals" (Hampl, 2006, p. 59) because she held her true self to only herself. Nevertheless, her doctoral dissertation is available, and I will open with scholars' interpretations of it.

Her dissertation was original, and it would behoove any student of empathy to start with it for a grounding in the subject because in it Stein details that empathy helps people understand that the other exists (Berkman, 2006), and we also need people to



understand the self (Borden, 2006). Other people complement us and complete us; we can see ourselves in them. According to Spector, an explanation of empathy offered by Stein is “a model of ‘passing’ between self and other that is prerequisite to the experience of self” (2006, p. 95). Her dissertation is rich in information and is a light about Stein, to better illuminate her philosophy.

How did Stein characterize empathy? She said there were three steps in the empathic experience: active listening and putting oneself in another’s place, identification merging; clearly understanding the person’s emotions, sympathy and self-discovery (Määttä, 2006, pp. 5–6). Stein also describes empathy as more a “feeling-in” phenomena versus a “feeling with” phenomenon like sympathy (Spector, 2006, pp. 98–99). Yet, from whence did her philosophy of empathy spring? It began with her mentor, Edmund Husserl.

### **Husserl Inspires; Stein Redefines**

Stein’s doctoral dissertation is intimately connected to Edmund Husserl, her eminent dissertation chair and founder of phenomenology, because the scheme of her paper is of Husserl (Calcagno, 2006). She was a “true disciple of Husserl” (Baseheart, 1997, p. 22), and there was a closeness between the thoughts of the two scholars (Calcagno, 2006, p. 255).

Husserl approved her subject of empathy, which is *Einfühlung* in German. He wanted to know philosophically if humans could learn to communicate with other persons even though that person had individual/self feelings. Husserl examined her

doctoral dissertation on empathy and noted her grasp of the background of empathy and her comprehension of the phenomenology of empathy (Calcagno, 2006).

Stein believed that knowledge of self came from knowledge of others. In this search to understand the other, Stein believed that empathy was the “awareness of the thoughts and feelings of others” because the body of another is not only presented to the empathizer, but the empathizer’s body is presented to the person with whom one is empathizing (MacIntyre, 2006, pp. 75–77). The self becomes realized.

Additionally, as the empathized with person is present, one may make some observations about behavior and action that may illuminate one’s own human possibilities (Borden, 2006). To Stein, the understanding of empathy is nothing less than essential to humanity. It is the “key to unlock the secrets of personhood” (Baseheart, 1997, p. 30). Empathy is a basic act that recognizes the existence of another. It helps humans comprehend another human’s thoughts and feelings (Berkman, 2006), and is an experience of one person comprehending the other (Calcagno, 2007). Therefore, empathy is an understanding of the individual.

Baseheart (1997) details Steinian empathy as the “grasp of foreign consciousness” even if in actuality, an empathizer cannot see a person’s pain. Therefore, empathy is an “act of perceiving” (p. 32) that helps the empathizer come in closer contact with another person, and therefore, a more intimate contact with oneself (Calcagno, 2007). Moreover, to Stein, empathy was a phenomena; it was moving into the mind of another person to best discern self (Calcagno, 2007). To Stein, furthermore, to completely understand empathy, it needed to be analyzed.

Stein analyzes empathy by asking what part of the experience is primordial (MacIntyre, 2006) which means original or beginning. She maintains that empathy is the non-primordial experience heralding a primordial one (Baseheart, 1997). According to Astell (2004), Stein's empathy is closely connected to moral acts and does "enable . . . ethical action" (2004, para. 11). This is critical because Stein is connecting morality and empathy in a way that suggests a cause and effect relationship. To Stein, empathy forwards morality.

What is the significance of Stein's belief that empathy advances morality? Its significance lies in the connectedness between the two. If Stein is correct, and empathy helps us become a more moral person, would it behoove us as a society to tout it, to teach it? (I will address teaching empathy in Chapter V.)

Also, importantly, in Stein's dissertation, she insists that each of us has an individual structure, and it remains constant (Borden Sharkey, 2010). To Stein, individuality and empathy have great meaning. Yet, in describing empathy as meaningful, is Stein explicating empathy as more meaningful or more natural in women than in men? Yes, she is. Understanding her view about empathy of women is essential to understanding Stein.

### **Empathy as a Female Attribute**

Stein views women as having a more developed emotional existence in contrast to men whom she views as more restrained emotionally. She goes so far as to profess, as per Calcagno, that the "emotions are a way to know the soul of another" (2007, p. 76). This Steinian discussion of emotions, caring, or empathy is closely connected to

womanhood because to Stein women are more intersubjective than men; she thinks women are made this way and are more empathically competent (Calcagno, 2007). This is an aspect of her moral vision.

Calcagno fervently believes Stein's philosophy of female empathy takes empathy and transforms it into a "creative gift" that enables women to "see" or "have insights" in a unique way (2007, p. 77) and is connected to the empathy of motherhood—either literal or figurative (Fitzpatrick, 2010). Moreover, to Stein, empathy is a component of her moral vision. She sees the world through an empathic lens.

How would another empathy and caring scholar, Noddings, connect to Stein's empathy? How would her empathy compare and contrast Stein's empathy and Calcagno's commentary on Stein's empathy? To Noddings, receiving people "or the relational mode seems essential to living fully as a person" (1984, p. 35). Noddings (2010) also asserts that empathy births more empathy, and this assertion is significant to this study because Stein's life would certainly be an example of this being true. Stein's empathy narrative shows a building outwards and a blooming of her empathy as she lived it. She was empathetic to her friend Toni Meyer and her cousins, the Courant's, at roughly the same time during 1915–1916 (Stein, 1986) which I will go into in more detail in a later chapter. She lived and practiced empathy in her adulthood as a teacher, evolving empathy into her teaching as if it seemed to build on itself. She then became a nun praying for others. Therefore, Stein's empathy suggests a clear example of the truth of Noddings's theory of empathy fostering empathy.

There is another very strong connection to Noddings and Stein's empathy. To Stein, empathy was essential to humanity and a way to get to know yourself (Baseheart, 1997). To Noddings, empathy is so crucial we should "guide, train, or educate" to it because "What we want as a result of our efforts are people who will care because they want to do so" (2010, p. 59). Both were in agreement of its importance within the human condition.

Calcagno's (2007) interpretation of Stein's empathy is that it helped women interpret others, give to others, and is connected to motherhood. He sees this as Stein powerfully "taking a typical stereotype of women as emotional and transforming it into a creative gift, a distinguishing spiritual faculty" (p. 77). Noddings (2010) is similar; she boldly asserts that the femaleness of women and their well-developed empathy is something to be affirmed, with a caution that empathy has come with a cost of "acceptance of subordination" (Noddings, 2010, p. 57; Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Yet, what of Stein's lived empathy which is a significant part of my study of Stein? In analyzing it, the reader may better discern not only how she philosophized about empathy in the abstract but how she lived empathically as a culturally Jewish woman and then later as a Catholic woman.

### **Stein's Lived Empathy**

In this section, I will analyze Stein's empathy as an educator and her philosophy of empathy, writ large. She was a brilliant and caring teacher and was devoted to her students even though her heart's desire was to be a university philosophy professor.

Becoming a teacher was not her first choice; nevertheless, she leaves a powerful legacy of what a teacher could be and what teaching might become.

**Stein the empathic teacher.** Stein's lived empathy, in contrast to her scholarship on empathy, is apparent in her educational philosophy. Because German universities did not include the talents of fully matriculated German women until 1908 (Border, 2003), Stein was in the vanguard of female, German college students. While Stein never worked as a tenured professor in her area of study, philosophy, she did become a fine and caring high school and college teacher. She felt strongly that education should be tailored to meet the needs of the students—not only the needs of the teachers (Stein, 1959/1996).

Again, here Stein's empathy flows towards the value of the individual. It is important, too, and adds to Stein's personal empathy, that her adult teaching and speeches were delivered and written as a Catholic woman, and she was fully cognizant of the dogmas of the Faith.

Another aspect of Stein's educational philosophy that exemplifies her life was her belief that schooling, writ large, must take into account both the cognitive faculties and sensibility of the student, so the student could improve herself (Brenner, 2006). To Stein, curriculum must be created that produced a complete, fully knowing woman, not solely an empathic one. She stressed the proper teaching of communication, for example, because "whoever is unable to express himself is imprisoned in his own soul" (as cited in Brenner, 2006, p. 221). To Stein, one must stand by and on one's words because the individual is at stake.

Furthermore, to make sure the needs of young women were taken fully into account, and so they could be surrounded with empathy, for the most part, she believed only women should educate women (Gelber, 1959/1996). Why? Firstly, she believed the difference between the sexes was not only a difference in bodies. She adhered to the belief that the total construction of the person must be considered and gender is a part of this. Therefore, gender must be taken into account when discussing education (Borden, 2003).

Moreover, she felt that only thoroughly prepared women should teach girls because “the education of girls, which requires theoretical foundation as well as practical applications, is specifically a feminine responsibility” (1959/1996, p. 14). Therefore, to Stein, women are the best teachers of women.

Notwithstanding Stein’s philosophy, did she possess any special gifts or developed talents that helped her become the empathic teacher and gifted educational expert she became? Indeed, yes. Gelber (1959/1996) elucidates that Stein “possessed an unusual intuitive faculty which made it possible for her to find her way into the depths of an unknown soul” (p. 4). Calcagno (2007) insists that Stein believed empathy to be an “act of consciousness that permits consciousness to know...foreign or other consciousnesses” (p. 37). So, to Stein, empathy was an individual choice, a decision purposefully made, to garner understanding of another. This empathetic quality was an integral part of Stein—not something she as an individual turned on and off as the need arose. She lived it.

**An extension of Stein's empathy.** Gelber (1959/1996) additionally notes that Stein's empathy extended further. She believed that teachers should teach from love—not from the installation of fear. Their empathy should flower within a relationship of affection between teacher and pupil to best help the student learn as fully as possible. This is, moreover, an example of empathy as an extension of figurative motherhood, the love between mother and child.

Notwithstanding this depth of contact, Stein maintained that, for example, our speech was a conduit of empathy that still maintained self-reliance (Brenner, 2007). Therefore, empathetic teaching, to Stein, helped students develop all their faculties to the fullest. To Stein, skills had to be learned; teachers had to instruct.

While Stein believed implicitly that teachers should purposefully teach, she also had a well-developed philosophy on the value and position of the individual. According to Borden Sharkey (2010), Stein believed each person had a distinctive individual form and a general flesh and blood form, but that human individuality “is critical for understanding human nature, our place in the world, and our relation to God” (p. 1).

Yet, to be an empathic teacher, one must be available to one's students; surely, Stein actively was. She provided informal spiritual direction to her students at St. Magdalena's in Speyer, although she was a German teacher, not a counselor, and she gave time to all her students who needed her. Her empathy for her students extended so far that she prioritized their needs above her own, particularly their spiritual needs (Cavnar, 2002). These narratives sound particularly mother like. In fact, empathy and its study were a lifelong pursuit of Stein's (Dolling, 2006). She never let empathy go.



Stein's availability for counsel was regularly noted by her students; she was "accessible to anyone who wanted her help . . . she came as an angel of charity" (Posselt 2005, p. 67). Stein focused on the unprecedented nature of the individual. Within Stein's empathy, each person has value and must be respected as such (Dolling, 2006).

In these examples and throughout her life, Stein was empathetic as she focused on the value and primacy of the individual. Therefore, empathy was an outgrowth of the intrinsic importance of the single human person because empathy shows the connections between people—the insights into another are understood.

Not only as a classroom teacher did Stein show empathy; she also was a gifted speaker on education, philosophy, Catholic education and issues, and the role of women in 1930s Germany—which were well received by the public (Herbstrith, 1971/1992; Posselt, 2005). Women were largely the topic of her lectures, and she presented women as complete human beings—individuals, who would use their educations and talents for the betterment of humanity (Stein, 1996). Flowing with empathy and striving for education is how she presents women as emotionally connected to motherhood. She also illustrated women as empathetic and capable of pushing forward a social justice agenda. Education for women was heralded by her during a time when most of the men of the German society were not supportive of her stance.

In using their talents, she believed women must also be empathetic and use their motherliness with those with whom they worked. Stein suggested that women empty themselves (Fitzpatrick, 2012) and become "warm and transparent" (Herbstrith, 1971/1992, p. 101).

**Further illustration of Stein’s lived empathy.** Stein was a volunteer German Red Cross nurse in World War I, and she began working as such in 1915 (Sullivan, 2006). Laboring on the typhoid ward, Stein attentively cared for her patients; this was her hallmark. She fed and cleaned patients, changed sheets, bathed weakened men and in one case repetitively wiped bloody mucus out of the mouth of a man. Moreover, she skillfully assisted on the surgical ward while helping a young female doctor learn procedures (Cavnar, 2002). Her selfless giving and empathy for the men during the war—certainly challenging times—fostered social justice because she cared for the soldier as well as the ranking officers with empathy and dignity. Importantly, in this hospital illustration, Stein was not yet a Catholic. However, she was moving towards a more outwardly focused life, (which is not Catholic or Jewish), and she wrote about this experience in her autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family* (1986)—which she penned when she was Catholic.

These examples of Stein’s empathy are indicative of who she was—not only as a scholar who wrote of empathy but as a person who lived it in her life in God. Her faith coalesced with her philosophy in a way that the life she espoused was the life she lived. There was no conflict between her ethics and her actions.

### **Themes That Have Emerged**

This literature review introduced the Catholic inspired empathy of Day, Flanagan and Stein. Four themes have emerged through my study of their empathy that will flow through chapter III as well. My three subjects experienced empathy in the following ways: empathy as an outgrowth of the value of the individual, empathy expressed as an

exemplar of loving motherhood, empathy as a component or force in challenging times to foster social justice, and empathy as an aspect of a moral vision about a common humanity.

Starting with Day, she championed our need to care for the individual through her work with needy people in the Catholic Worker community and in her consistent pacifism; she asked us to join her and love deeply as a caring mother would when she fought for peace and against war. She implored, and at times even demanded, we empathize with the marginalized even in the midst of emotional, societal, legal, or ecclesiastical obstacles—an example being her witness at the Eucharistic Congress of 1976. Day also posited, by her actions and writings, that she was a person who had empathy as part of her moral vision in the unity of humankind when she, by way of illustration, fought for the rights of conscientious objectors in World War II.

Flanagan's empathy is also extraordinary—legendary, in fact. He fought tenaciously for individuals in distress, like the incarcerated children of Ireland, because it was simple social justice—even though he was severely criticized for doing so. He gave his boys, and ensured they received, compassionate, empathic care in a cocoon of love that would be comparable to a mother's love. Moreover, his moral vision of empathy was apparent when he fought for the humanity of his marginalized charges. In his empathy, all boys were valued individuals deserving of the best of care.

The value of the individual also flows through Stein's writings and life; her empathy for the individual is central to her philosophy. Female motherliness, likewise, imbued Stein's writing. She felt women showed empathy because they were women, and

a persona of motherhood naturally flowed forth in work, community, or home. Empathy in challenging times to fight for what was right was a part of Stein's life as she passionately advocated for women's rights and female educational opportunities. Lastly, empathy was part of her moral vision—her universe—where people were treated as another “I”, and life was an attempt to win over wrong to right. People were valued—the individual triumphed.

Therefore, now that the flowering of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's empathy has emerged, I will subsequently devote the next chapter to each person's unique and overlapping empathy focusing on *their* words, philosophies, actions, and ideals.

### CHAPTER III

#### LITERATURE REVIEW: PART II

In this chapter, I shall add to the literature review by highlighting and analyzing more of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's empathy primarily using their words as well as secondary sources of importance to my thesis. Hopefully, each person in this triumvirate will be more alive to the reader as empathetic advocates for the marginalized and champions of the rights of people: collectively and individually.

Moreover, in this chapter, so as to fully focus on Day, Flanagan, and Stein's words, and to not slow down the biography of empathy, I will not include connections to other empathy scholars. Rather, I will sum up the links with other empathy scholars in chapter V. So, I will open this section with Day and follow with Flanagan and Stein.

#### **Dorothy Day's Christian Conversion, Her Faith, and Her Empathetic Life**

In this chapter, within the context of Day's empathy, I will address the following: Day and her distinctive Catholicism; Peter Maurin and his influence on Day and the creation of the *Catholic Worker*; Day's transformation to Catholicism; the back story of Day; her youth, young womanhood, activism, and her love for Forster Batterham; and Day's embrace of Catholic teaching and distributism versus Communism.

#### **Who was Day?**

Day was a complex person, no doubt. Arguably, she was one of the most important pacifist advocates for poor people of the 20th century. Who was she; what did

she believe? Was Dorothy Day conservative? She might have been. Once she became a Catholic, she advocated the Church's position on marriage, remarriage, birth control, and abortion while speaking vociferously and writing earnestly against the sexual revolution—which she considered pornographic (Day, 1948/1999). She also believed “birth control and abortion are genocide”, and as far as government welfare was concerned, she maintained and affirmed: as “Thomas Jefferson says, ‘The less government there is the better it is’” (as cited in Moss, 2012, para. 3). She also embraced and internalized—not merely tolerated, such esoteric subjects as transubstantiation (that Christ is physically present in the Eucharist) and the communion of saints.

Was she liberal? She might have been. She was a confirmed pacifist and raged against capitalism; in 1936, she was working towards a communitarian revolution (Day, 1948/1999). Another seemingly left leaning interest of Day's was her belief that the nuclear bomb should not be a part of our world (N. Roberts, 1987). She vehemently protested against it.

Like so many practicing Catholics are, Day was an intriguing blend of contradictions because of her nature, her progressivism, and her Catholicism. Practicing Catholics may be a puzzling mix of liberal social ideologies and conservative religious and ethical standards, and Day is an example of that mix.

### **Day Transformed to a Servant of God**

What else about Day's life other than her faith led her to push away from the potential trappings of the comfortable life to a life immersed in voluntary poverty? Her largely nonreligious but highly ethical and empathy infused mother may add a clue. Day

was born in a middle class family in New York City in 1897 to John Day, a journalist, and Grace Day, his wife. The family eventually moved to San Francisco, and in 1906, she experienced the San Francisco earthquake and watched with gratitude as her mother and the neighbors worked diligently to help each other amidst the suffering. She remembered her mother cooking, giving away clothes and caring for others during this tragedy, and she was deeply moved as her mother and neighbors, “stripped themselves to the bone in giving, forgetful of the morrow” (as cited in O’Connor, 1990, p. 162). This left a deep impression on her (O’Connor, 1990).

At the young age of 16, Dorothy enrolled in college at the University of Illinois in Urbana and became involved with Socialist and Communist political causes, and by 1917, she was protesting for suffrage for women, for which she spent time in jail. After an unhappy love affair with Lionel Moise, which resulted in a pregnancy she terminated with an illegal abortion, she was unhappily married to another man, Barkley Tobey, a heavy drinker who eventually married eight times. She was divorced after this short marriage in 1920 (Coles, 1987; O’Connor, 1990). She then went to Chicago where she became involved with the International Workers of the World (called Wobblies) and was again jailed. This jailing had a lifelong impact on her (Coles, 1987) and is worth exploring to best understand the evolution of her empathy.

### **Day Goes to Jail: Empathy Unfolding**

Actually, she writes about being jailed with a group of suffragists in one of her autobiographies, *The Long Loneliness* (1952/1997) as a very challenging experience, and

my highlighting this experience in some detail gives essential information about Day's burgeoning empathy.

Day and some other suffragists went to protest for the vote for women at the White House with banners and ribbons of gold and purple across their chests heralding their cause. They were arrested and placed into a police van and told to present themselves to the judge the next day. The judge decided they were guilty, yet postponed the sentence. Back the suffragists went to their protests, and Day and her fellows were finally jailed in cramped cells at the House of Detention. Day received a thirty day sentence, and after having one poor meal, the women and she staged a hunger strike. These incarcerated women were not allowed to walk to their cells but were lifted and dragged into ill-equipped compartments that were both dark and cold (Day, 1952/1997). In a humiliating display, the women had to use the toilets in full view of the guards and Day explains "It was as though one were in a zoo with the open bars leading into the corridor" and she said the hunger she felt from not eating made "Those first six days of inactivity were as six thousand . . . to feel the nausea and emptiness of hunger" (Day, 1952/1997, p. 77). Day detailed that even after her release, she would never be the same person.

Naturally, one would think that as soon as women were granted the vote in 1920 and the 19th Amendment had passed, Day would have trotted forthwith to the voting booth to exercise her constitutional right; after all, she had remonstrated for that right. Actually, no—after Day went through all of the pain and trauma of jail to protest with the suffragists, she *never voted*. Surprising? Not really, not when you really begin to



understand Day. She was against government intervention; people should care for people on the local level. The government was to Day “Holy Mother State” (as cited in Magno, 2011, para. 9). Day’s premise was the care the community gave to those who needed it must include love. Help given was personal—it was not a business or even a job; help was given from self to other seamlessly and locally. Here, Day’s empathy is made obvious even in the midst of societal opposition because her empathy is a constituent aspect of her philosophy of social justice.

In this part of her life, her sense of empathy was becoming more fine-tuned as evidenced when she wrote, “I would never be free again, never free when I knew that behind bars all over the world there were women and men, young girls and boys, suffering constraint, punishment, isolation, and hardship for crimes of which all of us were guilty” (Day, 1952/1996, p. 78). She felt as one (which is a hallmark of empathy) with murderers, those addicted to narcotics, and prostitutes. She goes further—and in my mind crystallizes her sense of motherly empathy, as she illuminates that she *is* both the mother who has a child killed and raped and the mother who gave birth to the child who committed an abominable crime (Day, 1952/1996).

This extraordinary empathy shows Day as someone who was nonjudgmental. She reached out in understanding to prisoners, young and old, who committed horrific crimes because she had such a deep understanding of how people can err. This connectedness with criminals and people addicted to drugs is a clear example of her active empathy in motion.

This empathy, also, is expressed as an extension of her maternal expression, her idealized motherhood that loves wholeheartedly and cherishes even the guilty. This absolute, profound connection with people is Day's willing identification with a fractured society; therefore, when she later met Peter Maurin in 1932 (Coles, 1987, pp. 11–12) she was fertile ground in which to plant his teaching.

Still, Day was not only a compassionate political firebrand and social reformer; she was a fully human, genuinely passionate woman who fell deeply in love. An understanding of her relationship with Forster Batterham will better position Day within the sweep of the intriguing and complex life she lived and the choices she made in love to best illuminate the human depths of empathy, including her empathy as a manifestation of her motherhood.

### **Day's Life with Her Common-law Husband Forster Batterham**

Day lived a life that was not socially acceptable for a woman of the period, and she admits that “Aside from drug addiction, I committed all the sins young people commit today” (Day, 2008, p. xii). In 1925, Day became passionately involved with Forster Batterham, who was an atheist, a nature aficionado, an anarchist, as well as her lover and companion. Moreover, Batterham was a fierce individualist who was adversative to marriage. Actually, she explained, “Forster, the inarticulate become garrulous only in wrath . . . He lived with me as though he were living alone and he never allowed me to forget that this was a comradeship rather than a marriage” (as cited in Coles, 1987, p. 44; Day, 1952/1997). Another aspect of their relationship was also in potential conflict: Day wanted parenthood, and Batterham did not because he did not

think the world was fit for new life (Coles, 1987). Day did not believe God would allow her to have a baby because she had had an abortion. Here, in her relationship with Batterham, and her thoughts about her punishment for having an abortion, she lacks empathy—for herself.

Day eventually had a daughter with Batterham, named Tamar, in March of 1927 (Coles, 1987). However, because Batterham would not agree to marry her, and she would not live with him without marriage after she became Catholic; they stopped cohabitating.

### **The Breadth of Day's Empathy**

Intriguingly, Day continued to have a relationship of sorts with Batterham after their break up. She writes of him with great affection in her earlier diaries. In fact, in *The Duty of Delight* (2008) which was published at her direction 25 years after her death (actually 25 years after her death would be 2005), it was unveiled that they continued to have contact, albeit not sexual contact, up through her old age.

Astonishingly, Batterham asked Day to help him in 1959 when his girlfriend Nannette was dying of cancer. Day lovingly agreed and took care of Nannette until she died by helping around the house and comforting her. Afterwards, Batterham and Day stayed in contact; he would call Day to talk and ask about his daughter, Tamar. In fact, at the end of her life, Batterham was calling Day on a daily basis. This speaks profoundly of Day's well-developed empathy. To care for his lover would seem the most difficult of tasks; some people would consider this shocking; yet she did it with tender compassion (Day, 2008). The unconditional and selfless empathy she gave to Nannette is an example

of the motherliness of her empathy and her reverence for the individual even if the person she is caring for is the paramour of the love of her life.

### **Catholicism and Day's Tenderness and Empathy**

Was Day's conversion to Catholicism integral to her empathic existence? Indeed, it was. She found God in her loneliness when she was in prison and in her empathy for God's poor before her conversion. Empathy for those without was one of the cornerstones of her conversion. However, it is plain that Day's sense of empathy was evolving before she became a Catholic; she uses very passionate language when she stated as a young woman:

I was the oppressed. I was that drug addict, screaming and tossing in her cell . . . I was that shoplifter who for rebellion was sent to solitary, I was that woman who had killed her children, who had murdered her lover. (as cited in O'Connor, 1991, p. 60)

She explained, "Let it be said that I found Him through His Poor, and in a moment of joy I turned to Him" (as cited in O'Connor, 1990, p. 161).

This unity with people, this empathy with the individual, and her ability to almost crawl into another person's pain is a brilliant example of empathy. Taking her own lifelong form of empathy, she folded it into her Catholic infused empathy. She connected her love and empathy for the destitute or marginalized people's plight with the Mystical Body of Christ. The Mystical Body of Christ is the belief that all Church members are led and steered by Christ (Joyce, 1911). To use a very specific illustration, she reflected on the death of the anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti on August 23, 1927 (O'Connor) when she explains:

The knowledge that these men were soon to pass from this physical earth . . . struck me like a physical blow. All the nations mourned . . . that is made up of the poor, the worker, the trade unionist . . . that very sense of solidarity which made me gradually understand the doctrines of the Mystical Body of Christ whereby we are members one of another. (as cited in O'Connor, 1991, p. 60)

Here, Day associates Sacco and Vanzetti with the Mystical Body of Christ; she categorically insists that all people are of the same body.

### **Day Conjoins Empathy with Catholic Teaching**

Therefore, in conjoining empathy—which is an intimate component of Catholic teaching and goes back to the life of Christ—and underprivileged people with the Mystical Body of Christ which is “all its members being guided and directed by Christ the head” (Joyce, 1911, para. 1), she was using the language prominent in Catholic teaching, so she could forward her work (O'Connor, 1991, p. 61). This was an extremely intelligent conjunction of ideals because it helped Day get her message out to mainstream Catholics who might have been wary of her relatively hard-line stance about the *requirement* that we serve those who need it most. This softening and envelopment of her message within the parameters of Catholic dogma helped her to get more people to listen to her philosophy of empathy—which throughout her teachings highlighted the intrinsic value of the individual.

However, she still felt she had to be one with impoverished or troubled people and to do so, she had to live in poverty. When did this happen? It happened when she was deeply moved within her faith journey, and she became a Catholic in 1927, after the birth of her daughter, Tamar. Using her own precepts and Maurin's personal philosophy, after a long interior struggle, Day's philosophy evolved into a voluntary vow of poverty

because she believed Christ lived in poor people, and she wanted to follow His injunction of Matthew 25:35–41 (Day, 1948/1997) which opens with:

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry . . . thirsty . . . a stranger . . . naked . . . ill . . . in prison . . .?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ (*The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition*, 1995)

So, Day’s empathy expanded even in the midst of societal opposition amongst people who may not believe in serving the poor, but Day forged forward to advance social justice. Her empathy flowered even when she was accused of being a Communist or Socialist.

This one part of the Bible sums up Catholic social teaching, and Day’s social conscience and knowledge of the most elemental foundations of Christianity was reinforced and augmented by her work and tutelage under one man, her mentor. Yet, how did she become the voice of the poverty-stricken community and a stalwart pacifist in the twentieth century? The answer is simple. The person who was most influential in her moral development and Catholic sensibility was the Frenchman, the peasant intellectual, the visionary: Peter Maurin.

### **Peter Maurin: Day’s Teacher**

Day and Maurin are still known as organs of social justice with an emphasis on being as one with poor people. Peter Maurin, who met Day in 1932, had an effect on Dorothy Day’s empathy that was profound; it would be almost impossible to discuss

Day's empathy without fully discussing Maurin. After meeting him and understanding his philosophy of caring for the poor, her life was transformed. Yet, who was he? Maurin was an idealistic French born peasant with a profound Catholic faith; in truth, he wanted to return to the roots of the Church, including the tenet of practicing voluntary poverty. He also espoused personalism which maintained: we are all human; we should care for our fellow humans; doing so makes us better, and we must serve others at a sacrifice to ourselves (Allaire & Broughton, n.d.). What did Maurin's personalism look like? He thought each person who needed basic sustenance should ask for it—without shame. Those who had means should give of what they had, even if they had to make sacrifices to do so. People should give to people, at the local level, in community, all the while talking and learning from each other. This was Maurin's empathy as an outgrowth of his moral vision about the equality of humankind.

Interestingly, he was much influenced by the philosopher Jacques Maritain, (who Stein knew and wrote about), and the writer Emmanuel Mournier.

Maritain thought the grace of God made the thought processes stronger and kept us from making intellectual mistakes (Stein, 1949/2002). This had commonality with Maurin's philosophy which included: group discussions for members of the community, housing for homeless individuals that exuded welcome, a 'Christ Room' available in every private dwelling to take in those in need, and a focus on farming where poor people could learn useful, self-sustaining skills. He also wanted to disassemble the impediments between those with money and those without, so as people of divergent incomes came into contact with one another, the poor could receive sustenance—the rich could come to

a better understanding concerning the wrongs of Capitalism. This fully influenced Day's empathy (White & Jones, 1988).

**Maurin's philosophical agenda.** Doing away with dualisms was also on Maurin's agenda. He advocated breaking down walls between intellectuals and workers, workers and business owners, wealthy and destitute—and religious belief and the lived life (White & Jones, 1988, p. 40). Actually, the unity of a religious philosophy and the life one lived was elemental to Maurin's philosophy, and it is something he helped develop in Day. Put simply, you lived the life you believed; your values and actions should not only reflect each other, but be as one.

Maurin was a fierce advocate of returning to the land—the soil, and learning through the rural life. His empathy included a belief that the love of the land and a desire of land ownership was a part of the human condition, and he felt that this could best happen if people lived in community. In community, people could not only labor together, but they could form and foster schools and even share farming implements—a communal life built together.

Indeed, Maurin's protégé, Day, maintained that community was the “social answer to the long loneliness” (Day, 1952/1997, p. 224). (*The Long Loneliness* (1952/1997), as mentioned before, is the title of her well-known autobiography about finding God and developing her life's purpose.) This search by Day for life's purpose was also connected to her search for motherhood. She was desperate to have a child and was overjoyed when she gave birth to Tamar. Her empathy flowered after the birth of



her daughter, and her figurative and literal motherhood reached out in empathy to help those in need.

Still, how did Peter Maurin think people should obtain the land so they could sustain themselves whilst working communally? He believed those who had land or money should give it to those without (Day, 1952/1997). His philosophy embraced giving and showing empathy as a primary social good for the giver and the receiver and was a component of his empathic moral vision.

Maurin was also adamantly against relief and the state taking care of the peoples' every need. To Maurin, people should care for people, and no one should become enmeshed in the tentacles of the state. He went so far as to aver that "He who is a pensioner of the state is a slave of the state" (as cited in Day, 1952/1997, p. 225).

### **People Caring for People**

An important philosophy Maurin shared and Day adopted was the belief that the community life was paramount, and people should care for each other on the local level.

He insisted that:

In the first centuries of Christianity the hungry were fed at a personal sacrifice, the homeless were sheltered at a personal sacrifice . . . The pagans used to say about the Christians, 'See how they love one another' . . . In our own day the poor are no longer fed, clothed, and sheltered at a person sacrifice, but at the expense of the taxpayers . . . the pagans say about the Christians, 'See how they pass the buck!' (as cited in Deines, 2008, p. 429)

His empathy demanded people-to-people help: an individual demanded respect and assistance because he was human—which is grounded Catholic action.

How different it is to “pass the buck” to the government than to actively help needy individuals ourselves, which is what Maurin espoused. Maurin wanted a more personal charity—maybe even a more painful and empathic charity, where the giver of the alms would feel the loss and meet with poor people as an equal even if society objected to that meeting and unity. Maybe, Maurin believed, the poor person would become the teacher to a person of some means.

This belief has a clear and direct Biblical antecedent and contextualizes empathy. According to Biblical precepts, the poor are the teachers to the wealthy because they depend more on God; their faith is stronger. Since they have so little on Earth, they are more willing to trust in God and wait for their reward for this faith in their afterlife. In 1:9–10, James says, “The brother in lowly circumstances should take pride in his high standing, and the rich one in his lowliness for he will pass away ‘like the flower of the field’” (The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition, 1995). In Matthew 6:25, we are urged to not worry much about food and clothing, not even about our life. We are to have faith in today and tomorrow (The Catholic Bible Personal Study Edition, 1995). In this way the poor people are teachers to rich people; their faith is purer because it is more necessary to their very existence. Maurin believed a thorough understanding of the Bible would help people empathize; it would change hearts and help people distance themselves from materialism.

He eschewed materialism; he was more spiritually minded and patterned his philosophy on the sacrifice of Christ crucified. He thought this would best succor the intrinsic needs of people whilst forwarding a progressive change in society—that was to

him steeped in the Catholic tradition which he believed was the light in the world. This connected to both the Western tradition and provided a platform for an innovative civilization that disavowed modernity and embraced the stability of tradition (Ellis, 1988). Ultimately, what did Maurin want the Catholic Worker to be? He answered this question when a Catholic Worker asked him about the purpose of the movement. Peter Maurin, dressed in ill-fitting old clothes, which was his usual garb, answered clearly that the Catholic Worker's purpose was related to what God wanted, which is to "feed the hungry at a personal sacrifice. He wants us to clothe the naked at a personal sacrifice . . . To serve man for God's sake, that is what God wants us to do" (as cited in Vishewski, 1976/2011, para. 32). It sounds like a simple message, and it is one Day embraced because her empathy championed the value of the single human life.

As Day's most important teacher in all things Catholic and the "intellectual author of the Catholic Worker," Maurin's influence on the movement was formidable, but today he is not as well-known as Day (Magno, 2011, para. 4). In the final scrutiny, what was so powerfully and persuasively articulated by Maurin to Day that so transformed her? He explained to her what was wrong with society and what needed to be done to rectify it. In essence, people should help people at the local level. People should not turn to the state or institutions for help, or what Dorothy Day called "Holy Mother State" (as cited in Magno, 2011, para. 6) but should as Maurin suggests build "a new society in the shell of the old" (as cited in Magno, 2011, para. 9). In building a new society, Maurin suggested an empathetic philosophy: distributism.

### **Distributism, Not Communism: An Empathic Connection**

Day's philosophy of distributism was much criticized during her life and afterwards by some who considered her ideas close to Socialism or Communism. Yet, is this true? What was distributism, and how does it connect to her philosophy of empathy? Where did distributism spring from in Day and Maurin's mind, and how is it intimately connected to empathy?

Clearly, the Catholic liturgical movement of the 1930s–1950s inspired the Catholic Workers to embrace this economic system of distributism. Day was intimately involved with the liturgical movement that emphasized the unity of Faith, churchgoing, and life lived. So, those who partook of Communion in the Sacrifice of the Mass needed to move outside of that experience and follow New Testament precepts to lovingly and empathically serve poor persons. Again, the participation in the Mystical Body of Christ included obligation: one should not have one, Eucharist, without the other, serving those in need. This belief cleaves intimately to Church teaching. In the papal encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), which was written after Day's embrace of distributism, it is written, "The artificial contrast between professional and social activity, on the one hand, and religious life, on the other hand" is one of "the more serious errors of our age" (as cited in Day, 1948/1999, p. 39). Therefore, the belief in progressive Catholic circles that those who have means must give sustenance and serve empathically those who have not would coalesce with the Catholic Worker's distributism: it was part of their empathetic moral vision. Still, how does this connect with distributism?

Distributism is a philosophy with a belief structure about the significance of land ownership and farming. In distributism, many should own land, not the few, and workers' pay should be adequate so a family can buy land. The tenets of distributism also include the many ways the family benefits from having their own land, and this land ownership is valued by God. Moreover, there should be private property for all with a spread out financial system, and people should be able to create small businesses in their farms creating a respectful life for every person (Day, 1948/1999).

Day believed that distributism was a more just economic system, and she felt it was a mainspring of the social teaching of the Church. Since she believed people simultaneously should live a life in Christ and a life in the world, then her philosophy of making sure each person had enough to simply live made perfect sense. She consistently insisted we had obligations to the poor—we must behave empathetically—and she believed that work should be fairly remunerated for peoples' sakes and for God's. She articulated her positions on distributism quite eloquently in the newspaper she started with Peter Maurin, the *Catholic Worker* which is a clear example of how her empathy was practiced even though parts of society railed against her. Nevertheless, her compassionate social justice demanded no less.

### **The Catholic Worker as an Organ of Pacifism and Coles's Critique**

Day's notions of empathy are clear in her articles in the *Catholic Worker* which was founded in May of 1933 as another paper for the progressive reader in contrast to the *Daily Worker* which was and is an organ of the Communist Party. Day offered the *Catholic Worker* to express the Catholic Church's "social program" for people who are

“walking the streets in the all but futile search for work” and for people “who think that there is no hope for the future” (as cited in Deines, 2008, p. 435). The *Catholic Worker* did not have a tax exempt status because that would insinuate acquiescence to the government’s use of tax money for war. Its writers argued for Catholic social teaching and the empathic treatment of poor humans coupled with absolute pacifism—whilst taking issue with both Capitalism and Communism (Deines, 2008).

For instance, in December 1942, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, she wrote the following:

We are still pacifists. Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount, which means that we will try as peacemakers. . . . We will not participate in armed warfare or in making munitions, or by buying government bonds. . . . But neither will we be carping in our criticism. We love our country and we love our president. We have been the only country in the world where men of all nations have taken refuge from oppression. (Day, 1942)

So, even though Day had internal conflicts with her pacifism, in no small part because most of the Catholic Workers were not pacifists during World War II, she kept true to her nonviolent philosophy and her empathic outlook. Also, because she lived in a country with freedom of speech, her organization could freely function for the good (Coles, 1987) and forward an empathic agenda.

She could speak to what she believed even though the sentiments she espoused were the antithesis of most Americans, and she was in disagreement with the government. This ability to voice her opinion was to her advantage to propel her cause and continue her empathic trajectory.

Moreover, it was not only the state that did not try to stop her; her Church did not interfere. As Day affirmed, “There was no attempt made on the part of Church or state to suppress us” (1952/1997, p. 181). The state and Church also did not interfere with her free speech as she and Maurin espoused the belief that Catholic Worker followers should be conscientious objectors and should not register for the draft or pay taxes (1952/1997 p. 181).

**Day and Thomas Merton.** Her active pacifism, and ability to influence people, extended to after World War II as indicated by her correspondence with the well-known Catholic convert, Thomas Merton. Thomas Merton, a Trappist Monk, and author of the bestseller *Seven Storey Mountain* (1948) and Dorothy Day never met, but they had a lively correspondence by letter from 1959–1968 (Forest, 2012; Shannon, 1996). He “had a great respect, even a reverential awe, for the extraordinary cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement.” He also believed, “If there were no Catholic Worker and such forms of witness, I would never have joined the Catholic Church” (as cited in Shannon, 1996, p. 99). Therefore, essentially, Merton is asserting, powerfully, if it was not for Dorothy Day, he would not have joined the Catholic Church.

They wrote to each other about draft resisting, and Merton wrote of his writing, as he was an author. Moreover, they wrote of their love of Russian literature and Orthodox Christianity. It is worthy of note that Merton and Day also wrote to each other in 1965 about Father Daniel Berrigan, a priest peace activist (Chatfield, 1996; Forest, 2012, as cited in Shannon, 1996) who she felt was “young and inexperienced” because when he was protesting in Detroit he “became pretty sarcastic” (as cited in Shannon, 1996, p.

115). Day continued that these types of people, who might object to Berrigan's protests and "read the *Daily News*," are the same types of people who come to the Catholic Worker for food—people who are labeled in society as derelicts and "who have done much of the hard work of the country." She insisted it is up to the Catholic Workers to make contact with these men if "we are trying to change men's attitudes" (as cited in Shannon, 1996, p. 115).

Moreover, she continued to be slightly critical of Berrigan when she wrote to Merton that she felt he was too full of feeling and overexcited. Merton replied back "I guess you and I are a bit old-fashioned, but I agree with you" (as cited in Shannon, 1996, p. 116).

Merton also wrote for the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, but in 1962, was given an order by his Abbott General not to publish any more pieces on war and peace. Merton was frustrated with his censorship, but he obeyed—to a degree; he continued to write for the *Catholic Worker* using pseudonyms (Forest, 2012). Merton and Day had much in common; they were both pacifists; they were both iconoclasts, and they were both empathic, devoted, action oriented Catholics.

Since the above correspondence between Merton and Day was based on their letters; their audience was each other. This brings up a range of possibilities in analyzing their words as they were writing to people who would basically agree with what they wrote. Importantly, too, when they wrote to each other in 1965, both were famous and well-regarded as Catholics; they could be considered Catholic icons.



What is so revealing about Day's letters is the quality of unburdening that is particularly personal and heart-felt. Moreover, Day must have spent a fair amount of time writing these letters, as they are long and well-thought out; this indicates Merton's importance to her. It seems as if she is reaching out to a fellow believer to affirm to herself that she is right about pacifism. This tender support she seems to be yearning for says much about her strength in that she is willing to be vulnerable and share herself with Merton, and that takes courage.

When she writes to Merton, not about peace but about her family, her emotion is evident in expressing, "My own son-in-law, tho strong in faith, has many problems mental and physical and Tamar is having her 9th child in late July" (as cited in Shannon, 1996, p. 103). This shows a remarkable trust in Merton to write that her son-in-law has mental problems. That is a noteworthy aspect of Day: her strength is in sometimes direct contrast to her touching vulnerability, which can be its own kind of strength.

Day further showed vulnerability when she questioned herself. Nevertheless, even though she believed in her pacifism, as a standard bearer of compassion, she continually interrogated it (Coles, 1987), which can be summed up when she stated:

Can there be a just war? Can the conditions laid down by St. Thomas . . . ever be fulfilled? What about the morality of the use of the atom bomb? What does God want me to do . . . Can I stand against state and church . . . Am I capable of enduring suffering, facing martyrdom? And alone? (as cited in Coles, 1987, p. 101)

Day was a complex woman of both soft empathy and strident insistence, and her position on America capitalism expresses both.

**Day in contrast to Flanagan concerning American Capitalism and pacifism.**

There is, moreover, the body of Catholic Worker scholars who add to the discourse about the complexity of Day. Piehl, a historian and Day scholar, clearly lays out Day's life as an intriguing mix of devout Catholicism, and personalism, with a radical, anarchist mix including the not surprising problems she had with Capitalism. "Day and Maurin were hostile to capitalism in a way that most Catholic churchman, including the popes, were not" (Piehl, 1988, p. 200).

Day's antagonism towards American Capitalism offers a distancing from most practicing Catholics of Day's lifetime and contrasts with Flanagan. Flanagan was proudly patriotic about America, like so many Irish-Americans, and he fitted his boys to move into American society, which is capitalistic, by giving them an excellent trade and academic education. He believed, though, that we had a responsibility to help all poor boys for their good and the good of the community, but he never suggested that he was in any way against the "American way" of life.

Moreover, in contrast to Day's pacifism, Flanagan also overtly and publically celebrated his boys entering the military service, and he was touted as "Number One War Dad in America" during World War II (Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 139).

Nevertheless, during World War II, Flanagan did vigorously object when his boys wanted to enlist in the military after the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor. He desired them to wait until they graduated from high school. "The United States Army wants men," he declared, "Not [*sic*] babes in arms" (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 122).

So, Day's pacifism during World War II would have been anathema to Flanagan. He maintained that his boys were fighting honorably and that war was sometimes necessary. "The Church has never understood by 'peace' a mere absence of armed hostility . . . She holds with the age-old definition of St. Augustine that peace is the tranquility of order . . . she understands perfectly well that there may be a great deal of anguish to be endured" (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, pp. 138–139). His boys fought and died; 40 died during World War II (Hyland & Reilly, 1995).

The death of his boys was a tragedy, but even the death of Americans could not make Day believe there could be a reason for a "just war."

### **The Catholic Worker's Position and Coles's Critique**

As noted in Chapter II, the Catholic Worker position (which is both the title of a newspaper and the name of a movement) was decidedly against the nuclear bomb, and as the intellectual and spiritual leader of the Catholic Worker, it was Day's opinion that led its vociferous and intractable anti-war position. To Day, all acts of violence and the destructive capacity of the bomb was against the "just war" theory of the Church. "Just War" according to Pope Pius XII, was the justification for war for people and governments using the following standards: try to avoid war, engage in war for self-defense, use lawful policy to judge it, and to avoid unjust attack (as cited in O'Connor, 1991, p. 71; N. Roberts, 1987).

In fact, the Catholic Worker argued against "just war" being a valid position at all and suggested that people refuse to pay taxes, not register with selective service, and commit acts of civil unrest.

Day's empathy led her to write scathingly of President Truman after the atom bombs were dropped on Japan. She insisted, "He was jubilant . . . We have killed 318,000<sup>12</sup> Japanese . . . they are vaporized" (as cited in O'Connor, 1991, p. 78). Her opposition to the nuclear bomb was absolute, and she professed this in the *Catholic Worker*. Her lived empathy as part of her moral vision would be resolute: to Day the nuclear bomb was immoral.

Moreover, the empathetic, forward looking viewpoint of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper is the most unswerving of any advocacy publication in American history (N. Roberts, 1987). What the devoutly Catholic Day believed, the *Catholic Worker* espoused and still espouses. Day was her own type of practicing Catholic: the Catholic Worker type.

Connecting to this, Coles (1987), who wrote a nontraditional biography of Day and was a great admirer of hers, could not understand how she could take this uncompromising pacifist stand. In fact, while interviewing Day when they were talking about her opposition to World War II, he thought, "I found a pacifist response to Hitler incomprehensible. The pacifist side of the Catholic Worker tradition had always been hard for me to accept in the face of mass murder" (p. 100).

Yet, Day had an explanation. She asked Coles what he would do if someone was trying to kill his loved one. She answered that one should, "Restrain him, of course, but not kill him . . . perfect love casts out fears and love overcomes hatred" (as cited in Coles, 1987, p. 100).

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<sup>12</sup> Other authoritative sources have the number of dead as many fewer. See [atomicarchive.com](http://atomicarchive.com)

Empathy, as part of her moral vision, her bedrock philosophy, of the equivalence of people, coalesced here with her compassionate reverence for the individual. This empathy took precedence over her committing violence against someone—even if they were trying to kill her.

### **The Themes of Day's Empathy**

So, ultimately, who was she? Day was one of the most important advocates for empathetic care for poor people in the twentieth century. She developed her uniquely pious and orthodox empathy from her background, her work with progressive causes, but mainly from her evolved Catholic sensibility that was nurtured by the tenets of Peter Maurin. Day wanted to reach out to the poor in love and to bring the Catholic faith back to its origins, as she believed Christ intended it, to flourish in the midst of the poor.

So, in this chapter, I interrogated Day as the idiosyncratic, transformative Catholic she was; I positioned her as being deeply influenced by Peter Maurin as she became a Catholic while being a full and complex human being influenced by her family background and her radical causes. Yet, she was also truly human, with all of life's untidiness, in her loves, particularly for Forster Batterham. With him, as with other men, she displayed a surprising vulnerability and little of the resourceful toughness she lived as an empathetic advocate for justice.

Her empathy was also unveiled in the following ways. Her empathy was an outgrowth of her moral vision on the equality of man as evidenced by her loving care for poor individuals. She practiced empathy in the midst of societal opposition to foster social justice as illustrated by her pacifism in the face of World War II war mobilization.

Day consistently lived empathy by valuing the individual; she demanded that people help people and not leave the welfare of others to the state. Empathy was also expressed by Day within the context of her motherhood. She empathically served those in need as an idealized, loving mother would with understanding tenderness and firmness—even those who had committed criminal acts.

In ending this section, clearly, the complexity of Day is evident because her multifarious gifts were so enmeshed in her puzzling choices.

The next section will include the empathy of another selfless person who was a fierce advocate for homeless boys: Edward Joseph Flanagan.

### **The Empathic Edward Flanagan**

From where did such a selfless man spring who could devote his life to homeless boys? What were his origins? In this chapter, I will detail Flanagan's upbringing and education, his empathy as an example of Catholic action, his empathic protection of homeless and wayward children, his educational philosophy, and his outreach to the community of donors.

#### **Flanagan: The Child and Young Man**

Flanagan was born in Ballymoe, Ireland, in 1886, the eighth of eleven children in a loving and committed Irish Catholic family. He grew up watching both parents reach out compassionately to those in need; he internalized their lives of giving and eventually decided on a life of service as a Catholic priest. Moreover, Flanagan sprang from a culture that valued outreach to those in need, so he did not only experience service in his family; he saw it in his community where Catholicism imbued every part of life. Why

was Catholicism so strong in the Irish Catholic? It was an institution that has consistently pushed away from English denomination (Reilly & Warneke, 2008). Many Irish Catholics felt fervently about the Church. As my Irish Grandfather, Patrick Fitzpatrick, told me once, “It was all we had; the English had taken everything else.”

To prepare for entry into the priesthood, Flanagan studied at Mount Saint Mary’s in Maryland, and, interestingly, was not valued too highly. One of his teachers said he was a “nice, decent Irish boy. Kindly and friendly—talent only fair, but he works well” (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 25). When he was finally accepted into St. Joseph’s Seminary in Dunwoodie, New York, he was not viewed as the seminarian who had the brightest future. One of his classmates, Dineen, affirmed his seminary peers would not “ever have voted Flanagan the one most likely to succeed” (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 28).

So, this average young man became a priest and moved to Nebraska where his brother was also a priest. By 1916, Flanagan was managing a Workingman’s Hotel, and he began to take in homeless and vagrant men for a small fee: ten cents to sleep and five cents for a meal. He did not want the hotel to be merely a place to get a bed and food; he wanted to help men transform their lives. This clearly displays empathy and his value for the individual.

He felt unsuccessful in this endeavor because grown men had a life of experiences behind them, and some found change difficult. He felt he was a failure—he could not sufficiently help them because they were so crushed by life. Flanagan explains:

In talking with the men, I learned that they had been orphaned in childhood . . . Or were members of large families where income was not sufficient to care for them . . . Invariably, they were homeless and abandoned . . . I knew that my work lay not with these shells of men, but with the embryo men—the homeless waifs who had nowhere to turn, no one to guide them. (as cited in Reilly & Warneke as Flanagan, 2008, p. 38)

Therefore, he moved on to founding Boys Town, which was highly successful in his goal: life transformation.

### **Flanagan: An Example of Catholic Purposefulness**

Flanagan is the only cradle Catholic (a person born Catholic) in my dissertation, and his Catholicism, like Stein and Day's, is inseparable from who he was and what he believed. I intend to investigate Flanagan's empathy in conjunction with his Catholicism to better understand the Church's teaching on service to the poor and outcast person—and to Flanagan the man.

One horrific and dramatic example that may most clearly illustrate Flanagan's empathy, and his attitude towards helping suffering boys, is a 10-year-old boy who was tragically abused by a demonic father. This boy then poisoned his father and killed him. Flanagan found out that not only did the father ill nourish and physically and emotionally abuse the boy, including punishing him by hanging him by the neck; he would not allow the child anything to love. For example, the little boy had a kitten, and in front of the child the father placed the kitten between two boards and jumped up and down on it until the life was crushed out of it. Flanagan's sense of justice and empathy could not be satisfied with this boy being held for the crime, and through a variety of channels, he was able to take the youngster to Boys Town: with love and compassion as guideposts, he did



well. The rule was that if he continued to grow as person who understood right from wrong, he would have an expunged record. If not, he would stand trial for murder.

(Oursler & Oursler, 1949).

One woman from Nebraska thought Father Flanagan was wrong to take a young murderer into Boys Town. She felt the good name of the town and school would suffer.

Flanagan, however, was unrepentant. He answered:

I have had murderers in my Home, something like one hundred entirely during the twenty-six years, also some bank robbers and car thieves . . . I have been very successful in dealing with these children and restoring them to a normal state of mind . . . with a different kind of teaching and training . . . I do not take these children for any other purpose other than to just try to save them. (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 137)

He believed passionately that adults were obligated to help youth in every possible way. He affirmed, “The reformatories of American cannot redeem a lad once he has slipped off the road to good citizenship. It is not the fault of individuals of such institutions, [sic] it is the fault of the system. Like our prisons, they are schools of crime” (Flanagan, 1936a, para. 34).

### **Examples of and Commentary on Flanagan’s Empathy**

Flanagan frequently advocated on behalf of youngsters who had been adjudicated through the court system for crimes like murder and robbery (Oursler & Oursler, 1949).

Another example of Flanagan reaching out would be the story of Hubert Niccols, who in 1931 was a neglected 12-year-old. His father was insane, and his mother had left him.

His elderly and ill-equipped grandmother was unable to properly supervise him, and he stayed out in the streets and got into mischief. After finding a gun, he tried to rob a store

to get food, and in executing the crime, shot and killed a sheriff. When his mother was found and informed about his predicament, she was not concerned about helping him. He was unceremoniously sentenced to life imprisonment, and Flanagan tried to intervene. He was unsuccessful in securing his release, and Hubert was not ultimately pardoned until nine years later (Reilly & Warneke, 2008).

This again, speaks to Flanagan's sense of empathy. This was a boy he did not know, and Niccols killed a sheriff, a crime most of society would strenuously condemn. Flanagan took the risk; notwithstanding this boy's crime; he wanted to help. There are so many testimonies and witnesses that highlight Flanagan's philosophy about helping and caring for boys who were in trouble. Some people, Governor Roland Hartley of Washington State for example, felt his interference in the Niccols's case was officious and that he was moved not by empathy but by "melodramatic publicity and exploitation" (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 96). Flanagan faced serious criticism in his work because of his empathetic mien. For people who viewed a twelve year old murderer as simply a criminal, Flanagan's approach seemed naïve and over simplistic. Moreover, since Flanagan did not believe in punishment, but he did believe in rehabilitation—with a focus on the individual—some law and order minded people were offended by his approach. Nevertheless, he was willing to show empathy even when powerful people like Governor Hartley opposed him.

Additionally, Flanagan did not care if bigots were appropriately challenged because he cared so deeply about the equality of people; to him race and ethnicity were a variable of humanity, not a fact of birth that resulted in marginalization. Therefore, Boys

Town was not primarily a Catholic institution, even though it was run by a Catholic priest. The majority of the boys at Boys Town were white Protestants—not Catholics. His school and home included Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, whites, Native Americans, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and boys with native religions (Reilly & Warneke, 2008).

Flanagan's lived, day-by-day, his empathy towards and belief in the equality of people. One Omaha politician was against the boys of different races living together. He attacked Flanagan by asking, "If God had intended people to be all the same, why did he make them different colors?" Flanagan responded, "And could you tell me—what is the color of the soul?" (as cited in Oursler & Oursler, 1949, p.169).

A further example of Flanagan's racial sensibilities and empathy as expressed as part of his philosophy of the equivalence of the dignity of people is a letter he wrote to a man who disapproved of pictures of white and African American children together at Boys Town. He wrote back to Mr. T. E. Pafford of Sands Spring, Oklahoma, and explained:

Negro boys are endowed with hearts, minds, and souls and are children of God just as the same as you and I and are our brothers in Christ . . . I don't think your comment helps you to become a great American. God bless you, dear Mr. Pafford. (E. Flanagan, personal communication, August 28, 1946)

This letter ultimately is reflective of Flanagan's progressive, empathic, and loving views on race. As he responded to Mr. Pafford with clarity, he realized donations would not be forthcoming from him. Nevertheless, Flanagan knew what he believed, and he

stood by it even if he lost a potential supporter because his empathy towards humanity was more important to him than donations.

### **Flanagan's Philosophy**

His philosophy about education, and his profound empathy for uncared children, like male orphans, street children, and newsies (boys who sold newspapers on street corners), speaks eloquently today. In fact, many people would be critical of him in 2013 for being too idealistic, empathetic, and understanding of the problems of wayward and disadvantaged youths. He was thought to have been a philosopher ahead of his time; although, he would not have labeled himself as a philosopher. Rather, he was an educator with a philosophy about empathetic caring for the individual, and this caring manifested in his realization that delinquent children did not become antisocial by choice. The weight of poverty, hunger, abuse, and abandonment influenced each boy's character, heart, and choice, in a distinctive way—experienced as an individual, and Flanagan's empathy valued each individual.

Ultimately, he believed, their lives and judgments *would become* our responsibility. He adamantly insisted that we would become responsible by default as he crusaded for boys while proclaiming that society is responsible for meaningful and transformative schools for homeless youths. He insisted:

It is estimated there are thousands... of homeless children in our country who are not being cared for, and who must look on the streets for the means of existence. These boys are our responsibilities whether or not we are willing to consider them such. We have no choice in the matter. Either we build homes for them now, or jails for them a little later. (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 90)

In empathy, he pointed out these facts even though some people cared little if homeless boys' future was in prison.

Moreover, and pragmatically, Flanagan emphasized keeping the boys busy—a simple but often effective tact, so they could stay out of trouble. Vocational skills and life skills were also a part of the curriculum at Boys Town, so each boy could eventually support himself; plus, money management training was included. One example of vocational training was printing. Pink and white notes were printed, by trained boys at the home—who now had a marketable skill, and his boys could earn these notes for some positive behaviors. A bank was also a part of the Boys Town compound, so his charges could learn about budgeting. Why go to these lengths in practical skills and vocational skills? Because some of his boys would never have homes to return to, and all of the life skills a child might learn at home would have to be taught at Boys Town (Portner, 1996).

**Flanagan's methods versus another reform school: One example.** Flanagan's loving, empathetic methods of reform were in striking contrast with American reform schools in the first half of the twentieth century. An infamous reform school in Marianna, Florida, was little more than a state sanctioned torture facility. For 109 years "bad" boys in Florida were sent to this "school" and abused emotionally and physically. Not only were supposedly hardened youthful criminals sent there, but children were sent for a variety of non-criminal reasons:

The men remember the same things: blood on the walls, bits of lip or tongue on the pillow, the smell of urine and whiskey, the way the bed springs sang with each blow. The way they cried out for Jesus or mama. The grinding of the old fan that muffled their cries. The one-armed man who swung the strap. . . . For 109 years, this is where Florida has sent bad boys. Boys have been sent here for rape or

assault, yes, but also for skipping school or smoking cigarettes or running hard from broken homes . . . and they needed to be reformed. It was for their own good. (Montgomery & Waveney, 2009, paras. 1–4)

While the state of Florida felt this was “for their own good,” the authorities and public ignored the maltreatment.

This is in sharp contrast to Boys Town disciplinary methods. At Boys Town, if a boy broke the rules—which were in place for all of the boys’ benefit, the trouble maker would be judged by a court of his peers. A punishment might include “watching” a movie with the errant boy’s back to the screen. This was considered a harsh reprimand because the boys loved movies (Oursler & Oursler, 1949).

### **Flanagan Empathizes with Youth and Galvanizes the Public to Help**

In helping juvenile delinquents, Flanagan was not above using techniques that would be considered by some as sentimental or even sensational. “It didn’t hurt that Flanagan harbored a bit of P. T. Barnum in his soul,” and he accessed the power of radio to promote his institution through the nationally syndicated “Links of Love” program (Biga, 2007, p. 19). Also, the wildly successful movie *Boys Town*, (1938) starring Spencer Tracy, who won the Academy Award for Best Actor playing Flanagan, put the Boys Town brand on the international stage (Biga, 2007, p. 19). Poignantly, in an act of friendship and admiration, Spencer Tracy sent his Academy Award to Boys Town with a note saying, “To Father Edward J. Flanagan, whose great human qualities, kindly simplicity and inspiring courage were strong enough to shine through my humble efforts” (as cited in Reilly and Warneke, 2008, p. 112). This statue still stands at Boys Town today.

Still, how else did Flanagan get people to support Boys Town, so he could provide the boys with not only what they needed but what he thought they deserved as human beings? One of the ways was giving speeches. Recently, Flanagan's notes and speeches have been transcribed and offer a wealth of primary sources to Flanagan scholars. Within his speeches and notes, a strong romantic sensibility emerges coupled with an empathic insistence of the social justice inherent in his position. Because they were human, his boys deserved the best, the same as a loving set of parents in a comfortable home could provide. His empathy demanded that his boys deserved a loving mother, even if it was a figurative one, wherever it could be found. His boys were not mere societal castoffs picking up the crumbs from the margins of life—they were boys with promise. This progressive philosophy is evidenced in almost every book about Flanagan, and Flanagan authors expand on his tenacity about the same. A look at his speeches will illuminate these assertions.

### **Flanagan's Emotive Speeches: The Causes of Delinquency**

When Flanagan spoke at the Conference of Catholic Action Week in Dubuque, Iowa, on October 13, 1936, he cautioned his audiences about a world and a country in turmoil. He believed, "Europe is feverishly rearming and trembling on the abyss of a cataclysm threatening the continent with dark chaos" and the United States is threatened by a criminal army that not only costs Americans sixteen billion dollars per year but is corrupting youths (Flanagan, 1936a, paras. 1–2). His empathy as part of his moral vision of what is right is substantiated when he clearly explicates that America, "a land so full of wealth, power, and ambition" is still the country that "raises more children fit only for

jails and penitentiaries” (Flanagan, 1936a, para. 3). He clearly connects children’s criminality with their underprivileged status which, he maintains, may be caused by being on the streets too much or having parents who “must work in order to make ends meet” (Flanagan, 1936a, para. 8). Another cause of delinquency, to Flanagan, is boys whose energy is not well-regulated or directed; trouble comes when children’s time is not properly scheduled.

Therefore, to Flanagan, one of the causes of juvenile delinquency is idleness. He suggests that each parish priest assemble a number of young men who could work with the boys in the church who are not yet delinquent but may become so. He suggests men who are selected for “character, empathy, standing in the community” could each meet with a boy, get to know him, and without patronizing the youngster, provide a good influence while meeting a few times per week for games or activities (Flanagan, 1936a, paras. 17–24). Flanagan was adamant there were numbers of empathetic men who could serve this need—helping pre-delinquent boys, because these were the most salvageable of youngsters. However, Flanagan likewise contends that the boy who is already criminal can also be saved by the efforts of pastors who could become well-acquainted with the police and the authorities responsible for juvenile affairs. The pastor would “intercede directly” with authorities and try in every way to keep the child out of a juvenile holding facility while involving the delinquent youth immediately with young men of good standing and character who may be able to help the youngster turn his life around (Flanagan, 1936a, para. 28).



This is a marked example of empathy in its most practical form—one-to-one help to a child in need. Moreover, this is an obvious case in point of Flanagan's empathy as personified by his value for the individual. Additionally, he exhibited willingness to let his empathy flourish in difficult circumstances, like working closely with police, so he could foster his philosophy of social justice.

Interestingly this local, personal approach to helping people is very much like Day's position that the community should help its own. Flanagan and Day both asserted that the members of the community should help those in need, at a grass roots level, and serve as Christ would serve, empathetically and lovingly.

Another illustration of Flanagan's empathy would be from his speech to the Kiwanis Club in 1937. He used a compare and contrast technique to highlight the differences between a criminal boy and a "healthy, normal boy." He described a troubled boy as a loner who "never learns the value of sportsmanship and friendship." He contrasts this image with the boy who recreates with friends, gets lots of exercise, and is appropriately tired when he goes to bed (Flanagan, 1937c, paras. 1–7). This very simple partial solution to the Depression era delinquency problem was remarkable simple—and at the time it worked for the youths of Boys Town. In Flanagan's empathy, boys were valued as the unique human beings they were.

Yet, who did Flanagan think was to blame for boyhood delinquency? He blamed both the parents and relatives of young criminals who did not properly raise them.

Flanagan had a powerful gift of persuasion, coupled with his reputation for helping even the most hardened youth. He would travel to distant places to plead in court

for young men and boys. He petitioned in one court about a young murderer named Paul. He beseeched the judge, “This boy is no criminal. It wasn’t his hand which pulled the trigger of the gun which sent his father to his death-- it was the neglect and abuse of his family by a derelict father, a circumstance over which the boy had no control, which pulled the trigger” (as cited in Oursler & Oursler, 1949, p. 268).

An additional instance would be his speech at the Soldiers 40th Annual Picnic at Farnhamville, Iowa, on August 17, 1936, where Flanagan asks, or demands, society to “make sacrifice, great sacrifice of our time, money, talent and never cease until our children, boys and girls are safeguarded and protected” (Flanagan, 1936b, p. 16). Unmistakably, this is an exemplar of Flanagan’s empathy for homeless and delinquent youths. They are another “I”—individuals who deserve our empathetic efforts—personal and monetary—because it is socially just. This is, moreover, an example of Flanagan’s empathy as a part of motherliness, a safe haven for all children.

**Parental responsibilities.** To the parents, as primary caregivers for their children, he is both insistent that they focus on their children and is harsh when parents are slack in their duties. Essentially, he tells the parents to subordinate their needs to the needs of their children and to be vigilant about supervising them. He holds the fathers to account by saying they must be “more enthused over their children, spend more time in their company . . . advising them, helping them to understand the many difficult problems ahead” (Flanagan, 1936b, p. 16).

His empathy for these marginalized children, as part of his moral vision, goes much further, though. To Flanagan, all of us are responsible, which he clearly delineates

when he asserted, “Perhaps all of us grownups are at fault for not helping these boys when they need help” (as cited in Graves, 1972, p. 42).

Our responsibility is clear to him because his empathy demands it. One of his most repeated sayings, and the one most closely associated with him that crystallizes his empathic philosophy, shifts the blame for delinquency to other sources. “There are no bad boys. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example, bad thinking” (as cited in Reilly & Warneke, 2008, p. 7).

### **Closing Flanagan**

Flanagan was grounded in reality. Therefore, I wanted to represent him as such. In this chapter, using his empathy as the focal point, I portrayed Flanagan as a youth and man depicting his empathy through primary and secondary documents while demonstrating his refusal to be cowed by criticism. I also illustrated his progressivism on issues of race and described his philosophy of boyhood.

In contrast to Boys Town, I offered an example of a horrific school where boys were abused. I also made clear that Flanagan was a promoter; he used persuasive techniques to encourage people to contribute financially to his cause. To close the section, I explained his theories on the causes of delinquency and made clear his standards for parental responsibility.

Within this biography of Flanagan, so far, what is one of his most important positions? It is his Catholic empathy in regards to race; in this area of his philosophy, he was clearly in the vanguard of the times. He took the teachings of Christ to his heart and believed we are all brothers and sisters who deserve an equal chance for a healthy life.

Action, or doing, was also integral to his Catholic empathy. It was not enough, to Flanagan, to say all boys were equal. He pushed forward and insisted they were—by including boys of all races and religions in Boys Town.

Additionally, when he helped Japanese Americans during World War II find a home at Boys Town, he stood firm in his belief that they were being discriminated against because of their ethnicity: this was against God at his most basic. If God created people in his own image, then all of us, every single one of us, are in his image.

Therefore, Flanagan took his empathy back to the teachings of Christ which asked people to “do” for other people, to serve them, not just think. His words, which flowed with empathy and a clarity and simplicity of message, were buttressed by his taking African American, Native American, and Japanese boys into his home, not just preaching, from a safe distance, about the equality of people and the love of God. He internalized his words and turned them into acts, or works, helping boys become men with an opportunity to craft a life within the foundation of empathy, love, education, and safety they received at Boys Town. These are requisites for emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Flanagan’s action, on behalf of what he believed to be true, can fall into four main themes that further situate his Catholic empathy, empathy of movement and goals.

### **The Themes of Flanagan**

Flanagan’s empathy falls under four main umbrellas. His empathy flowered as an expression of figurative motherhood. He thought children deserved loving, empathetic care that an emotionally healthy mother would give: his boys, all boys—even those

without a living, involved mother figure. Another way Flanagan's empathy came to the fore was when he had to work empathically through challenging times to foster his philosophy of social justice. He forged ahead, by way of illustration, to help Hubert Niccols, a child murderer, even though Governor Hartley opposed him and accused Flanagan of seeking publicity. Flanagan, moreover, was empathetic within the context of the individual. To him, each boy mattered, and he consistently brought the focus back to one person by explaining the evils that would occur to the boy, community, and society if he was not cared for humanely and empathetically. He maintained if we did not live empathy and Godly care to homeless boys, they could become career criminals—and the people who knew of the boys needs and did nothing would be partially responsible.

Lastly, Flanagan's empathetic moral vision is firmly entrenched in his and the Catholic tenet of the equality of humankind. Poor, rich, African American, white, law abiding and law flouting—all these boys mattered and are equally valuable. This empathetic moral vision of Flanagan, and all aspects of Flanagan's empathy, is intimately connected to his Catholic faith and to Catholic teachings including the requirement to help those in need, and to live, through human morality and actions, the recognition that each person is equal and valued.

Like Day, he did what he said he would do, in his case helping homeless boys with a full hearted empathy that reached out to boys across the world. He thought as he lived—to the benefit of so many in need.

This brings me to the last person in this empathetic triumvirate and a person, who, like Flanagan, lived a life of value and purpose: Edith Stein.

### **Edith Stein: The Empathy Scholar and Example**

Stein has loomed large in this research: she is the mother of scholarly empathy, a remarkable student, feminist, and philosopher whose life was a reflection and an interpretation of the tumultuous times in which she lived. In this section, I shall explain and analyze: Stein's background, sense of privacy, and her conversion to Catholicism; Husserl, Stein's phenomenological mentor; his phenomenology and her divergence from him, and how Stein defined and lived her empathy. Stein's educational philosophy and philosophy of womanhood as a public speaker will be given pride of place as essential to understanding Stein, as well as her difficulties with her dissertation which was a defining event in her doctoral studies. Moreover, I shall examine the ways Stein showed empathy as a World War I nurse, then move into her theories about schooling for girls and her clarity in presenting her thoughts in public. This section will close with some thoughts on Stein's conversion to Catholicism and its importance in understanding her.

#### **Stein Illustrated**

Stein is the only empathy scholar, and she retracts in and expands out her philosophy of empathy with which to situate the empathy of Day and Flanagan. Moreover, she speaks readily to women's issues. Her empathy, which was the subject of her doctoral dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917), and her deeply held religious beliefs combine both her strong cultural upbringing in Jewish ethics and morals and her heartfelt and freewill embrace of Catholicism. This embrace led to her life as a religious, and as a Carmelite nun.

Above all, who was Edith Stein? Born in 1891, in Breslau, Germany, Stein was the much loved child in a large family. Her father died when she was a toddler, and her mother very successfully took over the family lumberyard. Stein, always an excellent student, excelled scholastically and eventually enrolled at the University of Göttingen and studied under the influential phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl. As he moved to the University of Freiburg, Stein followed: she graduated *summa cum laude* in 1916; her dissertation was titled *On the Problem of Empathy* (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Herbstrith, 1971/1992).

This is also the more challenging unveiling of empathy—as compared to Day or Flanagan’s. Stein wrote her dissertation on empathy, which was a strictly philosophical piece, and she wrote it when she was still an agnostic.

Furthermore, some of the offered examples of her empathy are before she converted and while she was already in intimate friendships with converts to Christianity: Husserl and Reinach. So, in Stein’s case, her Catholic infused empathy is not always so clear, but it is unfolding. Importantly, moreover, she never completely distanced herself from the Judaism of her birth and youth; she was proud of her faith and her family—for her, though, a move to Catholicism was a natural progression.

### **Can Catholicism Be an Outgrowth of Judaism?**

It is important to note that some Jewish scholars disagree that Catholicism can be an outgrowth of Judaism, and a person can be a Catholic and a Jew simultaneously. It is a “specious idea that one can profess Christian faith and still remain a Jew” (Polish, 1994, p. 14). Why do some scholars believe this is so? Is it because Jewish people have a

fierce pride about their ancestry and faith and because as Polish asserts, “We gloried in the ignominy of being descended from a band of runaway slaves” (1994, p. 15).

It is further insisted by Polish, an eminent rabbi, that he does not look at the conversion of Edith Stein in 1922, and conversions in early Christianity, as the same. When Christianity was an outgrowth of Judaism, Catholicism took rituals and customs of Judaism and incorporated them into the faith; for instance, Catholic tradition teaches that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. The first Christians did not see the strict demarcation of Christian and Jew; there was fluidity between the two. One did not have to disavow one, Judaism, to embrace the other, Christianity. When Stein converted, a choice had to be made, and Polish empathically asserts that a person can stop being a Jew, and therefore, Stein should be considered Catholic. “It opens perilous implications to try to define her as both” (1994, p. 24).

Nevertheless, Stein felt differently and believed she could embrace Catholicism and not divorce herself from Judaism. This supports the Zionist perspective that Jewish people are a nation (Tanay, 1994). She insisted, “I abandoned the practice of my Jewish religion at the age of 14, and I felt a Jew again only after my return to God” (as cited in Tanay, 1994, p. 28).

Stein was fiercely independent and did not ask permission from anyone to characterize herself. She worked towards a Ph.D. in philosophy when there were no female philosophy professors in Germany. She did not ask permission to define herself for a job that did not yet exist, and she did not ask rabbinical or Church leadership if she could find connection to her Judaism through Catholicism. While there may be



disagreement about whether one must shed all sense of being Jewish when one becomes Catholic, Stein did not concur.

So, is it still correct to define Stein as a Catholic empathy scholar? I maintain that it is because even though some of the examples of Stein's empathy that are sprinkled throughout this study happened before she became a Catholic, most present Stein after her conversion. By way of illustration, while her family autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family* (1986) was referencing when she was either Jewish or agnostic, it was written *after* she became Catholic, which would impact her narrative. The change her Catholicism brought was so profound -- her life transformed. Importantly, too, she presented herself as a Catholic scholar after her conversion. Her identity and sense of self was Catholic.

Therefore, it is intellectually honest for me to include all of Stein's empathy under both the catholic and Catholic umbrellas'; it is within the parameters of defining empathy and delineating Catholic empathy. Yet, it will be referred to in this book as Catholic after her conversion.

Her life, after she became Catholic, clearly exemplified empathy, but her philosophy of empathy when she wrote her dissertation could not be considered Catholic. Therefore, as I peel away her lived empathy, I will attempt to uncover an empathic Stein both before and after her dissertation was published.

Her famous or infamous conversion to Catholicism, depending on who evaluates it, cannot be fully appraised because she would never wholly reveal the reasons behind it.

Stein scholars are given hints, some clues, nothing more: no overt expressions of reasoning or answers from Stein.

Nevertheless, to understand what scholars do know about why she converted is essential to understanding her empathy. Why would a culturally Jewish young intellectual wholeheartedly embrace a religion, Catholicism, that her pious mother considered a cult? To have an inkling into her conversion is to have a beginning understanding of the complexity and richness of Stein's empathy.

Moreover, comprehending her phenomenological inspired empathy, her understanding of phenomenology as taught by Husserl, must be included to foundationalize the development of her philosophy of empathy and how she lived her empathetic life. Why? For this reason: the understanding of the intimate connection between her perception of phenomenology as learned and understood as Husserl's protégé and the development of her own empathy is integral to this study. Therefore, I shall include some information about her conversion in this chapter, but I will go into it in more detail in Chapter IV. Husserl's phenomenology, and Stein's contact with him regarding his philosophy, will also be referenced in this section of the study.

### **Some Clues to Stein's Conversion**

A glimmer into Stein's conversion comes from her contact with the Reinach family. Adolf Reinach, a Lutheran convert from Judaism, fellow philosopher, and German patriot eloquently stated that in fighting in the Great War, later known as World War I, "It's not that I *must*; rather, I'm permitted to go" (Herbstrith, 1971/1992; as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 64). He tragically died, and Stein went to visit and empathize with

his widow and her friend, Anna Reinach, which is an illustration of Stein's empathy as focusing on the valued individual.

Edith fully expected to find Anna a broken woman after the loss of her husband, but this was not the case. Anna was serene and taking solace from her faith (which was at this time Lutheran, but she eventually became a Catholic.) (Stein, 1986). Stein had a revelation, and she described, "For the first time I saw before my eyes the Church, born of Christ's redemptive suffering, victorious over the sting of death" (as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 88). She also added, "It was then that I first encountered the cross and the divine strength it inspires in those who bear it" (as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 88).

This was Stein's understanding of the ways religious belief assists people in times of tribulation. Still, at this point, Stein was on the journey towards a religious transformation; she was not there yet. For two more years, she investigated and discerned.

Another detail Stein gives that may add insight into her conversion, somewhat, is that she saw a woman come into a Catholic cathedral carrying packages, and Stein saw her kneel down reverently and start to pray. While this may seem like an act of small moment, Stein was deeply impressed because the woman stopped what she was doing for an "intimate conversation" (as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 89). Stein was moved by this simple expression of faith.

Moreover, Stein relates that she read Teresa of Avila's autobiography, on multiple levels a powerful expression of faith, and said it was "the truth" but she would not

definitively assert why this truth impacted her so deeply (Hampl, 2006, p. 66).<sup>13</sup> When her dear friend and fellow phenomenological realist Hedwig (Hattie) Conrad-Martius asked her about her conversion, she said, “Secretum meum mihi” which means the “secret is mine” (Borden, 2003; as cited in Hampl, 2006, p. 70). Moreover, Dr. Borden Sharkey, a noted Stein author and scholar, highlighted Stein’s search for the truth as an inkling into her conversion in a speech she gave at Notre Dame University on February 10, 2012.

### **Steinian Interpretations**

Stein can be readily interpreted because she was a prolific writer; and her empathy infused life speaks for itself within her culture, time period, and gender. Moreover, I will evaluate Stein and position her as a groundbreaking feminist educator, an empathetic and accomplished teacher, and writer and public speaker. Still, Stein’s empathy is more classically philosophical whist being less dramatically transparent than Day and Flanagan’s. She did not create the *Catholic Worker* or establish Boys Town, so while her writing on empathy is more well-developed than Day or Flanagan’s, her lived life is less overtly empathetic.

Her philosophy is essential to describing her empathy and to do her justice I will unveil her phenomenology and the phenomenology of her mentor Husserl—a philosophical thread to foundationalize her philosophy—because her philosophy was tremendously important to her throughout her life, even up to her death. Therefore, to

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<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, Teresa of Avila was the “only woman in the history of the church ever to reform a religious order of men” (Starr, 2007, p. x). An early feminist connection, perhaps?

properly understand her, the basics of phenomenology must be included. She died a Catholic nun *and* a phenomenologist; albeit her own brand of phenomenology.<sup>14,15</sup>

### **Stein's Phenomenology**

While Edith Stein was an eminent philosopher, her mentor, Edmund Husserl, was one of the supreme philosophical minds of the twentieth century, and his influence on Stein's intellectual development was weighty. However, she had the strength and belief in herself to find her own way in phenomenology concerning empathy and come to her own conclusions about this philosophical branch.

**Stein develops her philosophy.** Her phenomenological realism was in concert with Max Scheler, Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Pope John Paul the Great. These philosophers insisted the putting aside of assumptions and preconceived notions when coming in contact with an object is understood in real *world*. The world does exist (Borden, 2003). Husserl's epoche cleaves closer to Rene Descartes (1596–1650) who believed that what we perceive may not be in reality what it is: what we see may not be what is. For example, a circular building ahead of us may look square. We may be in the clutches of an evil genie, or perhaps we are dreaming (Borden, 2003; Law, 2007). So,

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, her philosophy on empathy, enriched by her study with Husserl and Scheler, informed her teaching, and I think its importance today will fuel interest in her as a person, philosopher, and teacher who had a dynamic life trajectory.

<sup>15</sup> Stein's life trajectory evolved from atheism to passionate Catholicism; from Husserlian phenomenology to her own special brand of Steinian phenomenology, and from the passionate feminism of her youth to an equally passionate spiritually inspired feminism in her later years.

what we see may be in dispute, but what we think we see is not (Borden 2003).<sup>16</sup> Still, to Husserl, the world does exist.

**Stein develops her empathy philosophically.** In developing philosophically, Stein was influenced by her mentor Edmund Husserl. Substantively, Husserl asked two questions that build up his process of phenomenological reduction. They are, “What is it that can be known without doubt?” and “How is this knowledge possible in the most general sense?” (W. Stein, 1989, p. xvi).

Husserl conjectures naught about the physical world; rather, he brackets it, suspends it, or puts it to the side, so he can exactly describe phenomena. His consciousness is intended for something, and this pure consciousness includes a subject that perceives, an act of perceiving, and an object or what is perceived (W. Stein, 1989). This could be thought of as the “I,” the “I” taking in, and what the “I” takes in.

To Husserl, the ego–subject works to optimally make tantamount meaning of things in consciousness. However, he dismisses the dissimilarity between phenomenon (something we can sense) and noumenon (something that is an intellectual intuition, not a sensuous comprehension; Calcagno, 2007; Webster’s II, 1995).

Alternatively, Stein pleaded with Husserl about his transcendental idealism and “suspension of belief in the natural world” as too outlandish and not viable.

Nevertheless, he would not revisit it to alter his position (Calcagno, 2007, p. 15). Can Stein’s attitude here about distancing herself from Husserl’s transcendental idealism

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<sup>16</sup> So, Stein was willing to make her empathy her own even though her mentor was a world renowned philosopher. This illustrates her developing empathy emerging even in the midst of opposition which might have intimidated a less confident woman: Stein believed in herself. Moreover, her decision to adjust and refine Husserl’s positions shows her strength and intellectual fitness in diverging from her brilliant mentor to follow her own philosophy.

suggest she would also move way, to a degree, from Husserl in her dissertation on empathy? Indeed, yes.

Transcendental means “the conditions for the possibility of.” In Husserl’s transcendental turn or idealistic turn, he initiated delving into the stipulations for the potentiality of phenomenological erudition and included “time and space, subjectivity and intersubjectivity” (A. Calcagno, personal communication, March 16, 2013). This evolved from his prior scholarship which included things and reasoning within phenomenology. The transcendental turn adds to this. Husserl felt this description of reasoning and things was not adequately complex, so in developing his transcendental turn, his philosophy was newly nuanced and expanded. Time and space in conjunction with sense and objects included more with which to experience from the first person point of view. This offering by Husserl into transcendental structure was developed to foundationalize his book *Logical Investigations* (1900). Husserl believed the transcendental turn would help him squash assertions that his prior scholarship was essentially and merely psychological portrayal. Furthermore, to Husserl, the world exists in his transcendental philosophy and in his philosophy afore, transcendental idealism (A. Calcagno, personal communication, March 16, 2013).

Still, are there any major differences between Husserl and his protégé, Stein? Conforming to Calcagno, Stein shows little of following Husserl’s transcendental method; she treats empathy as a phenomenon. In describing empathy as a phenomenon, she was merely flattering her famed dissertation chair and not embracing his transcendental method when she referenced it. Actually, she wrote to Roman Ingarden

that even after her dissertation was finished she *still* did not understand some Husserlian terminology and philosophy like “constitution and suspending one’s beliefs in the natural world” (2007, pp. 14–15).<sup>17</sup>

Concerning empathy, Stein and Husserl are similar. Where Stein clearly diverges from Husserl is her belief that empathy is a gateway for self-knowledge and perception and is basic to grasping ourselves as people. Husserl does not believe that. Stein also goes further and asserts that to deeply understand another person, one must study the “psychology and spirituality” of the given society. She maintains that this examination is its own form of thinking (A. Calcagno, personal communication, March, 16, 2013).

### **Stein Defines**

Stein was also influenced by Theodor Lipps, a very prominent 20th century German philosopher and professor. However, she was not in complete agreement with Lipps as to the definition of empathy. While she believed, like Lipps, that empathy encompasses an “‘inner participation’ in foreign experiences” and “is akin to memory” (Stein, 1917/1989, p. 12), she did not believe that our memory makes “the remembered experience primordial” (Stein, 1917/1989, p. 13). This means that since a primordial experience is an original or primary one, and a memory is a recollection of an experience, it is therefore, *not a reliving of the original experience*. As such, if a friend is in the midst of a painful divorce from his wife, and he tells me about his suffering, the anguish is still his; the narrative is his.

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<sup>17</sup> This may make some budding philosophers feel affirmed if they find it grueling to extract meaning from Husserl’s phenomenology, or people may become downhearted and think there is no hope in understanding him.



As I empathize with him, I follow Stein's three-step process, and I actively listen, then merge—clearly understand emotions, and finally come back to sympathy and self-discovery (Määttä, 2006).

After this empathetic exchange, I come back to myself. I have been with my friend in his experience; however, it was not my primordial experience; it was his. My primordial experience is how I live my empathy in me, through me. Even though the empathic exchange was initiated by my friend, when I experience it, my experience is mine, and it is primordial.

Stein further maintains that empathy is the non-primordial experience heralding a primordial one. The experience is non-primordial in that the empathizer does not step into the (empathized with) person's mind; the empathizer does not have the exact same experience as the one she is empathizing with, at that moment. The primordial experience is the empathizer's lived, subjective experience. The empathizer lives the experience in her own way, in her consciousness. It is her own now, even though it was activated by another.

For instance, if I meet a friend, and she tells me of the severe illness of her mother, that is her primordial experience, as she is suffering emotional pain; she feels it. My experience with her is at first non-primordial, as I am trying to understand her pain. When I empathize, when I feel-in to my friend's experience, the empathy I feel that began non-primordially becomes primordial, as I live with the empathic experience with my friend. (As mentioned earlier, Stein views empathy as a three step process: active listening, identifying, and sympathy or coming back to self.)

Astell further explains that Stein contrasts empathy with mimesis (communicability) because it is a properly human emotion, and it comes from the “I” of the human person, not just from the environment (Astell, 2004). Therefore, empathy is not something that floats in the air and is caught by people; it is not contagious like laughter can be. It is something much deeper and more time intensive and occurs in relationships and connectedness; it takes practice for it to become a constituent component of one’s life. One’s life is intimately attached to other individuals.

To Stein, the individual took precedence in her viewpoint. She underscored her philosophy in her dissertation when she explained that we can “see emphatic<sup>18</sup> acts best in their individuality if we confront them with other acts of pure consciousness”(Stein, 1917/1989, p. 6, as cited in Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 23).

In her dissertation, she gave the unambiguous example of a friend telling her that he lost his brother, and she explains that within empathy, we work with this experience in the “here and now” (Stein, 1917/1989, p. 7). Stein maintains empathy is like perceiving, and as an “I” experiencing another person as another “I”; this is the way people experience other people psychically. When we experience empathy, we understand a person’s joy, for example, and transfer into it (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Stein, 1917/1989). Importantly, we do not live the emotion in exactly the same way as the person with whom we are empathizing even though Stein’s empathy was individual centric and demanded that each person was a valued, unique member of the human race.

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<sup>18</sup> I am not sure if Stein meant “emphatic” or “empathic.”

So, what else would Stein's empathy add that would be divergent from Husserl's? She would view these empathy examples as an opportunity for her to garner greater knowledge of herself; this is essential to Stein's empathy. To her, she is not only being caring towards a friend. She would also admit empathy has its limitations because she may not have adequate knowledge of the (empathized with) person's life (mental and spiritual) in their own community.

In this next section, I will move into Stein and her educational philosophy, and the empathetic connectedness to teaching and explore how Stein's philosophy of empathy impacted her life's work as a teacher and a speaker on women and Catholic education.

### **Stein's Educational Philosophy**

Before delineating Stein's educational philosophy and to further contextualize it, I will offer a further definition of Stein's empathy. Steinian empathy is the way in which people grow to be privately cognizant of themselves and others, and in empathy, the other is integral to the subject's perception. Importantly, too, Stein also sees the other in the world of people (Calcagno, 2007). The world of people, society and community, were constituent to understanding the person, to Stein.

Equally important in looking at Stein is how her view of compassion and empathy flowed over into her educational philosophy and theories about schooling. "Schooling" as a part of life for German women did not include the possibility of a higher education until universities were open to women in 1901. Women were not allowed to become fully matriculated until 1908. Not long after, Stein enrolled (Borden, 2003, p. 85).

Nevertheless, even though she was in the forefront of college educated German women and could have become a self-absorbed elitist, she lived empathy as a teacher, and she deeply believed that education should fit the female student—based on her needs and interests. Stein maintained the educators who teach women should, mainly, or only, be women, since they would have a better understanding of the problems and joys of females.

Interestingly, “females taking responsibility for teaching females” flows throughout her writing in *Essays on Woman* (1996); in fact, she is quite adamant about it as an imperative. Yet, there is an instance where she was not so sure. In a letter written on October 20, 1932, to Sister Callista, she digressed. In this letter, she forwards the benefits of a primarily female school faculty, but she opens the door to male teachers. She compares a faculty to a family that has both a mother and a father, each contributing to raise the children. Stein considers it best if both sexes contribute to child rearing. She even goes so far as to affirm that a male school director would be acceptable if he was a “skilled educator of girls” and was cognizant that his emotional weight with the young women might be circumscribed (Fitzpatrick, 2011; Stein, 1993, p. 123). A mixed faculty being preferable is even offered (Stein, 1993) by Stein which is in direct contrast to so much of her other writing and speeches (Fitzpatrick, 2011).

The strength and volume of her argument against male teachers is intriguing because her college career was dominated by male teachers, like Husserl. Was there some reason she believed other women would not benefit by a male-led education? Was Stein trying to stake something out specifically for women, as teachers, so they could

build careers? Did she look around her world and notice that men were in charge of almost all of the professions; was she thereby suggesting that women should teach women? Was she being profoundly pragmatic in that she was helping women think of themselves as workers? Did she maintain that teaching was a career in which feminine empathy could flower? All evidence suggests that she did, and it was also a part of her moral vision that women could be educated as well as men and the teacher could, or should, be female. Her conviction that women should be teachers of females was political, too, in that she believed women could be valued and important workers in this profession. She was an ardent advocate for female excellence in sexist 1930s Germany, where women had so little opportunity. Additionally, she thought female teachers would be better for the girls.

The evidence suggests that she was trying to promote a profession that women could practice as skilled leaders within the confines of her views of women as nurturers. Moreover, she was suggesting a women-teaching-women standard—that would be palatable to the power structure in which she lived, and a woman could still work meaningfully—while being empathetic (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

On other issues, Stein could also vacillate, and others have noted Stein's tendency to be incongruous. Espin notes that Stein's position regarding female Catholic priests is varied. Espin (2008) asserts, "At other times her ambiguous or almost contradictory statements become confusing" (p. 129).

This is in concord with her changeable nature. Such as, she changed her major in college from psychology to philosophy; she converted to Catholicism from non-

practicing Judaism; she vacillated about women becoming priests. She also became so despondent when she wrote her dissertation; she thought of death as desirable. Then, when she had a breakthrough in her dissertation, she embraced life.

Was she maturing in her opinions, so she could be in closer concert with Church teaching, or is it as Espin suggests that she put forth “her position without appearing to oppose Church teaching”? (2008, p. 129). It was both. Stein’s piety was well documented, and she did not want to publically oppose Church leadership. So, she could disagree without being what she may have considered strident.

Actually, this should not surprise the reader of Stein because she was paradoxical; the inner recesses of her heart were her own. However, an area in which she was consistent was her philosophy of the value of an empathic education for women.

### **Stein’s Passion for Women’s Education**

Still, Stein was passionate about female educational opportunity and female ability for scholarship; she empathized with women who yearned for erudition even within society’s opposition, and she continued to write and speak eloquently about it throughout her life.

In her book of collected works, *Essays on Woman*, (1959/1996), which was published posthumously, she explicated that the educational system in 1930s Germany was in trouble. She maintained: ‘The former ideal of education was that of encyclopedic knowledge: the presumed concept of the mind was that of the tabula rasa onto which as many impressions as possible . . . registered through intellectual perceptions and memorizations.’ (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 130, as cited in Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 61)

She eschewed the Enlightenment model which she claimed had to “suffer shipwreck” (Stein 1959/1996, pp. 131) that was based on students learning facts by rote, and she embraced a model that used the metaphor of the teacher as sculptor. The educator should work with the child according to their nature, and the work a child is given must nurture their abilities whilst building the intellect (Borden, 2003). “She felt, alternatively, that education should have different goals” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62) [from the Enlightenment model]. Stein maintained that “Education is not an external possession of learning but rather the gestalt which the human personality assumes under the influence of manifold external forces i.e., the process of this formation” (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 130; as cited in Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62). Education is also a profession in which she believed women could excel because of their empathetic nature and their natural emotional or literal motherhood.

“She went on to explain that education should recognize the individuality of the person, their nature, and the ‘primary formative principle acting within’ (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 131)” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62). Too, Steinian education is more than just works, words, tasks, and skills. She considers it “more complex and mysterious” at the same time an endeavor that must value the individual (Stein, 1959/1996, pp. 131–132).

This is essential to understanding Stein: her value for the individual was intimately connected with her empathy. One person mattered enormously; one person lived in and with empathy. Moreover, Stein believed education was multifarious and enigmatic, and these are components of empathic motherhood. As an empathetic and loving mother or mother figure reaches out as teacher to a child or adult to educate; there

is an inexplicable component, an intellectual spark, when teaching resonates and the person engages; something unquantifiable occurs. There is a transfer in the empathic learning, an exchange that Stein details as being far beyond the imparting of information; there is a spontaneous, caring connection.

Why was Stein so concerned with such positive connections with each individual student? Why does one solitary person have such meaning? For this reason: It is an intrinsically Catholic concept, and she was a devout Catholic at this point in her biography of empathy.

Why is the value of each human life a Catholic concept? Because the Church teaches that life is given to man and woman as a gift from God, and only God can make or end that life (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994). The Catholic Church insists that all human life has value and because each solitary human is God's creation, he or she deserves a life of dignity, no matter how poor, sickly, difficult, or burdensome the person is on Earth. As a Catholic, Stein would know this when she became a Catholic in 1922 and began teaching at Saint Magdalen in the same year (Gaboriau, 2002).

As a philosopher, she wrote and lectured on the value and understanding of the single human person. Throughout her life, she asked what it meant to be human, and Stein described a unique individual form for each person (Borden Sharkey, 2010). Each person is distinctive and has characteristics that make them the person they are. It is the way we are in the world. In our distinctiveness, we live as we relate to others within the uniqueness of ourselves (Borden Sharkey, 2010). What is more, this speaks to Stein's philosophy of individuation: her philosophy of empathy flows forth from the person.



Stein admits that all people are human, and humans are of the same formation; however, there are distinctive contrasts amongst people. Each person is an individual. Even if people have aspects that are the same, each person has that characteristic in a way that is his or her own. So, one person's sense of joy would be divergent from her neighbor's sense of joy (Borden, 2003).

Stein also insists each human being has a personal core and our individual personalities have a uniform harmony. Therefore, there is a degree of probability when another person is known as a friend; one could articulate what that person may like or believe based on experiences with them. Therefore, we have contact with another person's individual form when we know them (Borden Sharkey, 2010).

So, how does this evolve into Stein's educational philosophy? In positing her philosophy about individuation, she notes that not only the individual student must be taken into account; the soul of the student must as well. Stein describes women as moving outward into the world, searching for what jewels rests in others' souls, while finding the time to reside in their own soul: a peacefulness of strength to prevent the soul from being overcome by "stormy winds" (1959/1996, pp. 132–133). Is this not an excellent description of a mother-like empathy?

### **Stein Speaks**

Yet, in examining Stein's empathetic educational philosophy, it is important to understand how well she was able to convey her beliefs as a speaker. I have mentioned her powerful writing skills; now I want to address her extraordinary speaking ability which flowed out of her writing skills. By way of illustration, Stein spoke in Salzburg in

1930, and there were around 1,000 people in attendance. She spoke extemporaneously for two hours as the audience assiduously listened. One listener describes the audience as “captivated” and presented Stein as a “woman who spoke with charming simplicity . . . and yet a restrained dynamic was contained in every sentence . . . For here one sensed a great power of mind, a rich, yet disciplined inner life, born of utmost self-assurance” (Borden, 2003, pp. 9–10).

This is an example of her abilities blending into her empathy. She employed her premier intellect to work closely with so large a crowd. It is indicated, by reading this description of Stein’s speech, that she was feeling-in to her audience, so this empathic interchange was not the one-on-one encounter, but Stein offering herself to the audience with superb compassion: individual to individual.

### **Stein’s Empathetic Views on the Ethos of Women’s Professions**

In fact, Stein generally believed women had an utter capacity for empathy, and this led them to certain professions because “certain abiding attitudes are unique to the feminine soul and form woman’s professional life from within” because women want to reside in the “living, personal, and whole” (Stein, 1959/1996, pp. 44–45). In doing so, Stein maintained that women longed to protect life and guide human growth which sprang from maternal instinct. Empathy and all forms of lived motherhood were intimately connected in Steinian philosophy (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

This flowed over into the relationship between husband and wife because a woman could join herself with her husband and take part in his trials and achievements in a very natural, fluid way. Moreover, to Stein, women become concerned with people

within their lives because of their great capacity for empathy, and she felt it was best for women when they take their empathic cores and turn themselves towards meaningful work, either in the home or in the working world (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

Yet, there is more. Stein clearly insists that there are not male or female professions, and all types of work are open to women (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 49).<sup>19</sup>

Stein did not back away from her philosophy of empathetic women working, even if society opposed her, because she believed that women making choices about work was a part of social justice; this was her conception.

Stein details the ways in which a “self-sacrificing” women may work heroically when she needs to support her children or parents. In doing so, she may use her unique gifts and talents—even if in 1930’s Germany a woman’s talents led her towards a typically male profession (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 49). Professions that could be practiced by women (remember she is writing and lecturing in 1930s Germany) include any work that benefits from motherly and wifely empathy like medicine, teaching, and the social services (Fitzpatrick, 2012; Stein, 1959/1996, p. 49). Nevertheless, is what Stein is describing, this full-flowered giving of self in the world, empathy? I think it is, and her comparisons to a loving mother are particularly apt because a mother caring for her children is a simple and universal example of empathy. A mother takes care of a child, hopefully, lovingly. If, as Stein addressed, the caring of a mother flows over into the work world for woman, her list of possible professions make sense. Still, her belief that

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<sup>19</sup> Plato, while not a feminist—he thought men were a cut above women, did believe women deserved equivalent educational prospect. They should be permitted to use their skills in his model polity. Work and practices such as “medicine, music, philosophy, government, warfare, and athletics” should be open to women, but women would not be on par with males (Blythe, 2001, p. 243).

women bring caring into their work would contrast with some women who believe they work for the money, individual fulfillment, power, or position—empathy is not part of the equation for every woman.

**The value and challenges of an empathic woman in the workforce.** To Stein, a woman was not only adding her talents to the workforce, she was adding her nature which is noted by its cooperativeness with other people and her focus on the “ultimate service to a living whole” (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 50). Because men are at risk of being turned into meaningless automatons in a factory, the presence of women would be a balance mechanism because feminine empathetic sensibility will notice “where there is a want and where help is needed” (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 51). This was part of Stein’s moral vision because to her women were capable of a career, and her feminism brought her to the conclusion that women would work empathetically—wherever they were. Stein voiced these beliefs in women working when most people in Germany of the 1930s would have expressed a divergent point of view (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

Still, what of the challenges for a woman in the workforce? What are Stein’s views of a woman who has both work and home responsibilities? As a woman is empathic, in Stein’s mind, she works hard to help and care for others. She describes these busy women as “harassed, nervous, and irritable” (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 54) which sounds quite contemporary. Forging forward, she warns about the risks to women in professions when they have “taken pains to fill their post ‘just like a man’” (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 55) and have silenced their feminine nature. Stein believes it is when women embrace empathy they can be heroines in their community and in their homes.

These women can also reach out in need to those who are in need. They can do this with love, formed within their soul, and with help from God (Stein, 1959/1996). The motherliness of Stein's empathy illuminates her belief in women working for the good of others and themselves. However, the flaw in her argument is that some women go to their workplace as people without their feminine natures as part of their profiles but as workers, only.

### **Further Examples of Stein's Empathy from Her Autobiography and Letters**

Stein's (1986) autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family*, was written during Hitler's tenure to refute the racist and debilitating propaganda machine that was developed to disparage and outcast Jews. The presentation of her Jewish family, as a contrast to the depiction of Jewish life as deprived that the machinations of Goebel's, the Nazi propaganda minister, spewed, was Stein's goal in writing her book. Her Jewish family is presented with normal joys and troubles, a life that was in many ways typical of an intellectual family with a staunch matriarch, and at the same time, culturally and recognizably Jewish. Stein intended her book to be an apologia -- with good reason. As she wrote in 1933, Hitler was in power and anti-Jewish legislation had been enacted; Stein was removed from her teaching post because she was born Jewish (Stein, 1986). Therefore, to Stein, this book needed to be written as a positive record of Jewish life.

Stein scholars are fortunate Stein was such a prolific writer, and students and academics can find a plethora of her experiences and a reflection of her personality in her autobiography. Therefore, I am going to share a number of examples from her autobiography that best exemplify her profound ability to empathize.

**Stein's empathy in *Life in a Jewish Family*: Another "I": Toni Meyer 1914-**

**1915.** An "I" who benefited from Stein's lived empathy was Toni Meyer, a fellow student, who was given medical care for "manic-depressive insanity" and was frequently in different sanatoria to be treated for her illness. Stein describes this as terribly difficult for Meyer's mother, Frau Meyer, who "shouldered the sorrowful burden of her beloved child's dreadful illness for years" (Stein, 1986, p. 372). Even when Meyer was well, Stein details that it was excruciatingly difficult for Frau Meyer. One difficulty was that Meyer become paranoid, and this caused problems with Frau Meyer's servants; to them, the younger Meyer looked well (Stein, 1986). (Mentally ill people may often "look" fine.)

Stein continued her relationship with Meyer, although Meyer was a very troubled woman; she was seriously mentally ill, and her attacks increases in intensity as she aged. Sometimes she only wanted to see Stein in the midst of her episodes. As Stein explains, "She kept asking for me during her illness, while she had no desire to see her relatives at such times" (Stein, 1986, p. 372). Stein even took her to her home to experience some of the warm, inclusive love of Mrs. Stein who somehow understood that Toni was different. Stein, moreover, included Frau Meyer in this healthy circle. Stein wrote that "Toni felt particularly well when she was in our house" (Stein, 1986, p. 373).

This narrative shows Stein at her empathetic best, although, she did not label it as such. She visited a sick friend in asylums and at home, viewed her illness with sadness, and included her as a valued friend in the life giving Stein home. Meyer's mother was also included in this empathy and was given the pleasure of Mrs. Stein's hospitality and

thoughtful discussion. Meyer wanted to speak with Stein when she would not even speak to her family. Why? Stein was an active listener which is her first step in the empathic process (Stein, 1986, 1917/1989). In this case, Stein's empathy is practiced even within the vortex of adverse societal forces. In 1914 and 1915, mental illness was largely misunderstood. Manic depressives were blamed for their problems; yet, Stein's empathy thrived even in that challenging environment because, to Stein, she was treating her friend as a human being. Human beings—because they are human beings—deserve empathic, loving treatment.

**More Steinian empathy.** Stein exemplified empathy when she decided to become a nurse during World War I. She felt the war was part of her, and she felt she had to do something to help Germany; she loved her country and was a fierce patriot (Cavnar, 2002; Koepfel, 2007). She trained as a nurse at All Saint's Hospital, joined the Red Cross, and expressed a desire to be sent anywhere she was needed. She left Breslau on April 7, 1915, and over her mother's vociferous objections, she went to work in a hospital specializing in communicable diseases in Mährisch-Weiskirchen, Austria, where she received the prestigious medal of valor for her work (Borden, 2003; Cavnar, 2002; Stein, 1917/1989).

She labored on the typhoid ward, and the meticulous Stein was scrupulous about disinfecting her hands. (Typhoid is communicated through human waste.) Attentive care for the patient was the hallmark of Stein's work as a nurse. She fed and cleaned patients, changed sheets, bathed weakened men, and in one case repetitively wiped bloody mucus out of the mouth of a man. Moreover, she skillfully assisted on the

surgical ward while helping a young female doctor learn the procedures (Cavnar, 2002). However, she found the evening hours when the nurses and doctors socialized distressing, on multiple levels, because of the excessive drinking and carousing. (Stein did not drink alcohol.) She observed a male doctor administering drink to a woman who said she did not want any more. Edith wondered, “What all might follow?” (as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 73). Clearly, the sexual implications or potentialities in Stein’s mind are inherent in her question, and she decided not to mingle after hours. Still, Stein stayed on as a nurse despite what she thought of the immoral evenings and continued to work assiduously in barracks six.

In barracks six, Stein cared for patients including a man named Terhart, who had a suppurating leg; this caused pallor and lack of appetite. Stein cared for him with great compassion and empathy and she, “fed him as though he was an infant and coaxed him over and over to take yet another spoonful” (Stein, 1986, p. 358). Yet, he made no effort to recover. Another example was Pöhl who was terribly weakened and atrophied by empyema of the lungs. He had painful bedsores which had to be daily bandaged. Edith was distressed when he was moved without her knowing it; she wanted to arrange his bed so he could rest more easily and not being able to do so “upset her greatly” (Stein, 1986, p. 359).

Clearly, Stein’s caring attentiveness as a nurse and her willingness to leave her studies to serve others suggests empathy. Her willingness to give compassionate care to a sufferer illustrates a caring persona, a loving mother, really. Yet, is it empathy? It is the buildup of her developing empathy which became more well-developed by the following:



Stein realized that the chauvinism she had been raised with that predominated all things German was not grounded in fact. She wrote of how the German officers, whom she nursed, could be arrogant and demanding. If they were not pleased, they would disturb the entire ward. In fact, one German soldier refused to help her move a heavy patient by saying, "I'd like to do you the favor but I just can't. It makes me sick" (Stein, 1986, p. 334). A Czechoslovakian came to her aid (Stein, 1986). Stein further details that, "Those from the 'barbaric nations' were humble and grateful." The Slovaks and Ruthenians she cared for seemed happy and grateful for any help she gave (Stein, 1986, pp. 333). Is this the stirring of empathy? Is it empathy when we experience a people who we have been told are inferior and are not but are really like us? Yes, because Stein's empathy triumphs the individual whom she believes has intrinsic value.

This revelation of seeing a person who we have been socialized to think of as lesser, a poor person for example, may become more truly human to us when we know or serve them.

**Stein's empathy continued.** In 1916, Stein and her friend Erica Gothe were visiting near Reichenau, and there was a night air raid. Stein previously had experience with air raids and was not ruffled. Her friend, however, was deeply distressed and crying in her room because her brother, Hans, was stationed in the Vosges Mountains, from whence the shelling was coming. Erika said through weeping, "If it sounds so terrible here, what a hell it must be there." Stein came out and "knelt beside her bed and comforted her" (as cited in Stein, 1986, p. 407; Stein, 1986, p. 407). Eventually, Erika stopped crying and was feeling better. This small example shows Stein at her empathetic

best. She inconvenienced herself to give physical comfort to a friend. Even though she was not scared by the shelling, she could understand her friend as a person like her who needed help: another “I” in the world. She listened, identified, and came back to herself. This is an illustration of Steinian empathy prioritizing the individual.

Another example of the depth of Steinian empathy that will add to the narrative is the close contact Stein had with her cousin, Richard Courant, and his wife and Stein’s friend, Nelli Courant.

**The Courant’s find an active listener in Stein.** Nelli Courant was married to Richard Courant, a math professor and Stein’s cousin, and Nelli Courant told Stein she was initiating a divorce from her husband. “Thunderstruck” is how Stein described her reaction and wrote, “This, perhaps, affected me even more painfully at that moment than did the suffering of the close friends which I have just described” (Stein, 1986, p. 374). (She is referring to the suffering of Toni and Mrs. Meyer.)

Nelli Courant painted Richard Courant as an unfeeling husband who behaved “as though he was still a bachelor” and still continued to have an intimate friendship with an attractive female student, Luise Lange (Stein, 1986, p. 375). Moreover, Nelli told Stein that Richard felt Edith was not “elegant and amusing” and that she should not be invited to their soiree. She felt “intensely sorry for Nelli” at a time in her life when there were “so many human problems pressed upon me, touching me to the quick” (Stein, 1986; Stein, 1986, pp. 375–376). Yet, she gave focused attention to her friend when she was starting her dissertation on the problem of empathy; this was her dispassionate examination of empathy through the phenomenological lens.

This conjunction of Stein spending so much time empathetically helping her friends and the beginning of her dissertation is intriguing because it seems as these intense, very practical examples of empathic interchanges came before she went through the painstaking process of beginning her dissertation which she found both challenging and debilitating and life-giving and invigorating. After writing, she would have a “rosy glow to my face and an unfamiliar feeling of happiness surged through me . . . I returned, as it were, from some distant world” (Stein, 1986, p. 377). At other times, she would suffer from abject despair which I will explore shortly.

Was there a connection between Stein working in the real world of empathy and then taking that knowledge, that lived experience, and transferring it into the theoretical world of phenomenological theory? The evidence suggests that, yes, there was a connection because she was in the world of reality and empathizing as a friend *before* she starting writing. There was a base of human contact—real world knowledge, to jumpstart her dissertation. Crafting *On the Problem of Empathy*, Stein’s dissertation, did cause her painful emotional challenges.

### **Stein Confronts Her Difficulties with Her Dissertation**

In a dramatic turn in Stein’s narrative, she confronted significant difficulties in writing her dissertation around 1915. She would sit at “my desk with some trepidation. I was like a tiny dot in limitless space” (Stein, 1986, p. 377). She was starting “entirely at rock bottom, to make an objective examination of the problem of empathy according to phenomenological methods” (Stein, 1986, p. 376).

Stein found the experience of solitary intellectual work arduous, and she became unhinged mentally as she wrote her outline for her thesis. She found researching others' empathy unrewarding—researching the philosophy of empathy within the phenomenological method of Husserl and Lipps left her dry. Sleeplessness ensued as she unsuccessfully tried to write eighteen hours a day. Such despair was felt by Edith that she expressed, “All this brought me to a point where life itself seemed unbearable.” She added, “I could no longer cross the street without wishing I would be run over by some vehicle . . . I hoped I would fall off a cliff and not return alive” (Cavnar, 2002; as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 60).

Luckily for Stein, her relationship with Adolf Reinach came to the rescue. (Here again, she values empathetic, individual human connections: one “I” to another “I.”) He heartened her, and told her to start writing and keep in touch with him. (Her dissertation chair, Husserl, was of no help at this time.) Even though she was still despondent, she did so. When she returned to Reinach three weeks later, he told her something marvelous and totally affirming, “Very good, Fräulein Stein” (Cavnar, 2002; as cited in Cavnar, 2002, p. 60). Now, with her self-assurance bolstered, she wrote, and she wrote well. She moved forward to prepare for her orals.

How significant is the empathic connection with Stein's suffering friends and her beginning her dissertation thereafter in the midst of her own psychological pain in writing? She was sincerely empathetic to her dear friends, Meyer and Courant, and her close friend, Reinach, subsequently showed empathy for her. This circle of compassion is telling because it highlights her experience all the more.

Stein, ever the teacher, teaches that still—in the depths of depression, we may reach out to someone to help us. Even though her dissertation chair—the brilliant Husserl—could not listen to her with empathy; he tended to do most of the talking, in general; she found someone who would lovingly help her. This is a metaphor for the Steinian life because it is when we are seemingly without hope that we can find help in a friend—a human connection, a meaningful contact with an individual, that reminds us of our frailty and need for the personal touch. Empathy unfolds in a connection with an individual. “I” meets “I” and healing may occur.

Notwithstanding, to further explicate Stein’s empathy, I will move not to her personal life, or her detour into nursing, but into her career as a teacher.

### **Stein the Empathic Catholic Teacher**

Stein also was an accomplished teacher of both German and literature at St. Magdalen’s, Speyer, which was a high school for females and a teachers’ college. Furthermore, she was appointed to the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Munster where she lectured on what it meant to be a person (Baseheart, 1997; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Herbstrith, 1971/1992; Stein, 1959/1996). Moreover:

Because Stein believed that the individuality of the person had to be recognized . . . she advocated that society look at the unambiguous requirements that she felt women needed to fulfill their educations. . . . How should women fulfill their educations? What were their special needs? Stein believed that because the women’s souls were warm by nature and open to growth, women needed to search intellectually, and find time for quiet reflection throughout their lives. (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62).

In Stein's empathic intellect, conjointly,

this search would include a search for God. If, as Stein avows “. . . intellect is nevertheless the key to the kingdom of the mind; it is the eye of the mind . . . [going] into the darkness of the soul,” then what kind of educational establishment would be best suited to the intellectual needs of women? (1959/1996, p. 136). (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62)

“Stein contended that women were by nature active, and they not only wanted to receive the world, but move forward ‘. . . by giving shape to the external world’ (1959/1996, p. 137)” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62). “In doing so, she felt it would be best if women developed practical skills as well as intellectual ones, depending on ability. [A tenet of Stein's is depending on talent or ability.] She felt that the most able among women would develop intellectually if those . . . educational structures . . . became deeply grounded in the learning process” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 62).

She felt, too, that women should be taught[,] so that they would be able to learn anything new that they deemed essential throughout their lives. Stein scholar . . . Gelber, explains that Stein felt that the teacher had to work closely with the students in an atmosphere of trust and love to help students participate in the garnering of knowledge (Stein, 1959/1996). (Fitzpatrick, 2011, pp. 62–63)

Gelber notes that Stein recommends leaving the foreground of learning to the student and offering her support as a caring facilitator whilst the learner garners interest in the subject (Stein, 1959/1996; Fitzpatrick, 2011).

Additionally, Stein's empathy also helped teachers and professors far into the future. The forward thinking Stein was credited with helping women to habilitate (get academic appointments) after her death—even though she could not help herself do so in

her lifetime. Nevertheless, in *Fifty Years of Habilitation in Germany* (1987), German feminists gave the recognition to Stein for protesting in favor of and insisting that women be able to become professors. She was in the vanguard of German feminists, and this is an example of how her work has “lived on” to benefit female scholars (Espin, 2008, p. 121). Stein’s empathy as a component of her philosophy of social justice benefits others even after her death.

### **Schooling, women teachers, and fundamental program of study.**

Stein’s notion that schooling leads to a career, [even to professorships], led her to examine schools and suggest widespread differentiation in the high schools of Germany. She felt that general education should include instruction in a variety of household skills, including budgeting, child care, and housework. However, she also felt every student needed to be taught about political and social concerns. Later, [in women’s educational trajectory] she believed that students should move into vocational training, depending on aptitude. This concern was brought to the fore because there were not suitable teachers prepared to teach the vocational arts; she feared that German schools would fall back to treating students as identical masses unless suitable teachers could be trained to differentiate the curriculum. (Stein, 1959/1996). (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 64)

Again, Stein’s empathy forwards the individual.

If these reforms could be started small, they could then be studied, Stein believed, before they could be suggested to the German public. But what of the most [intellectually] gifted young girls? What should they pursue? Stein believed that the classics or mathematics would be appropriate to properly assist each young scholar in . . . [flexing] her intellect (1959/1996). Gelber quotes Stein as saying that anthropology, history, literature, biology, psychology, mathematics, natural sciences, linguistics, grammar, and theories of pedagogy should be taught to women ‘in harmony with the individual’s nature’ (Stein, 1959/1996, pp. 13–14; Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 65). Gelber also explained that Stein held that only women should educate women; it was a female responsibility. (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 65)

(Stein did admit, though, that males could educate females under certain circumstances.)

### **Stein's View of Teaching Women**

As stated previously, usually:

Stein did believe females should be educated with females, and by females, and that there should be proper differentiation in schooling for girls. Some, like her, would go to university to prepare for an academic career, [and] others would prepare for another type of career, say accounting or teaching. Some women would work for a short time, subsequently marry, and focus on their homes and families. Yet, [more than that,] she did believe that education about the world and society was essential for every woman—no matter what their future work . . . she believed that every woman was essentially a human being [a precious individual]. This is fundamental [to Stein]. Woman or man might have differences, but she maintained this: we are all human. Because of this deeply held belief, Stein thought that the most important function of school was in “teaching girls to know and understand the world and people, and learn how to associate with them . . .” (1959/1996, p. 139). (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 65)

“This gives weight to Stein’s opinions about the absolute necessity for premier educational opportunities for girls and women [—as individuals and collectively,]” (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 65) due to her moral vision and empathetic belief in the equality and deservedness of human kind.

### **The Theme of Stein**

In this study, under succinct umbrellas, certain thematic elements have emerged regarding Steinian empathy. Her empathy was a component of her moral vision of the equality of people as evidenced by her speeches. She insisted, in 1930s Germany, a woman could perform any type of job—as a woman—who was by nature empathetic and focused on the living and present. Also, her empathy was practiced in the midst of society’s opposition about female workers; yet, Stein advanced social justice. An example would be her insistence on premier educational opportunities for women that



would lead to careers at a time when society devalued education for females. Moreover, her empathy is enfolded into the reverence she exhibited for the individual as exemplified in her belief that education should suit the needs of students as unique people, not as undistinguishable masses within a class. Lastly, her philosophy of empathic motherhood, as a female attribute, was asserted whether a woman was an actual birth or adoptive mother of many, or a single childless teacher who loved and empathized with her students. An illustration of this would be her empathetic, attentive mothering and nursing, selflessly given, to the soldiers in Austria during World War I.

In this chapter, I examined Stein's empathy, explored her at times closeted emotional life, her controversial conversion to Catholicism, her background, feminism, and relationships, and the lifelong brand she garnered from her relationship with Husserl. Moreover, I explored the ways in which phenomenology imbued her life permeated by empathy. I also highlighted aspects of her life as a nurse, friend, teacher, and speaker to best position Stein's empathy within the context of her personal difficulties and educational philosophy, female work philosophy, and philosophical clarity, and conversion. Her philosophy and story, to some, still speaks today.

Yet, why does Stein resoundingly resonate to such a degree with other intellectual practicing Catholics? (By way of illustration, there is an annual, well-attended Edith Stein Project conference hosted by Notre Dame University which was titled "Encountering Vulnerability, Courage, Trust, and Hope in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in February of 2012, and in June of 2013, the International Association for the Study of the Philosophy of Edith Stein held a conference for Stein scholars at King's University

College at Western University, London, Canada.) For this reason, Stein exemplifies a life lived to the full as a scholar who reached ever forward towards her own definition of lived truth. She breathed as she believed; her philosophy was her life. Not for her was the philosophical position and life of, for example, Heidegger, who separated himself from his philosophy while working to foster and forward a Nazi vision. Stein did not live with this disconnect. She empathetically followed her heart in the direction of a world she hoped would help her foundationalize and erect her personal truth. Moreover, she wrote of empathy and life as one with empathy. The symmetry of her empathy was delineated by her contentedness in her world.

For these reasons, she has profoundly impacted people; her quest for personal truth was realized in her lifetime in her embrace of Catholicism. She may not have found all of her answers, but she still serves as an exemplar of courage in seeking life authenticity. Indeed, this is one of life's most comprehensive, life affirming journeys. She was true to herself in her search; her empathy was carefully coalesced with her work. She did it.

**CHAPTER IV**

**SYNTHESIS OF THE CATHOLIC EMPATHY OF  
DAY, FLANAGAN, AND STEIN**

In this chapter, I will explain what the process of converting to Catholicism entails, detail how Day and Stein converted, suggest how conversion to Catholicism creates a subgroup of Catholics, analyze how Day, Flanagan, and Stein speak to men and women separately and collectively, argue the importance of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's vows in their faith to the furthering of Catholic thought, and identify and elaborate on the scope of Catholic empathy. Further, I will answer the following questions: What is the overarching structure of their Catholic empathy? Why are they exemplars for Catholicism? In analyzing their empathy, what is the synthesis of their Catholic experience? What is Catholic empathy, and how can I articulate it?

**How Does a Person Convert to Catholicism?**

Conversion to Catholicism for Day and Stein included Baptism as adults, and adult Baptism has been practiced throughout the history of the Church; although, there was not a standard practice throughout the world for the process of conversion until after Vatican II (A. Casad, personal communication, March 19, 2013).<sup>20</sup> Baptism, a Christian initiation and a sacrament of faith, is necessary in conversion to Catholicism if the person was not baptized before or if there is any question about the validity of the baptism. A

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<sup>20</sup> As of March 19, 2013, A. Casad was the Director of Liturgy and the Catechumenate at Saint Thomas More Catholic Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and has a Master's of Theological Studies in Liturgical Studies from Notre Dame University (2003).

Trinitarian formula must be used mentioning the Father (God), Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit (AskACatholic.com, 2012b; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, pp. 312, 319).

A Baptism is a “plunge” into water, and the person is figuratively buried in the death of Christ and comes out of the water as a new person. Moreover, Baptism makes a person Catholic; it is instantaneous, and at that moment all sins are forgiven including original sin (sins people are born with according to the Catholic faith), personal sin, and all punishment from sins are removed. The baptized person is an adopted Son of God and a member of the faith in Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994). Even though a person is baptized, he or she is not expected to have a perfect faith. Faith must mature after Baptism; an opening faith can blossom in a community of believers. Community is emphasized in Catholicism; it is not a faith of solitude but is practiced with others (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994). This community aspect of the faith was particularly important to Stein and Day.

### **Steps to Be Followed in Becoming a Catholic, Now**

The steps a person has to follow if he or she had not been baptized are, initially, the person inquires about the faith and learns about Catholicism to see if it is the right church for them. If affirmative, the person becomes a catechumen, which was a term employed after the life of Christ for one who sought Baptism. The period of catechumenate continues for approximately one year. The catechumen learns about the teachings of the faith using permitted Catholic texts and discerns this decision to see if he or she is resolved in their decision to become Catholic. There is then a rite of election,

and the catechumen declares his wish to become Catholic, and this rite usually happens on the first Sunday of Lent. Next, the catechumen, who is now called “the elect,” reflects powerfully and takes part in three scrutinies which are ritualized on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of the Lenten season. This is a soul searching time for the elect, and at this time, they will be given the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer because they are going to say these prayers when they become Catholic which is called an initiation. The initiation, a time of great joy, takes place the night before Easter morning and a distinctive Mass is celebrated; the people are baptized, given Confirmation (the gift of the Holy Spirit), and they receive Holy Eucharist (Communion). Finally, there is the period of mystagogy; the new Catholic receives more instruction, garners more knowledge of the faith, and becomes more involved in the life of the Church with the people who are in it. This lasts through the Easter season, which is fifty days from Easter to Pentecost. For the next year, the new Catholic is known as a neophyte (AskACatholic.com, 2012a).

Conversion to Catholicism is a process of learning about the faith and growing in it. Becoming a Catholic never really stops if you look at it as “a great becoming” that keeps progressing forward as more is learned about God and self. Ideally, as each person strives to live a life closer to Christ’s life, change happens, and that is a personal conversion. It is change and the seeking of a higher Truth, a Truth that resonates to the soul, and a Truth that lets us rest in God.

### **The Conversions of Day and Stein to Catholicism**

Day came to the Catholic faith in 1927 after a life of great personal freedom. However, that personal freedom was not without consequences. Day had led a life

without rules, and she suffered for it. She suffered over her failed relationships with men and her abortion after an affair with Lionel Moise; she thought she would never be able to have another child. After the abortion, she was deeply distressed, and she knew she very much wanted a baby. In 1926, when Day found out she was pregnant, and she and her lover Forster Batterham, the greatest love of her life, would be parents, she was filled with “blissful joy” and “feeling so much in love, so settled, so secure that now I had found what I was looking for” (Day, 1952/1997, p. 136; Forest, 2013).

Her joy was not consistent during her pregnancy, though, because Batterham felt the world was not a good place for a new life, and his fierce individualism and independence was affronted. He also believed he would not be a good father (Day, 1952/1997) with which Day did not concur.

Their baby, Tamar, was born in March of 1927, and Day wrote a piece about the baby for *New Masses*, and according to Coles (1987), she was “as happy as she had ever been” (p. 9). Day decided to have Tamar baptized in the Catholic Church in July of 1927, and Day asked to be baptized in December of 1927. At this point, Day and Batterham separated (Coles, 1987).

Still, what specifically about Tamar’s birth moved Day towards her conversion? Day explained that the majesty of God and his formation “was crowned for me by the birth of my child,” and that “No human creature could receive or contain so vast a flood of love and joy as I often felt after the birth of my child” (1952/1997, p. 139).

Significantly, immediately after writing this in her autobiography, she gives direct

information about her conversion. She extolled that with this full feeling of love and gratitude for her daughter “came the need to worship, to adore” (1952/1997, p. 139).

What process led Day to her “flood of joy” after the birth of her daughter, Tamar? What were the most significant events in her life that led to her conversion? Essentially, Day had been searching during her early adult life for a belief system, to give herself to completely, connected to a committed, reciprocal love.

She thought it—“it” defined as the reason one rises in the morning and the aspects of life that gives one mission—was Lionel Moise. She gave up her independence, her virginity, and her fetus to keep a man she loved who did not love her in return with an attachment approaching her devotion. He failed her by cruelly abandoning her.

She thought “it” was the Communism and radicalism of her youth, but that was not enough for her; she longed for greater meaning and direction and still felt unfulfilled (Miller, 1982). In *The Long Loneliness* (1952/1997), she writes after she became Catholic, “I wanted to die in order to live . . . and put on Christ. I loved, in other words, and like all women in love, I want to be united to my love. Why should not Forster be jealous? . . . I loved the Church for Christ made visible” (p. 149).

She thought “it” was Forster Batterham who did love her back but offered her love parceled out, with limits. The relationship was on Batterham’s terms; it was a comradeship, not a marriage. Day wanted more; she wanted marriage, a home, and a father for Tamar. After giving so much to him, her tender love, her respect, and her willingness to commit permanently to him, he gave her back measured, contained love, as

he saw fit to do. Reciprocity was not there (Day, 1952/1997). Men had failed her. Day poignantly expressed these experiences when she said:

I should be used to men failing me. I've had to bring up a child alone, and I've certainly seen more than my share of the gross and selfish in men. I've had many men love me but few protect me. As a matter of fact the love I've had has been a hate too. It's better to have that purgatory here than later. I've wanted human love too much. (2010, p. 165)

When she found Catholicism, she found a concrete belief system that would give purpose and meaning to her life; she found a protection that would not abandon or disappoint her, like men had done. The use of the word “protect” in her above quote is very significant. How would the mood of the quote change if she used other words like “take care of” rather than “protect”? The quote would be less heartrending. The inclusion of “protect” adds poignancy to the quote and pushes the mood to one of great despondency. To be unprotected is to be vulnerable in an unhealthy way; it is almost as if life must be navigated without the connectedness of human support. There is an incredible loneliness in the word “protect” as a concept, and in understanding that, we can better understand why she turned to God—to find protection and to sooth her loneliness. Moreover, we can infer that her understanding of protection—its essentiality—led her to protect others who were unfledged and unfortunate, and in doing so, her empathy expanded outward with intention.

Furthermore, she got something back—love from God. The mutual nature of her religious experience offered her a tether to a grounded morality and an anchor on which to keep herself aligned with God and his plan for her.



Finally, to Day, she was offering Dorothy to God, but God was offering himself to her, too. This was not a lover who would not love her enough or an ideology that would be found wanting. This was a permanent bond; God was offering himself to her completely and loving her in the midst of her complexities and frailties. Finally, she was not an unequal beggar longing for commitment from a man or fulfillment from a political system. As per Catholic teaching, she was loved in her entirety by God; her love was reciprocated. In this relationship, her empathy exploded, she found a community of believers in the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Worker was born.

Even though she had heard people say they did not need a community of believers with whom to worship to have a faith, she disagreed based on the community of friends she had as a radical. In fact, her “whole make-up” led her to desire other people in her worship. Moreover, and interestingly, she did not even investigate the assertions of Catholicism before she decided it was the “one true Church”! She did not know anything about the sacraments, and she really did not know any Catholics. She writes of seeing masses of people entering Catholic churches in cities for Mass, holy days, and novenas. She reflected that even if they were in fear of committing a sin by not going to Mass, they still chose the Church. “They obeyed that law” (Day, 1952/1997, p. 139).

The laws or rules of the Church began to unsettle her after her conversion because she was deeply in love with Batterham. She realized if she became Catholic, she would have to give him up, but give him up she did. She chose God. Day felt her life had been without a basis for living, without a rule. Regarding Tamar, she wanted her to belong to a church “to have a way of life and instructions. We all crave order” (1952/1997, p. 141).

Concerning her past life, she admitted if Communism had offered her a belief system and a way of life, she would have stayed a Communist to give her life direction and reason. However, this was not to be the case (Day, 1952/1997). It was in Catholicism she found her comfort and purpose. (For this, I, as a Catholic, am very grateful that Dorothy Day, one of the most significant women of the 20th century, made that choice.)

Fortuitously, in her quest, Day met an old nun, Sister Aloysia, who was working in a home for orphans and unmarried mothers near Day's Staten Island cottage. This simple sister gave magazines and a catechism to Day—not esoteric tomes or papal encyclicals. Learning how to say the rosary was something Day acquired at this time. Sister Aloysia, a stern taskmaster, gave her catechism lessons, and Day was required to recite back the answers to Sister's questions, word-for-word (Day, 1952/1997).

Was saying the rosary a process of conversion for Day? Perhaps it was a component of her conversion, but how substantive it was in her change of heart would be difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, saying the rosary is a powerful symbol to devout Catholics, and it became important to Day.<sup>21</sup> She embraced the ritual of Catholicism even when she did not fully understand the faith.

After this, in July of 1927, she had Tamar baptized, and even though there were numerous difficulties in her relationship with Batterham about her burgeoning faith, she desired Baptism for herself -- which was not a specifically organized affair. She spoke to Sister Aloysia about the faith; she had Tamar Baptized as an infant; Sister Aloysia told

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<sup>21</sup> For example, I meet regularly with a group of women from my church and say the rosary.

her, “You must become a Catholic yourself” (as cited in Day, 1952/1997, p. 142). Sister Aloysia, who eventually became her godparent when Day was baptized, gave her religious tracts to read including lives of the saints. She read and recited answers to Catechism questions back to Sister Aloysia, and in December of 1927, she was conditionally baptized as a Catholic as she had already been baptized as an Episcopalian. She immediately made her first Confession and received Communion the next morning (Day, 1952/1997). According to Day, the process, and the training and instruction, to become a Catholic was based on what Sister Aloysia decided upon.

Within a year, Day was confirmed in a festive ceremony on the Feast of Pentecost<sup>22</sup> at the Convent of the Holy Souls on Eighty-Fifth Street in New York City. Day noted that she received this Sacrament, Confirmation,<sup>23</sup> to “the sweet singing of the nuns,” and she took the Confirmation name Maria Teresa (1952/1997, p. 152). (When Catholics are confirmed, they take a Confirmation name; my Confirmation name is Shelagh.)

### **Problems within Conversion**

Actually, Batterham was not the only obstacle, she felt she was betraying the “poor of the world” (Day, 1952/1997, p. 144), and when she was finally baptized, she was not elated; she felt as one with hypocrisy. She asked herself if she was partaking in “the opiate of the people” (Day, 1952/1997, p. 149). Moreover, her radical friends

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<sup>22</sup> Pentecost is fifty days after Easter.

<sup>23</sup> Confirmation is a Sacrament that brings the gifts of the Holy Spirit and intends to lead the recipient closer to Christ. The bishop places his hands on the person (a priest can do this with permission, too), and this Sacrament is considered a perfection of Baptism (Beginningcatholic.com, 2006).

thought she was mentally ill; one comrade told her she did not realize she was so, and that was a real problem. It was suggested she see a psychiatrist (Coles, 1987).

She suffered from worry over leaving her radical causes, like the many debilitating experiences suffered by jobless people, and she was joining a church she felt connected with wealthy people of property which, when she wrote her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness* in 1952, she still believed. Interestingly, in Robert Coles's book *Dorothy Day* (1987), Day reads back to Coles from *The Long Loneliness*, and she told him she still felt the same way. The Church was the Church of the poor and had built valuable charitable institutions like orphanages, but it was not enough. The Church did not "set its face against a social order which made so much charity in the present sense of the word necessary" (as cited in Coles, 1987, p. 58).

She longed to be "poor, chaste, and obedient" and "put on Christ" in his Church that she loved because it was still, in the recesses of her heart, a church for poor people. It illuminated Christ (Day, 1952/1997, pp. 149–150). It would be her voice heralding the Church's responsibility to lovingly and empathically serve the poor. This flawed Church would be her tether for the rest of her life. She chose to love it and commit to it in spite of its imperfections.

When she took on the life of Christ, she not only accepted the teachings of the Church, she became a follower of Christ. She committed to the Church's sacraments like Communion and Confession; she prayed using the unifying practices of saying the rosary and searching out truths about her faith. Since her Baptism only required an emergent faith, her job would be to nurture it.

It would not be hyperbole to assert her conversion to Catholicism directed her life and ultimately changed the world. She looked at the world through a moral lens—her interpretation of the lens of the Church.

As she evolved, as a Catholic and a person, she decided to move back to New York City. She took Tamar there after she and Batterham separated, and she moved close to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church where she found a confessor, Father Zachary. What did she desire? She wanted to find out how to live as a follower of Christ as taught by the Catholic faith (Coles, 1987).

Afterwards in 1932, she met Peter Maurin, and she developed a philosophy and focus with him, under his tutelage, that led to the Catholic Worker. I went into this life changing relationship in detail in Chapter III.

Day's conversion story is quite dramatic; she went from radical nonbeliever to radical practicing Catholic. Yet, on certain levels, Stein's conversion is even more extreme. She religiously moved away from a Jewish home to become a Catholic.

### **Stein's Conversion to Catholicism**

Stein was raised in a Jewish home, and she was proud of her Jewishness; however, and significantly, she did not immerse herself in the practice of her Jewish faith. When her mother went to temple, for example, she did not have to go; she stayed home and read (Courtine-Denamy, 1997/2000). I wonder if she would have converted if she were deeply immersed in the beauty and majesty of Judaism, and I will address this question within this section about Stein's conversion.

Another issue is, Stein referred to herself as “a radical feminist” when she was at the university; she was a member of the Pedagogical Society for Women’s Right to Vote (as cited in Borden, 2003, p. 3). She may have been more open to embracing the faith of her birth if the temple of her hometown did not segregate the women in an upper level, if she felt more a part of the service.

Nevertheless, how did her conversion take place? In 1921, after staying up all night reading *The Life of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, at the house of her friends, the Conrad-Martius’s, she decided the truth was in the Catholic Church. She did not excessively elaborate on why she found the truth within this book, but she did express about Saint Teresa, “this master of the inward life, seized in the depths of her being by a greater force” (as cited in Courtine-Denamy, 2000, p. 41). As noted by Courtine-Denamy (2000), after she finished the book, she obtained a Catholic Catechism and began to go to Mass in Bergzabern, Germany, and the pattern of the Mass “seemed familiar to her, and she understood the ceremonies down to the last little detail” (pp. 41–42).

She asked the local priest for Baptism, and when he told her a period of preparation was necessary, she asked him to test her. (Stein has studied the Catechism.) She was baptized as a Catholic on January 1, 1922, in Bergzabern, Germany, and she decided her Baptismal name would be Teresia Hedwig. Her dear friend, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, was her godmother which required permission from the bishop because Conrad-Martius was Protestant, not Catholic. Stein received Confirmation on February 2, 1922, and the celebrant was Bishop Sebastian of Speyer (Courtine-Denamy, 2000; Gaboriau, 2002).

Another event that may have influenced her conversion was told by her close friend, Erich Przywara, who said that when Stein was still an atheist, she told him she took a personal thirty day retreat using Saint Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises. Przywara gave an account of Stein finishing the retreat with a decision to convert (Borden, 2003, p. 7).

### **The Conversion Process when Day and Stein Converted**

The conversion process was not standardized throughout the world at this time; this did not happen until after Vatican II<sup>24</sup> (A. Casad, personal communication, March 19, 2013). When Stein and Day converted, which was 1922 for Stein and 1927 for Day, the process included intention, study, and Baptism, and the process took different forms in different locations. So, it can be clearly stated how Stein was initiated into Catholicism, as she gives us some first person accounts, and we have the testimony of others offering overarching information about the process and the Sacraments received. However, to specifically position Day or Stein's conversion rituals into the conversion rules of the Church would be difficult to quantify because there was latitude in one diocese or another and Church leadership (bishops, priests, and nuns) made decisions about the process.

Importantly, though, the same formula was usually followed: seeking the Faith, study and preparation, and Baptism. The Sacrament of Baptism, when one immediately becomes a Catholic, can be described because it follows a formula of pouring or immersing in water (A. Casad, personal communication, March 19, 2013). "I Baptize

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<sup>24</sup> In Vatican II (1962–1965), Church leadership gathered and numerous Church reforms were instituted including changing the standardized Mass from Latin to the vernacular and an increased emphasis on ecumenism.

you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” However, since Day was conditionally Baptized, as she had been Baptized as an Episcopalian, the words “If you have not already been Baptized” would have probably been added before “I Baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (A. Casad, personal communication, March 19, 2013). (Since after Vatican II, the word “spirit” was substituted for “ghost” in Baptism and any time the Holy Spirit is referenced.)

So, people throughout the world would have divergent experiences with the conversion process. One person may have had a formalized period of attended classes and another person may have met with a priest or nun, read some books, and answered questions. However, in this study, I can assert whatever Day and Stein did and relay their conversion stories, and I have done so.

### **Influence of Other Converts**

Nevertheless, how did this happen? How did Stein finally decide to convert? Knowing this was a choice that would horrify her mother and shock her family, how did a proud culturally Jewish woman like Stein become a Catholic? One possibility is because she had intimates, friends and mentors who were converts from Judaism to Christianity. Her dissertation chairman, the famed phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, was a convert from Judaism to Lutheranism. He converted when he was 27, and he and his wife, Malville, raised their three children in the Lutheran Church (Gaboriau, 2002).

After World War II, Malville Husserl, while hostile to Stein’s conversion in 1922, became a Catholic herself. Moreover, during World War II, Malville Husserl spirited



away “in Belgian religious houses . . . to escape deportation” (Gaboriau, 2002, p. 67) and to attempt to remove herself from the malevolent Nazi snare and policies against Jews in Hitler’s Germany.

According to Gaboriau, Stein was also very close with Pauline and Adolph Reinach; both were converts from Judaism to Protestantism. Adolph Reinach had been Husserl’s assistant at Gottingen and was a philosopher of note. When Adolph Reinach died, during World War I, instead of being bereft and broken, Pauline Reinach was filled with hope in Christ (2002) which deeply impressed Stein. Stein highlighted this experience when she exclaimed, “It was the moment in which my unbelief was shattered; Judaism paled, and Christ streamed out upon me: Christ on the Cross” (as cited in Courtine-Denamy, 2000, p. 41). This is significant because Stein emphatically asserts that her Judaism faded, and her unbelief was destroyed; this declaration gives strong evidence as to why she converted to Catholicism.

Something else that fervently influenced Stein was the ritual of the Catholic funeral Mass which she contrasted with the Jewish funeral service. She attended a Catholic funeral Mass and found the Catholic liturgy very beautiful, very reassuring. Stein expressed, “Yet what powerful consolation and peace there was in the words of the Liturgy which accompanied the deceased to his eternity” (as cited in Gaboriau, 2002, p. 57). The dead man, a prominent man of science, was called by the priest by his baptismal name, and his many accomplishments were not mentioned. In contrast to the Catholic funeral Mass, in the Jewish funeral service, she found “nothing truly consoling” and “no belief in a reunion after death” as the deceased was eulogized by the rabbi including a

“retrospective look” across the man’s life (as cited in Gaboriau, 2002, pp. 54). She did not find the service emotive or meaningful.<sup>25</sup>

A question worth asking is: What events could have come into play that would have helped or encouraged Stein to stay with Judaism? Importantly, Stein was not truly informed about her Jewishness, and she lived in an anti-Semitic society. “She was neither a practicing nor a believing Jew at the time of her conversion” (Banki, 1994, p. 44). Banki wonders if there was a place for Edith to study Judaism before she became Catholic. “Was there a Talmud Torah or rabbinical academy that would have taken her speculative philosophical interests seriously? How could she have latched onto the rich and demanding legacy of rabbinic thought as a woman, and an argumentative woman at that?” (1994, p. 48).

These points Banki brings up are important ones; it is noteworthy that Stein did not convert from a Judaism that she knew intimately as a deeply held religious faith. She knew it more as a culture. Moreover, if she became immersed in her faith, she would have needed a place to study it and people with whom to study. That would have been available to her in 1920s Germany, but would she had felt included and welcomed?

Franz Rosenzweig, by way of illustration, was brought back to his Jewish faith on the cusp of his conversion to Christianity when he went to a Yom Kippur service at an Orthodox synagogue. Rabbi Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer pondered whether “Rosenzweig would have remained a Jew if he had been hurried upstairs to sit behind a *mehirza*—the

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<sup>25</sup> Having attended reformed Jewish services myself in the United States where everyone sits on the same level, I felt part of the congregation. Would this inclusiveness, this sense of community which was so important to her, have directed Stein back to her faith? I do not know.

screen segregating women in the synagogue—that fateful night” (Banki, 1994, p. 48) as Edith Stein would have been segregated because she was a woman.

Stein also may have become a practicing Jewish woman if she had a close relationship with an intellectual Jewish woman, like her, who was conversant with and passionate about the faith. Stein met Christian women with this passion, and willingness to share their faith, like Hedwig Conrad-Martius, who deeply influenced her. Stein was searching when she became a Catholic, and the search took her to adopt a new credo.

Banki (1994) would have liked to meet Stein before her conversion, and she would have said to her, “If you only knew the spiritual depth and intellectual richness of your own tradition, the poetry of the liturgical language, the interplay of ideas and opinions among our sages, the challenge of ethical decision-making. Abide with us” (p. 49). This is not what happened.

Nevertheless, in examining the possibilities or reasons for Day and Stein’s conversion, can there be any common experiences extracted about Catholic converts in general? Can we make any sweeping statements about the converted Catholic?

### **Conversion to Catholicism: A Specific Type of Catholic**

There is evidence the answer to this question may be, “Yes.” For roughly one hundred years from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, there were a large number of prominent intellectuals who found Catholicism “intellectually liberating” like John Henry Newman, G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Merton, and Evelyn Waugh, who all converted to Catholicism because of deeply held religious conviction (Allitt, 1997, pp. 1–2).

Why do I state that so categorically? For this reason—because they would have had good reason not to convert because to do so “often prompted accusations of disloyalty to the nation.” There were also personal and social risks. In one particularly dramatic example, when Thomas Arnold converted, his wife blamed John Henry Newman and wrote to Newman, “From the bottom of my heart I curse you for it” (Allitt, 1997, p. 5; as cited in Allitt, 1997, p. 5).

Some grown children who converted were disowned by their parents, and there was a dramatic loss of class prestige. There is no evidence of an intellectual who gained either financially or socially by becoming a Catholic. This may suggest that, like Stein and Day, intellectuals in the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century converted to Catholicism because of deeply held convictions; their conversions were real (Allitt, 1997, p. 5).

Additionally, while the Catholic Church was pleased to have such accomplished and important converts, there was a tension there, too, over the converts challenging orthodoxy relating to, for example, the function of the laity (Allitt, 1997).

These brainy Catholic converts who had spent years educated in non-Catholic settings desired to “make a place for themselves in the Catholic Church and a case for this church in the wider intellectual world” while they attempted to impact leading cerebral movements of their time (Allitt, 1997, pp. 2, 4). However, they could have been more broadly influential in the issues of the day had they not been Catholic.

Yet, were these Catholics particularly devout? The above mentioned Catholics were so, and in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century there were an

overflowing of converts who were serious about their faith and closely attending to its practices. For instance, Henry Manning, who became a Catholic in 1851 and was an adherent to the teaching of Papal infallibility, was a former Anglican archdeacon, and he became a Catholic clergyman. Eventually, he was appointed as a Catholic cardinal in 1875 (Allitt, 1997).

Yet, today, are Catholics who convert still different and more devout? In certain ways, and in certain cases, yes, that is true. Therefore, to illustrate this point, I am going to highlight conversion within the context of Catholic expression. This also connects to some of the reasons Stein and Day converted and how their conversion led them to an empathic Catholicism.

As a case in point, Mark Shea is an evangelical Christian who converted to Catholicism after starting RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) four different times. He was an evangelical in college, but as he thought about his faith, he decided that evangelical churches vacillated on the meaning of scripture. He also believed he had found the truth in Catholicism. He eventually became involved in Catholic apologetics and wrote Catholic themed books including *This is My Body: An Evangelical Discovers the Real Presence* (2004) (Nixon, 2011).

Nixon related that in The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2007 Religious Landscape, conversion to Catholicism from other forms of Christianity is not uncommon. Eight percent of Catholics were raised in other Christian religions. However, the reverse is also true. Nine percent of evangelicals were brought up in Catholic homes. However, the numbers and significance of Catholic converts to Catholicism should not be

discounted, “Roughly 2.5 percent of American adults have converted to Catholicism. This is a huge number” (2011, paras. 10–13).

Yet, what of the evangelicals who convert to the Catholic faith? What do they bring? They can bring a passion for evangelization. They can relish bringing their found Catholic faith to the world which, in contrast, cradle Catholics may be more reticent in proclaiming. The wonder of their faith and their enthusiasm for it may be a private matter to people who are born Catholic (Nixon, 2011, para. 26).

This is critical because some Catholics, like me, are reluctant to proselytize. (I remember the term “Bible thumper” being used as a pejorative when I was young.) I am uncomfortable with pressing my Catholic religious view on people, and I prefer to show my faith by my example.

What other reasons do people have for converting to the Catholic faith? According to Noll, a major draw of Catholicism is the chronicle and institutional customs (as cited in Nixon, 2011, para. 20). Tradition and ritual reign in Catholicism, which can be very beautiful and meaningful, and this is something to which converts seem to be drawn.

This above information about other converts and the reasons for their conversions leads to whether conversion to Catholicism creates a specific type of Catholic, and this relates directly to Day and Stein and their empathy rich Catholicism. When Day, for instance, converted to Catholicism, she lost friends; various colleagues thought she was mentally ill, losing her mind, actually, and that she was, furthermore, deluding herself about being so. Strong accusations, indeed (Coles, 1987; Day, 1952/1997).

I have noted this before, but it was worth repeating. Day converted to Catholicism at great personal risk; she lost her common-law-husband, whom she passionately loved, and she lost some of her friends. Nevertheless, she took this marginalization to great benefit to help those in need. Her empathy, fostered by her faith and the teachings of Jesus, (always the teachings of Jesus for Day) led her to move purposefully, *actively*, to assist poor people.

When Day converted in 1927, Catholics were still suspected of disloyalty to their country. Prejudice against Catholics was such that even up to 1960, when John Kennedy ran for president, there was broad national debate about whether or not a Catholic could be president or whether he would be more loyal to the Pope.

Also, like the accomplished converts who had tension with Church leadership, Day, too, came into conflict with the Church; she was asked to change the name of the Catholics Worker—to expurgate the “Catholic” part—and she refused (Coles, 1987, p. 81). Her stance was to follow the teachings of Jesus; that demanded Catholicism and empathy to her.

Moreover, the evidence that converts can be more loyal to the faith and be in the forefront of evangelization is true of Day. She spoke for the Church as an empathetic apostle for poor and unwanted people. Too, Day, like some of the Catholic converts mentioned, was deeply attached to the rituals of the Church like saying the rosary and attending Mass on special feast days.

Stein, too, suffered marginalization in her conversion, although as a Jewish person, she was already an outsider. In her family, she suffered much, as her mother,

crushed by her conversion, and devastated by her entering the Carmelite order, refused to write to her at the convent. Her family, some more so than others, were not supportive of her decision to be baptized in 1922 and become a nun in 1933 (Herbstrith, 1971/1992).

No one in her family came to the Cologne Carmel (a cloistered convent) to be with her, support her, or celebrate with her when she received the habit of the Carmelite order called the day of her Clothing. Ceremonially, she was given the Carmelite habit to wear, and for a part of the ceremony, she wore a full, white bridal dress (Herbstrith, 1971/1992, Posselt, 2005).

Like the evangelical I mentioned who had converted, Mark Shea, Stein was a herald of the good news of Catholicism. Although she went from Judaism to Catholicism and was not an evangelical to Catholic convert, she brought a new freshness to the Faith, an excitement over it. Stein, too, gloried in the ritual and history of the Faith.

This, too, speaks to Day and Stein's empathy because even though they realized there would be acute risks to conversion, in doing so, they were able to further spread the message about a loving, empathetic world, in Day's case relating to poor people, and in Stein's situation, teaching.

Day and Stein's empathy was who they were, Flanagan's, too, and part of their empathy was in their message—the life of Christ—and their message spoke to people. Yet, in conveying their powerful message, did they speak to men and women equally or as separate groups?



### **Day, Flanagan, and Stein Speak to Men and/or Women**

Day, Flanagan, and Stein speak to both men and women, but Stein has a following among orthodox Catholic women that is profound. Of course, there are male philosophers, like Alistair MacIntyre and Antonio Calcagno, who have written books about Stein.<sup>26</sup>

Importantly, Stein wrote her speeches and radio broadcasts and spoke as a woman staking out some special ground for womanhood in sexist 1930s Germany. Moreover, Stein speaks to me as a Catholic woman, and I find her philosophy not only accessible but deeply moving. She writes as if she understands the complexities and nuances of womanhood, and she writes as if she is speaking directly to me. Speaking to other women about her, they have expressed the same sentiments.

As an instance, in 1931, Stein lectured in the Rhineland for the Academics' Association and spoke at the Ursuline School in Aachen. She expressed that women should have a full and rewarding life even as they prioritize managing their home (1959/1996). She suggested that:

Whenever the circle of domestic duties is too narrow for the wife to attain the full formation of her powers, both nature and reason concur that she reach out beyond this circle. . . . Before considering men and women's common vocation in God's service, we would like to consider the problem of the distribution of vocations according to the natural order. Should certain positions be reserved for only men, others for only women, and perhaps a few open for both? I believe that this question must be answered negatively. (1959/1996, pp. 80–81)

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<sup>26</sup> Anecdotally, at my Stein presentations around the country including such institutions as the University of Notre Dame and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, most of the questions and comments came from women.

This is an example of her clarity of thought and her belief in the intellectual life of women. Nevertheless, she still recognized and respected the role of women in the home. Even then, she emphasized the life in God and the joy of spirituality. In Stein's thinking women are called to God, "He has called women in all times to the most intimate union with Him: they are to be emissaries of His love, proclaimers of His will to kings and popes, and forerunners of His Kingdom in the hearts of men" (Stein, 1959/1996, p. 84).

If women bring God to the lowly and powerful, this is essential work, and this is one of the reasons Stein resonates with orthodox and intellectual Catholics. Stein demands life with purpose that is much more than merely day-to-day living. At the same time, she is deeply respectful of human intellect, and she presents her philosophy as such. Our life is one in union with God where empathy can flourish coming from and through God. Our God driven power of goodness and empathy can be broadcast even in the life of the home as wives and mothers. All people can be included in her empathetic vision.

However, was Stein too accepting of the status quo in this case? Should she have demanded more for women? Was she structuring her words too much in the language and sexism of the era and not insisting forthrightly that women may bring people to God, and while this is important work, they also have other roles?

This aspect of her career is intriguing because, for most of her life, she wanted a much more active existence, an "in the world" exploratory for herself. Significantly, too, she did not choose to be a wife and mother; yet, she is complimentary and supportive when others chose it.

A possible parallel, of roughly the same time period, would be Margaret Mead who lived a life as an eminent anthropologist yet touted housewifery to women. As per Reed, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) the author, Betty Friedan, clearly described how the “functional” anthropologist Margaret Mead influenced women to be homemakers. Mead “defined feminine creativity in terms of the passive receptivity of the uterus” as women were choosing motherhood over and above other work (as cited in Reed, 1964, para. 27). Nevertheless, Friedan points out that Mead did not live her life with motherhood as her sole focus; she was a leader in her field, “She made her way in a man’s world” (as cited in Reed, 1964, para. 28) and she married three times, not once (Margaret Mead, 1978).

Likewise, Stein lived a dissimilar life from full-time wives and mothers. She traveled and was a noted speaker, educator, and scholar; she taught at St. Magdalen College for Women in Speyer. She did not stay home; she did not marry. Therefore, Stein celebrated the family centric life of women but did not choose it herself. She chose a life much more in the world, until, at least, she entered a cloistered convent in 1933. Her life, while not being in emotional conflict with her speeches, was lived divergently from most other contemporaneous German adult women; moreover, she was a celibate, and she wanted to make her speeches palatable to a wide audience. I am not suggesting duplicity here or a lack of authenticity; rather, I am suggesting she possessed a certain chameleon capability that adapted her speeches to her audience and to her era. In 1930s Germany, women were housewives, not, for the most part, brilliant intellectuals like Stein.

### **How Does Day Speak Collectively to Men and Women?**

Day speaks to both men and women. Day's lived empathic example addresses men and women, and she speaks pointedly. As such, she told women who were advocating for the freedoms of feminism in the 1970s that their movement was too middle class, too steeped in self-interest, and not focused on poor people (O'Connor, 1991).

In speaking to and for radical Catholics, she gave courage to those who desired orthodox Catholicism with all of the ritual of the Faith coupled with the strict adherence to the social teaching of the Church. Laboring with and for poor and marginalized people, Dorothy Day Catholics have a home.

A Catholic follower of Christ who adheres to the social principles of Day might make bread at the Catholic Worker hospitality house in the morning, protest nuclear proliferation in the afternoon, get arrested for picketing for organized labor in the evening, and if he is fortunate enough to have a comrade who can afford to bail him out of jail, leave jail and go home.

The next morning he can go to Mass, receive Communion, and say the rosary with the ladies guild afterwards with prayers going heavenward to end abortion. That all makes sense, there is a beautiful flow between faith and service for the Dorothy Day type of Catholic. She gives Catholics like her permission and strength to be counter cultural and to celebrate the seeming contradictions as a Catholic radical. Some Catholics have stayed with the faith because of Dorothy Day and her powerful lived empathy and example.

### **How Does Flanagan Speak Collectively to Men and Women?**

Flanagan speaks with a moral voice, and although he worked primarily with boys, his mission speaks to women as well because of the foundation of his message. He believed that children who were in need of a home should have one, and it should be a good one where they are treated with empathy and love. Too, their schooling should be of the highest quality, so they can make a living when they left the school to work, enter the military, or attend college, depending on choice. Throughout Flanagan's tenure at Boys Town, there were Mother's Guilds who, for example, made blankets. In fact, Flanagan's own mother came to Boys Town to help with his boys and his mission (Oursler & Oursler, 1949).

Throughout Flanagan's life, he had both male and female supporters, and he was an interesting juxtaposition of stereotypical male and femaleness. He called his charges "dear" and was insistent that they not be physically disciplined, but talked to when they erred. Nevertheless, he encouraged and provided the "rough and tumble" of all kinds of physical activities and sports for his boys including a well-known, accomplished, traveling football team (Oursler & Oursler, 1949). Therefore, both men and women were admirers and supporters of Flanagan in his lifetime and afterwards.

While Day, Flanagan, and Stein have spoken to both men and women, how are they still impacting specifically Catholic thought? In this next section, I will address that important issue.

### **Day, Flanagan, and Stein's Importance to Catholic Thought: Their Vows**

I am going to argue that Day, Flanagan, and Stein are very significant to contemporary Catholic thought because they took vows and lived by them; they make a case for the value of celibacy, and they are powerful emissaries for Catholicism. They were representatives of the faith who broadcasted their beliefs and attempted to change minds and hearts about important social issues of the day. They did all this cocooned in love and empathy for their fellow humans.

#### **Day's Vows**

When Day became a Catholic, she decided to radically change her life. She “wanted to be poor, chaste, and obedient. I wanted to die in order to live . . . and put on Christ” (1952/1997, p. 149). Taking vows in her heart transformed her. She did not actually take a professed religious vocation; she was ineligible. She was a mother with a baby when she converted, and that would have been impossible.

However, after meeting Peter Maurin in 1932, she empathetically devoted her life to serving and advocating for poor people. She lived as a poor person, as a nun might, and ate the food of poverty while living in the Catholic Worker Houses of Hospitality as a person without means.

Her vow to serve was real, even if it was not professed in a religious ceremony. She took on Christ in as real a way as if she had become a professed sister. She took the veil without an actual physical veil but with a covering of demanding simplicity.

Nevertheless, she was not quiet or humble in her demands for marginalized people. When she took on the cloak of Christ as a savior, she took responsibility upon

herself to lovingly serve humankind, not with the surplus of her life, not with what she had left over after taking care of her own needs, but from the interior of her life. Giving and giving again without expecting anything back was her life after 1932.

### **Flanagan's Vows**

Flanagan came to his vocation as a Catholic born and from a country, Ireland, where this would have been a family and community supported decision. (His brother was already a priest.) In his vow to serve God, he went to lengths that ended up helping thousands of boys have productive lives. When he saw what was happening to the homeless boys in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1917, he vowed to take action to help by starting a home for them. He took his vows so seriously that he did not stop in his quest even when powerful people opposed him.

Because he was already a Catholic priest, he was under vows to be a follower of Christ, but he took it to limits truly unknown in American orphanages when he founded the then called Father Flanagan's Boys' Home. Therefore, he lived his vows by reaching out to children in a way that asked people not only to give to boys in need, but to look at delinquency from the perspective of care. He asked people to look at felonious boys not as young ruffians who had touted the law, but as youngsters who needed love and understanding within an empathetic institution. He lived what he believed.

### **Stein's Vows**

Stein was a Catholic nun who took religious vows in 1934 and became a cloistered Carmelite nun. Becoming Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, she lived in

Carmel of Cologne and later moved to the Carmel of Echt, Holland, in 1938, when it was no longer safe for Jews to stay in Germany after *Kristallnacht* (Gaboriau, 2002).

After taking her vows, she continued writing and lived her life contemplatively with prayer at the forefront. However, with the encouragement of her superior (the sister in charge of the convent) she wrote books hoping to further spread her word and philosophy about God and people.

Stein, of the three people focused upon in this paper, was the only one who removed herself from the world and prayed, lived in community, and wrote. She took her vows to her limit, so she could focus on her relationship with God. The vows of her heart led her to this decision; yet, she still wrote with the idea of disseminating her theology and philosophy because she felt it had value. Her thoughts, words, and vows had value.

Yet, how do the vows taken by Day, Flanagan, and Stein impact Catholic thought? In this way: they are sterling examples of the Catholic teaching to serve others before self, and they lived lives of devoted faith in God and outreach to others in their works. Their works involved serving others and persuasively encouraging others to listen to them. They lived their faith at an elevated level of service, love, and empathy.

### **Day, Flanagan, and Stein Make a Case for Celibacy**

Does celibacy have a place of value in modern society? The example of Day, Flanagan, and Stein would be in the affirmative. While Day was sexually active until she converted in 1927, she was celibate after that. Flanagan and Stein were celibates, and as professed religious, they would have to be so. Celibacy had value to them because they



could devote themselves to God in a way a married person could not. Significantly, they all had a vocation to serve God above all.

I will go further. Their choice of celibacy benefited society and gave them an opportunity to reach people through their words and empathic lives. Even though Day had a child, not having a husband gave her the freedom to move and decide about her life and work for herself without husbandly consult. Flanagan was free, under the auspices of his diocese, to travel and preach the word of brotherhood and love for homeless boys; he did not have to worry about the needs of his wife or children. All the boys of Boys Town could be his. Stein had a full career as a teacher in Germany at a time when most women did not, and she was able to eventually cloister herself for a giving life of prayer and writing. This would have been impossible if she was married because Catholic sisters must be unmarried.

This suggests the single celibate life as a positive choice for some people. In not having marital responsibilities, one can devote self to others in a way that can make an enormous difference to the world.

While it is certainly not a choice I would have made; my vocation is for marriage; it can be a respectable, loving, outwardly focused lifestyle. It is a lifestyle that focuses on the love of many, like Flanagan did, versus a romantic love. It is the kind of love that Jesus gave.

None of these lives would have been exactly the same if they were married. These three did not have to share their beloved. They had God and chose God as their

main and most importance allegiance. There was not a splintering of loyalty; they were God's first without question.

Within their unmarried lives, they were able to love many people and consecrate themselves to God. They also were able to broadcast their philosophy of empathy to people throughout the world. They were powerful emissaries of empathy, and each one was able to communicate with the public about their causes.

How much did the Catholic tradition of having celibate priests and nuns influence their decisions to be celibate? Foremost, it would not seem like an abnormal choice. Catholicism overflows with celibate saints, priests, and nuns and goes back to Jesus, who was also celibate.

Celibacy was not always required for clergy in Catholicism. As per the Gospel of Matthew, Peter, had a mother-in-law, -- which we can infer means he had, or once had, a wife. Celibacy did not become a discipline in the Catholic Church until the 12th century when the clergy was prohibited from having sex. One of the reasons for this practice was so the priests would not have children to inherit their property (Stephey, 2009).

### **Powerful Emissaries for Good**

Due to Day, Flanagan, and Stein's gifted communication skills, they were able to spread their religious fervor and empathetic agendas with the Catholic and non-Catholic public to garner support, in the case of Stein, and backing and money in the case of Day and Flanagan.

Day offered her moral stature in her arguments, within her fierce pacifism, about the rights of people in need. Her organ was the *Catholic Worker* newspaper which served

as a platform for her philosophy of empathy, fairness and justice. She was the living image for the Catholic Worker organization. In giving speeches, she encouraged people to think outside of themselves and look for ways to help other people.

Sometimes she responded to injustice by protesting. For instance, in 1948, she had a disagreement with Cardinal Spellman of New York about the gravediggers of the Calvary Cemetery, a Catholic burial ground, who went on strike against the Catholic Church. Cardinal Spellman refused to bargain with them. The men eventually went back to work, but Day had other ideas, and Catholic Workers picketed the Catholic burial ground. Day wrote a scathing piece in the *Catholic Worker* and denounced Church leadership saying “a Cardinal, ill advised, exercised so overwhelming a show of force against a handful of poor working men” (as cited in Coles, 1987, p. 81). She used her prestige, moral voice, and empathetic position to insist on the rights for these laborers. She was unafraid to use the *Catholic Worker* for this purpose.

In Flanagan’s case, he was a good, folksy speaker and could tug at peoples’ hearts to get them to give to his boys. Regularly, he would speak at civic groups to herald his cause. One such example would be a speech he gave on September 14, 1937, when he spoke to the Kansas City, Missouri Co-Op Club. Here, he asked the listeners to help and “deal with the individual boy . . . as a partner, a friend, or shall I use that worn out and much abused word—a pal” (Flanagan, 1937a, para. 3).

He also worked on ideas for a speech for the Cooperative Club where he highlighted that after he spoke to 2000 men in two years of work with his men’s shelter, he found they had been uncared for in their youth and “Their lives were practically

finished.” When he met a 12-year-old boy who was crying because he was homeless, he thought he could “help boys like this, and there would not be men failures” (Flanagan, 1937b, para. 2).

Broadcasting his beliefs was not a problem for Flanagan. In his empathy, he wanted others to know about his boys, so they could be empathic and understanding as well as financially supportive, too.

Stein found an audience for her forward thinking empathic educational and family philosophy in her speeches and writings. She was, according to accounts, a direct, yet understandable speaker. Through her speeches and radio addresses, she was a leading Catholic voice for women in 1930s Germany. She spread the word—both the word of God and the word of his emissary on Earth—by declaring that:

Women’s participation in the supernatural maternity of the Church is more extensive. She is called upon to cooperate in awakening and furthering the life of grace in children . . . Woman assumes this vocation in a special way, thanks to her special relationship to the Lord who has destined her for it. (1959/1996, p. 239)

Her pulpit may not have been in a church, but it was broadly in the Catholic German educational and family lecture circuit, and she was not in any way fearful of clearly stating her position for the good of the Church. Her giftedness and mastery of language helped her convincingly convey her beliefs to people of broad educational strata. She attractively presented the Church’s position for the benefit of the German Church.

### **What This Means: A Synthesis**

So, it was the ability of Day, Flanagan, and Stein to successfully and convincingly promote the Church's position about justice and the equality of people and made them robust exemplars of the Church's teaching. Even though they were very different in their approach, they were all passionate advocates of an empathetic Catholic response to those in need.

Day, as an example, was sometimes brutally direct; she was willing to unsettle the settled, and disturb the uncaring. Facing broad disapproval from a patriotic American public during World War II did not dissuade her. She kept insisting, in her empathy, that the Catholic Worker was still pacifist, even in the face of Hitler.

Challenging her beloved Catholic Church was not a problem for her, either. When she was called to the Church chancery office in 1951, Monsignor Edward Gaffney demanded that she alter the name of the Catholic Worker because "Catholic" was in the name of the organization, and it could be inferred that the Church proper had a role in running or maintaining it. After asking her associates in the Catholic Worker what they thought, they were disinclined to change the name. So, Day refused (Coles, 1987).

This was especially brave of Day because in 1951 the status of the Church was so high with practicing Catholics, and the role of the clergy was one of almost total respect from the faithful. To refuse a request of a priest was almost unthinkable as Catholicism was still an immigrant church with somewhat of an insular mentality. Catholics were outsiders, and they tended to admire their educated priests.

Additionally, it would have been debilitating for Day to be separated from the Church in any way or to be threatened with some type of sanction. She had given up her love and the father of her child, Forster Batterham, for the Church. Yet, she was still willing to engage in risk taking discourse with the Church she loved, to do what she thought was correct. The Catholic Worker was Catholic, in the deepest and broadest sense. She created it with Peter Maurin based on the teachings of Christ to serve poor people with love.

Flanagan had quite a different style in promoting Catholicism. Totally patriotic, he boasted about the Boys Town youngsters who went to war. He was part of the nationalistic Catholic establishment during World War II, and this helped him appeal for support for his charity. He used his words to convince people to give to his cause, and he also appealed to people on an emotional level by sending his boys forth as speakers in public and on the radio. This somewhat corny appeal style wore remarkably well, and money flowed in for him to use for the betterment of his charges.

This is not to suggest that Flanagan was saccharine in his approach. This gentle Irishman who could be so tender and empathetic with his boys could then vociferously denounce anything or anyone he felt impeded his effort to improve the lives of children.

Nevertheless, overall, he improved the standing of the Church in the United States with his powerful presence and compelling message. People who thought little of Catholics admired him because of his successful work with children.

Flanagan was Boys Town and the positivity with which people viewed him helped the Church mightily. In fact, when he died, his stature was so great, he was

traversing Europe to report on the living situation of war orphans after having been appointed by President Harry Truman (Reilly & Warneke, 2008).

Stein's approach to promote Catholicism was more cerebral and nuanced. She gave moving and intelligently thought out speeches, and she spoke to Catholic women as a woman who had an understanding of their lives and a love of their faith. Still, in her carefully crafted speeches, she still positioned herself to advocate for broad educational opportunity and training for women and to encourage women to have a life of the mind. Educationally, she was a strong proponent for differentiation and for skilled vocational training, headed by responsible, competent teachers. She represented Catholicity beautifully until she had to stop when Jews were no longer allowed to teach as per the regulations of National Socialism in April of 1933 (Gaboriau, 2002; Stein, 1959/1996).

Stein also tried to help her Church move towards responsibility to help Jews within Hitler's reach. She wrote to Pope Pius XI in 1933 and asked him to speak out in support of Jewish people and against the forces conspiring against them. While he sent her back a letter and a papal blessing for her family, he did not pursue her requests as she would have appreciated (Nota, 1971/1992).

All three were champions for the Church, and their message was carried with vigor and skill. For this reason, they are exemplar Catholic communicators, and actually, Catholic goodwill ambassadors. Even though they could disturb people in their insistence, their message heralded a Catholicism that persevered in treating the individual with respect and love. Their empathy and understanding were forces for good as they heralded the faith even if they had to "trouble the waters."

### **Troubling the Waters: Day, Flanagan, and Stein—Catholicism with a Push**

Undoubtedly, Day, Flanagan and Stein were willing to give their Catholicism a push towards what they thought was right, an empathy for those in need. Because they consecrated their lives to God, their lives were prioritized, and after God, everything else they did as Catholic emissaries fell into place. Moreover, because each one had a succinct mission, they could focus on developing their influential styles to foster what they believed to be a Godly pursuit.

While I am not suggesting that their desire to influence was contrived, I do believe it was purposefully thought out and delivered. Further, they knew parts of their message would be discounted, nevertheless, they persisted. So, navigating the difficulties of insisting upon rights and care for the poor, homes for homeless children and educational opportunity for women, they became Catholic standard bearers and examples of Catholicism to their public. This was highly beneficial to the Church because of the integrity and quality of their message. Even if a person did not agree with Dorothy Day about how to help the poor, it would be challenging to attack her sensibility about the necessity to help people who are hungry. It would take a particularly hardhearted person to think we should just let poor people die of starvation.

### **Synthesis: Overarching Structure**

So, what is the overarching structure of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's empathy? It is Catholic infused, or at times controlled, empathy because it always circles back to the innate dignity of the single human person, the right of that person to live, and the overarching Catholic belief in the innate rightness of caring for people who need help.



They took their mission to the streets, actively, to convert the nonbeliever and bolster up the lukewarm Catholic or nonreligious person while demanding dignity for human life—which is simple to state but very difficult to institute. However, they implemented ideas that were simplistic on their face: care for the poor and pacifism, homes, food, clothes, and schools for poor boys; second chances for errant youth, education for women, opportunity for women, and schools appropriate for girls' needs. They used the power of their Catholic voice to move public opinion their way.

They also showed people what it means to be Catholic, which in their type of staunch practice is to love God and love your neighbor while doing everything you can to articulate your neighbors' needs to your society. It means urging the Catholic position about the rights of people and the dignity of living for all people.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **EMPATHY IN A BROADER CONTEXT**

Edith Stein, Father Flanagan, and Dorothy Day: three prominent Catholics of the 20th century noted for their empathy and noted for directing their empathy towards a just cause. Clearly, these are three people for whom I have a regard.

Yet is empathy, or lack thereof, just one trait that forms part of the makeup of any human personality? Is empathy, in and of itself, a virtue? Is lack of empathy, in and of itself, a fault; or is it a neutral character trait where one's virtue or fault depends on how it is used or combined with other traits?

In this chapter, I will look at the breadth and limits of empathy navigating my own definition of this multi-faceted experience, to conceptualize it on my own terms, and giving my philosophy of empathy throughout the chapter. Within this chapter, I will point out disagreements between scholars' philosophy of empathy and my own as the conceptualization progresses. To open, I shall explore the empathy scholarship of Agosta.

#### **Agosta: An Essential Contemporary Philosopher**

Agosta (2010), who has taught philosophy at Loyola University and DePaul University, is an important contemporary empathy scholar, in this author's opinion. He analyzes empathy facing forward, directly towards empathy, and reveals empathy on its

own terms—as empathy. Empathy, Agosta clearly articulates, is something we “get” from others, and to Agosta, we become human through empathy.

Inquiring about empathy when one may “recognize our Socratic ignorance” (p. xiv) is an element of his philosophy, and he importantly insists his study of empathy “takes its orientation from empathy, not from Heidegger; from empathy, not from Husserl; from empathy” (p. 4). This is what I did as I analyzed Day, Flanagan, and Stein’s empathy; I delineated empathy from their empathy, and that is what I intend to do in this chapter—study empathy from empathy. As I analyze scholarship on empathy, I shall excavate backwards towards the essence of empathy, so I can move forward to my succinct definition.

I concur with Agosta in not adhering to one specific theorist. His examples of scholars would include Freud, Searle, Kohut, and Heidegger; mine would incorporate, among others, Stein, Rogers, Agosta, Noddings, and Levinas.

In doing so, I will articulate the paradoxes of empathy and the connections between empathy and social justice, empathy and power, empathy and arrogance, empathy as a negative when one subgroup is favored and another is disparaged or distanced, and examples where a person does not have empathy, but there are still positive societal outcomes.

### **Levinas’s Philosophy**

To Levinas, empathy is a “profoundly ethical event” and is a face-to-face encounter that turns into a “responsibility for” the Other. The encounter with the Other is “between two distinct beings,” and the Other is not the self (Todd, 2003, pp. 50–51).

To Levinas:

The relationship with the other is not an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, or a sympathy through which we put ourselves in the other's place; we recognize the other as resembling us, but exterior to us; the relationship with the other is a relationship with a Mystery. (as cited in Todd, 2003, p. 51)

As Todd informs, Mystery is the “radical alterity of the other,” so this contact cannot condense the Other to contact with self (2003, p. 51). We may participate with the Other, as per Todd explaining Levinas, actually, but for sympathy to flow, one must disavow “irreducibility of self and the Other” (2003, p. 51). Therefore, regular contacts in, for example, teaching, can evoke people to “sympathize and pity” and can link humans intensely, but these contacts do not rise to the level of “nonviolence, of ethical interaction” (Todd, 2003, p. 51). Importantly, to Levinas, the “alterity of the other . . . *reveals* itself,” and that is essential in infusing the empathic encounter with a moral overtone progressing to responsibility (as cited in Todd, 2003, p. 51). The Other must reveal self to me; opening myself is not enough; being willing to assiduously listen is not enough; the Other must actively make self known (Todd, 2003).

This revelation from the Other opens to an understanding that is different, and the self, in “being-for,” as per Bauman or an “encounter with the other,” according to Levinas (Todd, 2003, p. 50), is propelled directly towards accountability to the Other. This accountability, which Levinas calls responsibility, is an essential component to his empathy. Moreover, Levinas wants to maintain clear boundaries between the self and the Other in defining empathy—keeping the distinction of the self/Other, co-mingled with respecting the Other's existence: the state of their otherness (Todd, 2003).

Todd details that Levinas refers to the “encounter with the other”; the “being responsible for” to Bauman requires “that something must break through, disrupt, and interrupt convention, and that this inaugurates commitment to unplanned and unpredictable encounter with the Other” (Todd, 2003, p. 50).

While I agree, that in an empathic exchange there is some type of a breakthrough, I disagree that it has to initiate commitment and responsibility and be spontaneous and variable. By way of illustration, I have had many empathetic exchanges with students over the years, but there have been only some with whom I commit permanently.

The word “commitment” indicates a permanence that most teacher-student relationships do not have. Does that mean my contact with students was not empathy? Of course not; it was empathy, but it did not have the quality of commitment or future responsibility. I would say it had the quality of investment. I am invested in my students, and I give them my empathic, kind and caring attention, as I work with them. Too, they give me life lessons and help me teach effectually. There is reciprocity, a flow, a contact, a deep understanding, an empathy that occurs in close student/teacher relationships, but it does not necessarily have a quality of continuity or prolonged responsibility.

Additionally, Bauman maintains that when this empathetic contact erupts, it must be “unplanned” (Todd, 2003, p. 50). Here I think Bauman misses the mark; while at times the experience of empathy is spontaneous, that is not always the case. For example, I have planned and executed parent/teacher/student conferences for students I knew quite well, that were planned to the smallest detail with work samples and listed

anecdotes related to student character and achievement. Even though I carefully planned these meetings, I would describe them as empathic, and I was not surprised by the empathy. I perceived students in a new way, as a child in the family as well as a valued scholar. I assiduously listened and felt for my students as they explained, by way of illustration, their struggles with reading. This was not a surprise to me, and yet I still empathized.

Another example might be attending a funeral for a much respected and cared for colleague. I might plan what I said to my valued co-worker's grieving husband, and this would be no less an empathetic exchange—I could still have a profound connection with him in his grief, even though I reflected at length on my remarks.

This illustration is a planned empathic exchange. The empathy felt may be unpredictable in its level of intensity; some contacts were more feeling infused than others, more perceptive, but empathy was still a component, an expected out-growth of deliberate communication. Therefore, empathy can be planned and predictable with an investment in the Other and be qualified as empathy. Empathy, moreover, also includes the Other.

### **Empathy of Todd and Levinas: The Other**

Empathy, as Todd references Levinas, “must always refuse reducing the Other to a common ground with the self” (Todd, 2003, p. 51), which sharply contrasts with Stein's view of the empathic exchange as a way to better know the self. To Stein, the lines are not so clearly drawn because empathy is an experience of one “I” to another “I,” and self-learning and self-discovery takes place. It does not minimize the Other or marginalize

the Other if the self learns something in an empathic exchange; it is not selfishness that drives the experience. So, Stein's philosophy that one can learn about the self in empathizing with others is quite true and not at all self-serving. Empathy can flow from a kindness of heart even if the heart it flows from gains a better understanding of the self. Yet, how much more is it than understanding of self; how foundational is empathy to human social intercourse?

To Agosta, its centrality cannot be doubted, as he asserts that that we get our humanness through empathy because "there is no where [*sic*] else for one to obtain humanness than from another human being" (2010, p. xvi). The empathasand, the "target of empathy," is the one who gives empathy to the empathizer; and the empathizer may do this if he has experience with empathy—if his childhood world—his caretakers—treated him with compassion and empathy (2010, p. xvi). However, the work of Temple Grandin would refute Agosta's position that we can obtain empathy only from another human being. Grandin used her "unique gift of autism, which enables her to visualize and empathize with flight and fear principles she shares in part with the animal kingdom" (Vansickle, 2007, p. 28). She created more humane livestock handling chutes influenced by her getting into the chutes herself to "see what the animals were seeing" (as cited in Vansickle, 2007, p. 28).

Grandin further has examined the before mating "dancing" behavior of roosters which results in the hen being more welcoming towards the advances of the rooster. She maintains that people have not studied the "dancing" behavior of the rooster; in fact, roosters may have "forgotten" how to dance to attract a hen, and this has resulted in

mating being much more violent with the rooster mating with aggression and the hen being, at times, injured in the mating (Ussery, 2006, p. 13). This indicated that her care, her empathy for the livestock, came from the animals themselves, not from humans.

### **A Human Event**

Yet, still, significantly, to Agosta (2010), empathy is “essentially ethical” (p. 14) because through it we can comprehend the exultations and trials of the Other, and when empathy ruptures and is not present, the Other becomes unreachable which also pushed outward into a loss of the kinship of people. Instead of the Other being a part of our human connectedness, he can become Absolutely Other. This happens when empathy erodes in the face of a person with, for example, mental illness, and there is a person-to-person stigma about the condition. This elevates empathy making it more important because empathy can “defend against compassion fatigue” and can remind each person that he or she is in the “presence of another human being” (2012, para. 6).

To Agosta, clearly, empathy “has the core that is essentially ethical” because in empathy we understand the tribulations and delights of another (2010, p. 14). In spite of this, empathy does not necessarily lead to action to mitigate another’s anguish; it is morality that does that. (I have argued, though, throughout this study, that the Catholic empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein did lead to moral action.)

Clearly, empathy helps humans understand, when they are empathizing with people who they are in contact with—a human being that is not themselves. In having this contact, the types of empathy being delineated can best position empathy as an overwhelmingly human event.



As per Määttä, there are subdivisions within the scientific literature about empathy.

*Affective* and *cognitive* empathy refer to emotional and intellectual understanding . . . *Predictive* empathy refers to the ability to predict reactions, while *situational* empathy denotes the ability of the empathizer to perceive and react to the other person's feelings in the situation in question. *Trait empathy* is seen as a personal characteristic. (2006, p. 4)

This delineation of empathy further departmentalizes empathy within the empathic act. If this language is used—this highly specific language, we can more clearly explain what empathy is and what it is not. By way of illustration, if a person is particularly astute at understanding body language, and can predict a person's explanation of feeling based on his clues, this person would then have a skill—highly useful, if she were, for instance, a teacher, nurse, therapist, or doctor. Nevertheless, even though empathy can be broken down into these type specific empathic exchanges, empathy itself can still be described as the human connectedness within broader contacts. Yet, what about empathy in a broader sense? Is empathy connected with expansive concepts like, social justice? If so, how?

### **Empathy and Social Justice**

Can social justice be promoted by social empathy and a “deep historical and contextual understanding of the life experiences of people who are not identified with the dominant culture”? (Segal, 2011, p. 270). Segal believes the answer is yes. She maintains that there are three parts of an empathy model: “individual empathy, contextual empathy, and social responsibility” (Segal, 2011, p. 266). Social empathy is, moreover,

connected to the United States ideals, as noted in the Preamble of the Constitution, and is based on putting “justice into practice” (Segal, 2011, p. 266), but she notes that we have not reached this goal completely. For example, in 2009, the income for Caucasian Americans was 71% higher than African Americans and 105% higher than Latinos and Latinas, and men are still earning considerably more than women (Segal, 2011). Social empathy, which Segal admits can be difficult to quantify, is elemental in developing an increased understanding “between groups.”<sup>27</sup> Segal defines social empathy as “the ability to understand people by perceiving or understanding their life situations and as a result gain insight into structural inequalities and disparities” (2011, pp. 266–267).

So, if social empathy is the ability to come in contact with the Other, and perceive what the Other’s existence is like within the context of a culture riddled with inequality, this is one of the ways empathy is a part of social justice. For instance, if the teacher engages in meaningful contact with her student, Stephan, and understands that one of the reasons he is not doing assigned reading at night is because he cares for two toddler siblings, she knows something important about him.

If, further, she realizes Stephan’s mother is working as a delivery person for a local sandwich shop, providing her own car and cell phone to perform this job, is not provided with health insurance, and is forced to work less than 40 hours a week so health coverage does not have to be provided as per company policy, the teacher has an even clearer understanding why Stephan’s life might be overwhelming and why he is not focused on his studies—as the teacher would like. The wish the teacher might have, and

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<sup>27</sup> I would say “among” groups as “between” indicates interaction from one group to another while “among” indicates interaction with more than two groups. The word “between” is too limiting.

the steps she might take to help the family because she views the situation as unjust, are all folded into both her conceptual and active empathy and her sense of social justice.

Consequently, while empathy does not always have to be part of social justice, it is the human-to-human glue, the invisible strength, that oftentimes is a part of it.

Empathy is that deep understanding of the Other as one as ourselves. The above example of Stephan and his mother shows they are like the teacher who loves her children and cares for them the best she can. The family is, to a degree, suffering, and the teacher can feel for them.

Importantly, how does one know of human suffering? It is through empathy. When I empathize with a person, I make inroads into understanding how they feel, and in doing so, I may actively help. If I do not empathize, if I do not understand, how can I move forward to help? Does perception come into play? Can I help without an understanding? Can I be taught to empathize to forward social justice?

### **Can Empathy Be Taught?**

In examining whether empathy can be taught to forward social justice, I will primarily look at the work of Todd who argues that one cannot demand empathy because empathy “is not simply a demand for an emotion. It also presupposes a certain mode of relationality, a certain interrelationship with the other” (2003, p. 45). In contrast, I shall also analyze themes in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852/1998) by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Stowe's narrative evoked broad-based, worldwide empathy and impacted the Northern sensibility behind the American Civil War.<sup>28</sup>

Todd (2003) argues that when students are in a classroom and are “asked to experience a mode of being together that involves others who usually are not part of the classroom space . . . That is, it is a demand for togetherness with an other . . . the hope is that empathy will break through . . . in transformative emotional experiences” (2003, p. 47). Admitting that empathy is viewed as a significant goal of social justice education; nevertheless, Todd asserts that feelings of empathy are not within a person's “sphere of control,” and empathy is characterized by “unpredictability and nonintentionality that characterize the experience of being-for” (p. 49).

Significantly, Todd maintains that empathy cannot be demanded. Therefore, her examples of classrooms attempts to provoke empathy through specified lessons about human hunger and the Holocaust “must be rethought” (2003, p. 49). She believes demanding empathy is an “untenable pedagogical aim” (2003, p. 60), and even if a student does feel empathy in a classroom exercise where another person's suffering is presented, it does not lead to an intrinsic moral import (Todd, 2003).

In Todd's (2003) view, empathy is “an ego activity that . . . serve[s] the interests of the self . . . it is not about respecting the singularity and uniqueness of the Other . . . it cannot offer the ethical attentiveness to difference *qua* difference so necessary to projects

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<sup>28</sup> I would suggest that anyone who has not read the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* read it in its entirety. The Uncle Tom character was co-opted after the publication of the book and presented in plays, reviews, and vaudeville, by whites portraying African Americans, as a shuffling, sycophantic, ridiculous, and unworthy character. Tom of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was totally selfless, intelligent, honest, and heroic; although, he was at times painfully patient and understanding with the foibles and even evils of white people. He was what is described in literature as a Christ character. However, the political aspects of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and a discussion of the epithet “Uncle Tom” and “Tomming” are beyond the purview of this study.

of social justice” (p. 63). Therefore, to Todd, empathy is not a place to look for social justice education; it cannot be insisted upon in an educational setting.

While clearly I do not believe that empathy can be demanded of students; it can be evoked; it can be developed; it can be drawn out by the power of, for example, compelling literature. The example I am offering is the book, controversial in some quarters, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, yet according to Reynolds (2011), it “became the most influential novel in American history and a catalyst for radical change both at home and abroad” (para. 2). Who—what person, did Frederick Douglass insist did the most for the advancement of African Americans? To Douglass, Stowe did (Reynolds, 2011). I shall not argue the book’s importance, which is really not in dispute, and its consequence is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the power it had to evoke empathy; its ability to convincingly turn fictional characters into flesh and blood characters—to be able to evoke empathy still, was evidenced in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s* empathic wake. Stowe demanded empathy, and she was successful in her demand. In my own teaching experience, students were regularly moved towards or to empathy by reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Students would often times cry, and sometimes even sob to the point of being unable to speak, as they read Tom’s death scene. This book helped illuminate the evils of slavery to some of my students because they could empathize with the characters.

In total, to a degree, Todd is correct in asserting that empathy cannot be demanded. It cannot always be demanded; it cannot easily be taught. However, it can be encouraged and developed if appropriately housed within a set of circumstances, a narrative, which evokes empathy—like a powerful tale. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* did forward

social justice and did influence opinions about the inherent evils of slavery. At its most basic, to advance social justice is to advance human emancipation, which *Uncle Tom's Cabin* helped to achieve in the United States.

Another example would be Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's movie *The Lives of Others* (2006). In this depiction of the evils of life in a totalitarian state, the protagonist, Wieler, a Stasi officer in the 1984 German Democratic Republic, deeply empathizes with people whom he is investigating, and this empathy transforms him (Diamond, 2008) as he watches a loving couple together. *The Lives of Others*, and the empathy it evoked in the protagonist as well as in viewers, certainly highlights the power of empathy; its matrix of power. Power and empathy can too be connected, and that is the subject of the next section.

### **Empathy and Power**

“Among the more central motives driving human behavior is a search for power along with a tendency to benefit from having it” (Handgraaf, Dijk, Vermunt, Wilke, & De Dreu, 2008, p. 1136). Moreover, powerful people have great reason to seek power because they are regarded well by others and even viewed as more perceptive and understanding. Risk taking and deciding upon high goals and even a sturdy bargaining plan are more prevalent among powerful people (Handgraaf et al., 2008, p. 1136). Are powerful people truly as they are portrayed by some as egocentric, arrogant promoters? According to Handgraaf et al. (2008), powerful people are not the self-aggrandizing types oftentimes portrayed or caricatured in popular culture; rather, they insist that powerful people “act in more prosocial, benign ways, value social responsibility, and seek to help

rather than hurt their counterparts” (p. 1138). All of these characteristics, caring about people with compassion, realizing a responsibility to serve others, and seeking to mitigate the suffering of others indicate empathy. This goes counter to the public stereotype of some powerful people as heartless, but is this true?

Contrarily, how else does power and empathy interface? In social dominance orientation (SDO), which is “a variable indexing individual differences in the preference for group-based hierarchy and inequality—has been found to be one of the most powerful predictors of intergroup attitudes and behaviors” (as cited in Sidanius et al., 2013, p. 313). SDO also is indicative of a hard thinking person with minimal empathy and limited disquietude about the problems of others (Sidanius et al., 2013), and this can induce prejudice.

Sidanius and Pratto assert empathy is so important that the opposite of it is “the *callous affect* dimension of psychopathy” (as cited in Sidanius et al., 2013, p. 314). SDO has been found to correlate with attitudes that profess affirmation for exploitative wars, capital punishment, and tormenting punishments (Sidanius et al., 2013).

So, as per Sidanius et al., powerful people can live a life of prejudice and lack empathy within power’s purview creating psychopathic behavior. Power selfishly garnered can create a mindset eschewing empathy and triumphing self-serving.

### **Empathy and Arrogance**

Power garnered selfishly can also foster arrogance; this would not cultivate empathy. Arrogance, and the superiority evidenced by arrogance, can prevent a person from seeing another human as another “I” worthy of empathy. Therefore, arrogance may

work against empathy because the person who is prideful and has a supercilious attitude towards the Other may not need to empathize. Why? The other person is not equal in stature, position, or intelligence; therefore, he or she is not worthy of empathy.

Furthermore, and in contrast, arrogance can be called empathy. If a person is so sure of his position about, for example, not busing to promote integration in public schools, his surety may depress his empathic impulses. If he only empathizes with the children who have long bus rides and the parents who desire neighborhood schools, he may be dismissing the students who desperately need a school with enforced busing, so populations can be mixed demographically and the valuable resources and educational intangibles, like parental power and physical in-the-classroom involvement, can be more equitably dispersed. So, a person's empathy for one group and arrogance about his position as a member of that group, may damage another set of people who are not in his empathic circle. In this way, too, something named as empathy can have negative consequences for groups outside of the empathic enclosure.

Nevertheless, does that mean that a person against forced busing is not feeling empathy? No, it is still empathy because he is feeling for persons or people that are not him. He deeply understands this group's problem (which *may* also be his own). So, while empathy is largely viewed as a positive, it can be a positive for one group and a negative for another. Still, I insist that empathy is closely connected to our humanness and our understanding of the Other. Maybe a person's position would never change if one were given more information about how much integrated schools may help all the children, but maybe, through empathy, the human-to-human openness, what Levinas calls



a nakedness (Todd, 2003), opinions could change and marginalized people could be supported.

### **Empathy and Power, Arrogance, and Social Justice**

So, empathy, in conjunction with power, can be a positive force for some people like the rulings of a benign king or president or a negative force like Hitler. Whether empathy is a positive or negative in conjunction with power would depend on what that person did with the power. Undoubtedly, Hitler was profoundly empathetic towards the so-called “Aryan” German people who were his followers; he felt as one with them in their suffering after the Treaty of Versailles. Their misery was his anguish, and he helped build his power base on this intimate link.

Empathy can also flow into a negative or positive like arrogance depending on its setting. If a person is positive they are right, and not amenable to reason, this can have positive or deleterious consequences. Frederick Douglas was convinced slavery was wrong; he was not willing to listen to an alternative possibility. His empathy favored the enslaved laborers; he felt with and for them. In this case, his surety—some might say his arrogance—about his position forwarded social justice and produced a positive social good. He knew slavery personally and was not willing to entertain anything affirmative about it. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, was sure that society could flourish with slavery in its midst. His arrogance, and his empathy for the slave owner, led to further proliferation of involuntary servitude to the detriment of the slave.

In terms of social justice and empathy, the dualism of positive/negative is also in play. American World War II pacifists, by way of illustration, were genuinely empathetic towards anyone who might be killed or hurt in war. To them, war was wrong—period. They perceived the pain of the Other. Nevertheless, pacifists were, in spite of everything, ignoring the lessons of history, many times repeated, when powerful and malevolent leaders murdered and maimed with impunity—under the guise of some political, religious, or cultural ideology. The American pacifists during World War II may have been empathetic, but their empathy, in totality, was going to most likely result in the few being saved and the many being killed and/or enslaved.

Too, a terrorist bomber blowing up people in a train station, airplane, or restaurant would almost surely feel empathy for his own people--those he is protesting for, on their behalf. He may be seeking social justice. His empathy for some, those like him, can be present. Where is his empathy for the people he kills? It is absent, and in this case, empathy for one group of people, his own people, has an evil outcome for the people outside of the sphere of people worthy, in his mind, of his empathy.

Alternatively, a person may not overly express empathy in a specific setting and still serve a larger good; an example would be my position as a reading teacher. Over the last 37 years, I have taught some children who came from quite challenging circumstances and families, including children who had already been adjudicated through and incarcerated in the juvenile justice system. While I did feel empathy for their situation, and I always tried to find time to talk to and encourage each student; I also wanted them to read and write to the best of their ability—in class this is what I fostered:

reading as empowerment. Personal problems, to whatever degree possible, had to be put aside (although these personal issues were dealt with at a different time), and the focus needed to be placed on vocabulary improvement and strengthening reading skills. Why? I believe helping every child develop their reading, writing and speaking skills to the highest possible level gives them the tools to move their life forward. My tough love for my students was for a higher purpose—literacy and my forwarding of social justice.

Furthermore, an idea or position may also not be particularly empathetic, on its face, like General Patton's desire to defeat Germany in World War II where many German soldiers and noncombatants may be slain, but may have a larger good (i.e., preventing world domination of a wicked leader). General Patton was not a man who exuded empathy; in fact, some people considered him a bully; he slapped one of his soldiers who had battle fatigue. However, his overarching desire to win World War II and remove people from bondage could be called empathy (in collaboration with Patton's deep desire for personal power).

### **Empathy Concluded**

To end this study, I will conclude with my definition of empathy. Where does it diverge or meld most particularly with my subjects? What about the other scholars like Agosta, Rogers, Davis, Noddings, Levinas, Todd, and Määttä?

Empathy is closeness or comprehension into another giving the empathizer the understanding of another's experience without believing the empathizer is actually having the experience his or herself. While Stein, Agosta, and Noddings would concur, Rogers's explanation is the most clear. He maintains that in empathy we come into

contact with another person's inner existence as if it was our experience "without ever losing the 'as if' quality" (1957/1992, p. 829). Not losing the "as if" quality is essential to understanding Catholic empathy because it is only an omnipotent God who can literally experience a human's inner life; humans cannot do this. Empathy is not telepathic; it is not in the realm of the supernatural. It is a remarkably close perception/experience of understanding, of knowing, and of feeling. It is being profoundly in touch, but never in, the inner life of another. Also, and importantly, empathy is good or bad, fostering social justice or decimating social justice, depending on the mindset and intentions of the person showing the empathy. Who was included in the empathic orbit? Who is left out?

Still, Agosta presents empathy centrally in human connectedness when he asserts that "no human interconnection would exist at all without empathetic function" (1984, p. 43). Without empathy, as a starting point, how would we connect as people? Some connection would take place, but how much depth would it have? How prolonged would it be?

Moreover, Agosta (2010) insists that "empathy has a core that is essentially ethical. Empathy is an important way in which the sufferings and joys of another individual are disclosed to one" (p. 14). Correctly, empathy is ethical when it is focused on the understanding of human good. For example, the ending of human slavery or the mitigation of human suffering through the eradication of disease would be a good example of the empathy/ethics relationship. Even so, in discussing the empathy/ethics connection, importantly, people would disagree on exactly what ethics are. That does not

mean, though, Agosta is wrong. Empathy does help us understand the feelings of another, and in its best sense, like, by way of illustration, saving Jews during the Holocaust, it is the core of human caring and what separates us from other animals.

### **Characteristics of Empathy**

Empathy can be a prolonged encounter or quite a short term experience. By way of illustration, I may feel empathy for a student who is lonely and is not making friends, but this deep feeling, this empathy, this oneness with another, will come and go even if my underlying conscience knows I am empathic toward that individual. Also, I will not necessarily commit to the student; I may only invest in her, though, as a valued Other.

This would fall under Davis's three types of empathy which are cognitive empathy, personal distress, and empathic concern (as cited in Riggio, 2013). This above example of empathy for a student would be an example of empathetic concern showing suitable feeling, awareness, and understanding of another person's emotion. Why? Because empathizing during all my waking hours where I am in the crux of the contact and feeling—with as perfect a human understanding as a person can muster, would debilitate one; my life would stop being a life and would denigrate into an emotional quagmire; I would be stilled. This emotional exhaustion may make me pull away from my student.

Now, I will address another empathic teacher who is part of my philosophy of empathy: Edith Stein. I am in concert with Stein that empathy has three parts: we actively listen, we empathize, and then we come back to ourselves (Stein, 1917/1989). (Active "listening" may involve observing, not physical listening.) This is empathizing at

its healthy best. To Stein, women were more empathetic; she was very clear on this point, and she connected empathy to figurative and literal motherhood.

Also, as per Calcagno (2007), Stein is addressing empathy as “a typical stereotype of women as emotional and transforming it into a creative gift” (p. 77). Even though I will address cautions about empathy for women shortly, I do concur with Stein that empathy can be a powerful female gift, and it is a gift worth celebrating.

Moreover, my empathy is associated with Stein’s empathy in defining it through perceiving (1917/1989) which is a succinct way to describe it. To Stein, a human, an “I,” comes in close contact with another “I,” and in doing so, can “comprehend the psychic life of their fellows” (1917/1989, p. 11). I, too, maintain that empathy is closely connected to knowledge of self and can still be selfless in its receptiveness of the Other. Even though I may gain in self-knowledge and empathy, *that does not place empathy as a self-serving interaction*. My gain does not lessen the value empathy offers the Other.

Stein additionally defined empathy as per Calcagno as “the way humans become inwardly aware of themselves and others”, and the other is a human “dwelling in a social world” (Calcagno, 2007, p. 64). The social world is the primary arena with which to come to grips with empathy and its power.

Another scholar who would complement my empathy and Stein’s female empathy is Noddings. Noddings (2010) makes the case that female caring is a result of “thousands of years of confinement to home” which has produced “female sensitivities to the needs of others and inclinations to respond positively to those needs” (p. 2). Add to that her belief that “evidence . . . suggests that women are more empathic than men, and this

should not surprise us, given the thousands of years of female caregiving experience with which evolution has had to work” (Fitzpatrick, 2010; Noddings, 2010, p. 57).

How does Noddings’s scholarship on female empathy impact mine? I agree with Noddings (2010) that “thousands of years of female caregiving” (p. 57) have impacted women’s empathy, and I appreciate her perspective that female empathy has great value. It does. What would happen to the world without empathy? At a minimum, some people would cease to exist because they might be viewed as burdens instead of valuable human beings.

Truly, too, I respect Noddings’s (2010) caution that empathy has “come with a cost” (Fitzpatrick, 2010; Noddings, 2010, p. 57). While I have never lived “acceptance of subordination” (p. 57) as she explains some women have, it is totally correct for her to caution women about empathy. I would add to her caution that since men may see women as more empathetic than they, they may expect women to sacrifice in an unhealthy way in work and family settings. Certainly within the family, in the mother/child relationship, empathy sometimes flows from the mother like milk flows from her breasts. Too, what I respect about Noddings’s philosophy is her belief that the work women have historically performed, like mothering and homemaking, has prodigious value deserving respect. Caring for children requires extraordinary empathy (Fitzpatrick, 2010). As a mother, in my empathetic link with my children, I experienced great joy and great sadness. I rejoiced with my children when they rejoiced, and I suffered with my children when they suffered.

One can feel for another's pain and not be crippled by the emotion, but pain is not the only experience that can be understood. Conversely, empathy can also be a deep understanding and connection with another's joy. While this could be emotionally easier than non-stop empathic interchanges that involve human, animal, or earthly suffering, it still requires the empathizer to prioritize the Other rather than the self.

In total, my conclusion is that empathy is an integral understanding of the Other but is not the lived experience of the Other. It is central to human connectedness in that the empathic act is intrinsic to human contact and understanding. We connect as humans in empathy. This connectedness, when it is focused on a broader understanding of the human good, like service to the poor, helping homeless boys, or creating a caring educational setting for girls, is one of the things that make us human. We care about the Other even when we do not know the Other. The oneness with another that empathy involves is: (a) active listening, (b) empathizing, and (c) resolution as Stein expresses, but I would add the action, which I have detailed in this study, as characteristic of Catholic empathy. This action may take part after the empathic contact.

To try to mitigate suffering is moral, so Catholic empathy takes a fourth step—a “moral forward” step to help by valuing the Other and addressing a need. In morality, one can perceive deeply and come to a better understanding of the moral life of the Other through empathy.

However, empathy must be viewed within the context of life, not as life. Noddings cautions us that empathy can lead to subordination, and with this I concur. Yet, to be, for instance, a mother, is usually to empathize regularly, almost at times



constantly, because of the usually close relationship with mother and child. So, I caution women about empathy only to understand it, not to try to artificially regulate it. I would suggest that women not fear it, but embrace it; see where it will take one. Hopefully, empathy can triumph as a help to the other in a better understanding of self—a symbiotic relationship of mutual growth.

**Conclusion: Empathy Comes Full Circle—Day, Flanagan, and Stein**

In conclusion, in this study, I analyzed empathy from and within a Catholic perspective and clearly detailed why empathy matters; Catholicism matters, and Day, Flanagan, and Stein matter.

Empathy is an integral part of our humanness and connectedness to others. Empathy is both simplistic and natural and complex and esoteric depending on how one examines it. Catholicism, the most ancient Christianity, is both a faith with a sometimes magnificent, sometimes troubling, history and a well-developed and studied philosophy of the value of the single human life. It is also, for some people, a way of life and of looking at the world that guides decision-making and action taking. I have asserted throughout this study that action taking, when helpful after an empathic exchange, is a fundamental part of the faith plus good works empathy tradition in Catholicism. That was certainly the case for Day, Flanagan, and Stein.

Day saw human suffering and railed at the rank injustice of it—it was against God’s plan. Her empathy was based on the life of Christ and secular beliefs about what human beings deserved because they were human. She went so far as to espouse absolute pacifism in the face of the rightness of World War II—in the midst of many empathetic

people who promoted the declaration and escalation of World War II. Day's remarkable consistency and authenticity always fell back to her beliefs about the life God wanted her to live, and her actions were a personification of empathy in action. She lived what she believed, as did Flanagan.

Flanagan saw a problem and solved it with his own empathic feeling, and his belief that other people should be empathetic, too. Those who can help, financially or otherwise, should. They should assist his boys by helping them to empower themselves with life skills, academic and/or vocational skills, and strong reading levels as arrows in the boys' life skills quivers. Generous donating was better for the giver, to Flanagan, better for the boys, and a net plus for society.

Because of the triumph of the philanthropic, Flanagan's legacy lives on in a most positive way. At Girls and Boys Town, no young person is to be dismissed as unreachable. We are to look at them as children of God, as we are, and treat them with kindness. Our outreach to the troubled youth should be imbued with understanding empathy.

Stein wrote her dissertation on empathy and lived it as a teacher, friend, and nun. She reached out to friends, family, and students empathically. Her words and example resonate more, to some, now, than they did in her lifetime, and her influence and witness are growing.

These are three lives worth exploring—three examples of empathy in action—Flanagan, Day, and Stein. They continue to teach by the stories of their lives; lives lived

as one with people who needed them be it the poor person, the homeless boy, or the student or friend.

It is in the vastness and complexity of our humanness that we empathize with others. Empathy is an experience worthy of study to connect us to the best we can be and subsequently to improve the lives of those in need. It is one of our duties as humans, and it is one of the aspects of teaching that connect us as another “I” to our students.

It is a part of life that immeasurably adds to our connectedness to our fellow humans as humans. In empathy, we reach outwards to another, and we can experience the “I” in a fellow soul—the oneness and sameness of human life.

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**APPENDIX A**

**METHODOLOGY, A WAY OF KNOWING**

**Introduction: Biographical Research**

As Plutarch insisted, a biographer must “reside in some city of good note, addicted to the liberal arts, and populous; where he may have plenty of all sorts of books” (as cited in Hamilton, 2008, p. 79). I find this sound advice from Plutarch of Chaeronea, Greece, (46–120AD) who was a prolific and eminent biographer (De Lacy, 1996, p. 359). I, fortunately, do live in an area that has “plenty of all sorts of books” with fine university libraries; it is good starting place to “do” biography.

Another biographer of note, Dr. Samuel Johnson, the founder of modern biography in the Western world, insisted that biographers delve into the integral structure of the ethics of their subject whilst they unravel a life. This is more than the garnering of knowledge to dispense to the reader; biography is the acquisition of knowledge that hopefully illuminates the reader’s own life. Why? This is so the reader may find out something about himself (Hamilton, 2008, pp. 9–11). Johnson also wanted biography to interrogate the subjects’ morals and character. Questions should be asked such as: Did the subject stand up well to the multitudinous vagaries of existence? Did he or she sin? If so, were they sorry; did they repent? (Hamilton, 2008, p. 10). These are questions biography can answer because biography is an essential component of the honest scholarly exploration about a person. C. Wright Mills proposed that “No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey (as cited in Denzin, 1989, p. 9).



Therefore, to Wright Mills, the necessity of biography as a viable, valuable methodology cannot be argued.

Biography was, in Victorian practice, focused on great men with important lives (Oakley, 2010, p. 426). It was “meant to be uplifting, as with the lives of saints and other holy figures” (Roe, 2012, p. 107). That attitude has evolved—bolstered by the scholarship of some feminist sociologists. They have insisted that biography included ideological constructs and that claims to fact may be called into question (Oakley, 2010, p. 426).

Alternatively, is biography merely entertainment, a place where salacious information about a subject can be shared? Is it a possible “quasi-religious experience” (Roe, 2012, p. 117). No, it is ultimately the “fascination with character” and, of course, a learning experience as one learns about another (Roe, 2012, p. 117).

Yet, in “doing” biography there are many choices to be made about the presentation of the subject. The biographer is a decision maker and “guide, companion, interpreter, critic, propagandist” while appraising the person, so the reader can garner information about the subject (Oakley, 2010, p. 428). Moreover, biography is the combination of the biography of the author and the biography of the subject. This equilibrium between writer and subject is, according to Oakley, the most central procedural question in biography (2010, p. 431). I found this very true myself. At times it was difficult to separate my history as a devout Catholic with my subjects’ Catholicity.

Nevertheless, I intend to use one methodology in my dissertation: biographical research, so I can make meaning of my subjects’ empathy. My role and relationship as

biographer to biographee is honesty. My reasons for choosing this method is so I can best delineate the lives of Stein, Flanagan, and Day, regarding empathy, and undertake the revealing task of introducing the very Catholic empathy of this triumvirate.

### **Biography as a Methodology with Empathy as the Constant**

This biography of empathy is a very specifically edited version of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's life, and I have used the methodology in interpreting their lives in an "abridged fashion in conjunction with editorial comment and analysis" (B. Roberts, 2002, p. 47) *a propos* my subjects' empathy. I employ biographical research as a methodology because of its clout in illuminating a life, which in my mind, is deserving of notice.

Biographical research is a methodology that was practiced by such storied company as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Saint Augustine, Shakespeare, Freud, and Capote. The value of biography to the reader is not only knowledge garnered about a person; it is the gateway the reader may obtain in learning about a person, so they can learn about themselves (Hamilton, 2008). That is what I want to do. In illuminating Stein, Flanagan, and Day's lives, I gained insights into my own life, and I, hopefully, would like to help the reader navigate their own being using the precepts of these people. To learn what to do or what not to do by examining the triumphs and tragedies of my subjects' lives, and the specific impetuses that were individual turning points, is the power of biography.

Biography also segues into the meaning of human life in the context of my subjects' contemporaneous society (B. Roberts, 2002). This is specifically pertinent to this study because Day, Flanagan, and Stein were truly a reflection of their time and

society, and in different ways, they tried to change their culture to be more accepting of marginalized groups. Day wanted true, loving giving of self—by all people of means—directly to the poor; Flanagan wanted to change the way homeless, poor, and delinquent children were treated, and Stein wanted rights and educational opportunity for women. So, as I have delved into this research, I wanted to create meaning for myself and others by scrutinizing their everyday lives, writings, and speeches as concerning empathy.

Yet, in scrutinizing my subjects, I kept in mind the scholarship of Derrida who maintained that we cannot clearly see into the interior of a person because language is always a filter, and language is always changeable. Therefore, meaning cannot always be absolutely defined based on words (as cited in Denzin, 1985, p. 14) and absolute truth about another person cannot be unveiled.

**Interrogating subjects.** Yet, how should I specifically interrogate my subjects in this biography? I questioned the following, as I situated the biographical method within the parameters of understanding, including their relationship with others, and their class, gender, family and life beginnings. This methodology likewise includes a “knowing author,” who is me—as I try to make some judgments, uncovering my subjects and clearly outlining the objective and subjective markers that are the turning points in a life history (Denzin, 1989, pp. 17–20). Moreover, I looked at the actual people and piloted the reader back to Stein, Flanagan, and Day (Denzin, 1989), hopefully to glean some knowledge that is just around the corner about themselves.

This method appeals to me because it gets to the heart of the “whom” and “why” of these historically significant personages. Biographical research looks at “in diverse

methodological and interpretive ways, how individual accounts of life experience can be understood” (B. Roberts, 2002, p. 5). We can also note society’s changes by looking at individuals and assisting scholars as they “chart the major societal changes that are underway” as well as examining how these transferals impact all parts of the society: small units like families or large units like institutions (B. Roberts, 2002, p. 5).

Additionally, biography is situated in the construct of lives opening in families (Denzin, 1989, p. 19). Hence, I positioned Day, Flanagan, and Stein as emerging from the context of their families to better illuminate how and why their empathy develops.

Yet, in using this approach to detail my methodology, a question stands out: What exactly is biography?

**What is biography?** According to Brian-Jones, the biographer looks for patterns in the person’s life while noting their choices made and actions (1998). This is what I have done. In examining my triumvirate, I have seen a story of patterns or themes emerging concerning their empathy. Day reaching out with love over and over to the poor; Flanagan felt as one with troubled boys and wanted to purposefully help them develop; Stein steps into others; she feels-in and uses her gift for empathy, in her own time, and makes others’ problems her own. These recurring behaviors are indicative of a basis of biography because the question can begin to be answered: What is this person really like?

Brian-Jones also suggests that after the biographer unearths these repeated actions on the part of the subject, she should then speculate and analyze the data (1998). This, too, I have done as I found a bounty of empathic examples. Therefore, I looked for

patterns in my subjects own writings, other first person interpretations, and historical accounts. The triangulation of evidence, discovered from multiple reputable quarters, led me to become increasingly convinced about truths concerning my subjects. Sometimes I discovered untruths, exaggerations or strictly hagiographical accounts. For example, I read a piece about Edith Stein being a wonderful housekeeper who was clearly adept at domestic tasks. In contrast, I have read numerous accounts, even Stein's own, that state categorically that she was a poor, inept housekeeper, although, she tried. Therefore, after reading many authoritative accounts about Stein *vis-à-vis* housework, I may safely conclude a truth: The domestic arts were not her forte.

**Doing biography.** There is more, though, to “doing” biography which includes a biographical method. What are the steps in this? Brian-Jones suggests the biographer choose a subject, gather data, analyze and interpret data and write a result (1998). Is this different than historical research? In many ways, yes. The biographer does many of the same things that a historian does in that she looks at books, articles, and letters, in all forms, and both primary and secondary sources. In spite of that, the biographer researches the “personal foreground, not the background” of the subject (Hamilton, 2008, p. 64) while putting the subject into their historical context. Importantly for biography, the person—not the period—takes precedence.

Additionally, in appraising a life, a biographer must ask if their biographee is a reliable witness to his or her own life (Oakley, 2010, p. 434), so the biographer's writing can be honest and accurate. In Day, Flanagan, and Stein's case, they are reliable to me—after thousands of pages of text are read.

In the case of Day, she was brutally honest about her life and particularly her shortcomings, but she still held certain parts of herself in reserve, hence her requirement that certain of her personal papers and diaries not be published until she was dead for 25 years, which was 2005. (*Duties of Delight* (2008), which included these writings, was published by Marquette University, which houses the special Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection.)

Flanagan was a promoter, and he wrote with grand sentimentality and emotion—to better encourage people to donate to Boys Town. He was also tenacious about insisting on quality, loving, and respectful care for all children.

When I first started reading Stein, I found her superiority and lack of humility unsettling. It was only in reading her later, more mature letters and accounts that I could better understand her complexities. She was gifted; she knew it, but she realized she could not disseminate her message if the listener could not extract meaning from her words.

So, on balance, when I weighed the entire sweep of Day, Flanagan, and Stein's speeches, books, and writing, I decided they were trustworthy witnesses to their lives, and I could honestly proceed with this edited biography.

Too, in biography, epiphanies are essential to understanding a human subject. These turning points are times in a person's life that shape the individual and do not necessarily need to be publically earth shattering events; they just need to have moment to the subject (Denzin, 1989, p. 22). Epiphanies for my subjects were varied. Day was deeply challenged by her Catholic faith to help poor people; Flanagan was moved by the

plight and social injustice of young boys without homes; Stein was deeply impacted when she observed a simple woman stopping by a church to pray. While these events may not seem epiphanatic to the reader, they were to Day, Flanagan, and Stein, and breaking down these turning points add to the strength of biography.

Still, what is not a biography? Are there some criteria we may employ to make sure biography is what it should be? Yes, there are; the biographical method should have a design.

**Biographical design.** Should biography be further defined to show the design or composition of the author's work? Hamilton, author of *How to Do Biography* (2008) and the author of *Monty* (1981) thinks there is.

Biographical design both garner interest in the author's work (hopefully) and fulfills what the author set out to do. Initially, there is the structure of lifework, which is what biography is, which includes: youth, schooling, human connections, the apprentice period, accomplishments, old age, and death (Hamilton, 2008). In my design, I focused more on my subjects' accomplishments and human connections—because that part of their lives was so rich—and relatively little on their youth.

However, Hamilton maintains that in designing biography, we are giving our verification of a fellow human; we are unfolding a life for others to read. In writing, the biographer presents a theme about their subject, almost like a story with a plot that leads to a crescendo where a person is shown in his positives and negatives whilst presenting the author's deepest views (Hamilton, 2008). In my case, four themes emerged in this biography of empathy of Day, Flanagan, and Stein: empathy as an extension of

motherhood, empathy emerging in challenging times to foster social justice; empathy as a component of the intrinsic value of the individual, and empathy as an element of moral vision. Therefore, in discerning themes, a biographer judges and presents conclusions.

After presenting my interpretations of Day, Flanagan, and Stein, I did as Hamilton suggested and searched for truth and tried to pull out the “true person behind the myth” (2008, pp. 108–109). The last two Hamiltonian requites of biography are the patient yet vigorous selection of material for inclusion or dismissal in the study, and finally, crafting the whole into a readable story (Hamilton, 2008). To facilitate the selection of materials, I funneled the research and took the tens of thousands of pages I read and marveled as the truth emerged.

When I discerned a pattern in a life, and I believed this repetition of a certain behavior (i.e., theme) was worth including in my dissertation, I did so. My own passions also came into play, so I funneled my research into choices about inclusion that I found most compelling. I tried to keep this piece honest.

In the case of Day, Flanagan, and Stein, it is the people who are most important; the historical period, though in my mind immensely interesting, is not the main actor—the people are.

**Biography using archival materials.** Because I wanted this dissertation to be as alive as possible and include information not found in other books and articles about my subjects, I went to the institutions that had the best sources. I went twice to Spalding University in Kentucky to study in the archives of the Edith Stein Center and read the original documents about Stein, writ large, and first person documents about her



conversion's impact on her family. This was a marvelous resource, and I found materials there I have not seen elsewhere. Twice traveling to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to study in the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center was valuable. I read myriad articles, pamphlets, and documents I had never seen before. I have also had broad access to the Hall of History Museum archives at Boys Town in Nebraska.

Danto (2008) suggests extensive planning before arriving at an archive, and I followed her advice. I checked the rules pertaining to using the collection and called and made appointments. I read any information or newsletters available about the collections, and I asked what sources would be available and what restrictions or policies were in place in my accessing the collection. I was seeking as full an experience as possible, as I wrote this biography.

In addition, visiting the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts helped me to understand Stein better, as I admired the Ludwig and Rosy Fischer German Expressionism Collection that was collected from 1905-1925. Looking at the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Conrad Felixmüller, I could feel the intellectual passion, conflict, and tumult of German life of which Stein was a part.

In traveling to study, I followed Oakley's (2010) suggestion of engaging in "exhaustive and comprehensive reading" (p. 428) which was an integral part of my study. I read every word I could find about my subjects to best position their lived empathy.

**Other aspects of biography.** Hamilton writes of the joys of biography and "the zeal to know, the rush of excitement" one experiences while researching (p. 83). Indeed, I completely relate to this sentiment. As I researched, I found my excitement and interest

building, as I reflected upon the elements of my subjects' empathy that I will bring to a wider audience. Moreover, there was "the thrill of the hunt" as I tried to unearth, for example, Stein's family's reaction to her conversion from Judaism to Catholicism. My emotions flowed forth when I read the actual letters her nephews had written after her beatification, which, however, I did not include in this study.

**Summing up biography.** Therefore, as I researched, I always referred back to basic honesty. I asked myself if I was representing my study as openly and as fairly as I possibly could. If I inserted an abbreviated quote, did it still get to the heart of the statement? Was I offering a balance of my subjects' philosophy and lived experiences of empathy in a way that presented them as the complicated, sometimes heroic, often selfless, and sometimes egotistical people that they were? I also wanted to include their evolution of empathy from young idealists to more seasoned adults with a better understanding of the world and their place in it. They were humans worth knowing because their example was so powerful. They teach about themselves: they teach about us. This is the magnitude and beauty of biography.

Therefore, I used the biographical method to best explicate the empathic philosophy within the lived lives of Stein, Flanagan, and Day. Using biography as a methodology, I am insisting they are lives worth knowing.

**Limitations of this research.** "Another issue prominent in biographical research is the question of size of study—how many stories to collect"? (B. Roberts, 2002, p. 11). Indeed, that has been a concern throughout this study because of the volumes of research I could have included. By focusing only on my subjects' empathy, I was able to ratchet

down the text into a manageable length; nevertheless, the choices I had to make for inclusion were challenging and at times painful. There were so many areas I could have expanded with ease but because of page length requirements, I did not do so. I do, though, have many other areas of scholarship I plan to pursue as a result of this work including: a comparison of the Irish Borstal system and Boys Town, Edith Stein's step-by-step philosophical methodology, and *The Catholic Worker* as a reflection of papal encyclicals, to name a few.

Moreover, according to Denzin (1989), biographies mirror the class and sex of the writer. To a degree, this is true with this biography of empathy, as I bring my Irish Catholic working class childhood sensibilities into the social justice focus of the narrative and the passionate Catholicism of my subjects. To suggest otherwise would be disingenuous.

Another limitation of honest biography is discerning, as Oakley (2010) asserts, why the biographer is intrigued by certain persons and what similarities and differences there are between biographer and subject. My interest in my subjects has been for some duration, and my connections to them are many. I am a devout Catholic, as all three were; I value education and am educated; they were, too. I promote what I believe to be just; in my case, the civil rights implications concerning the ways reading and writing are taught. My subjects were standard bearers for their causes. Flanagan and Stein were both teachers, as I am, and Day and Stein are both women. Flanagan is Irish; so am I.

Our differences are that Day, Flanagan, and Stein all came from families who emphasized the value of education, and I did not. Also, while I have been involved in a

warm and loving marital relationship and have four children, Stein and Flanagan never married or had children, and Day was unhappily married for a short time and had one daughter with a man she did not marry.

Stein and I are distinctive Catholic feminists of different generations. Day was for women's suffrage, but did not vote. Day also disparaged the modern women's movement as being too middle class and self-centered. Therefore, these similarities and differences are a part of this biography of empathy, with a careful scrutiny on my part, to emphasize truth.

Another limitation is striving for objectivity and intellectual honesty concerning three people I admire. Because I did not want this dissertation to be a hagiography (even though there is literally a life of at least one saint, Stein, and two saints, Day and Flanagan, possibly in the making), I had to become comfortable with my subjects as people. I wanted to present these three people with integrity. Nevertheless, I cannot assert I was totally objective; that would not have been possible.