



Cuadernos de pensamiento 36

Publicación del Seminario “Ángel González Álvarez”
de la Fundación Universitaria Española

Número monográfico sobre Humanismo, técnica,
y transformación digital

Año 2023

The Philosophy of Education of Edith Stein and Augustine

La filosofía de la educación de Edith Stein y Agustín

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Recibido: 03/11/2023 | Revisado: 15/11/2023
Aceptado: 15/11/2023 | Publicado: 30/12/2023
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51743/cpe.424>

ABSTRACT: This study demonstrates the comparative understanding of Edith Stein and Augustine on truth and love, faith and reason, and individual and community. Augustine tells us that we are pilgrims on this earth who are always in a constant search and discovery. In like manner, Edith Stein acknowledges that truth and love have an intrinsic relationship because truth must be accepted along with love and love with truth. Faith and reason also have an intrinsic relationship. When faith and reason become one, the truth becomes clearer and attainable. Edith Stein demonstrates the

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relationship and harmony of faith and reason. In the same way, Augustine believes that reason, which is incorporated in the nature of man, and faith, which is illuminated by the Divine, can control the evil that corrupts the soul of man. This article therefore attempts to contrast both ways of thinking and to study the possible similarities between them.

KEY WORDS: Augustine, Edith Stein, education, philosophy, values.

RESUMEN: Este estudio demuestra la comprensión comparativa de Edith Stein y Agustín sobre la verdad y el amor, la fe y la razón, y el individuo y la comunidad. Agustín nos dice que somos peregrinos en esta tierra, y que siempre estamos en constante búsqueda y descubrimiento. De la misma manera, Edith Stein reconoce que la verdad y el amor tienen una relación intrínseca porque la verdad debe ser aceptada junto con el amor y el amor con la verdad. La fe y la razón también tienen una relación intrínseca. Cuando la fe y la razón se convierten en una, la verdad se vuelve más clara y alcanzable. Edith Stein demuestra la relación y armonía de la fe y la razón. De la misma manera, Agustín cree que la razón, que está incorporada a la naturaleza del hombre, y la fe, que es iluminada por lo divino, pueden controlar el mal que corrompe el alma del hombre. En este artículo se intenta por tanto contrastar ambas formas de pensamiento y estudiar las posibles similitudes entre ellas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Agustín, Edith Stein, educación, filosofía, valores.

1. INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of education focuses on the holistic formation or transformation of the human person in all its aspects whether intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Real transformation happens when a student or teacher integrates the lessons in his life as a whole. Thus, the idea focuses on every student or teacher as a whole, in his entirety. Every part of the individual, his mind, emotion, soul, and body should be the centre of every endeavour to educate; by developing the individual into an integrated person. For such to be effective learning should be a journey together on the way to understanding. It is a life of searching and discovering between teacher and learner. It is not a perfect journey, because integration takes place whenever one commits mistakes, learns from it, and continues to relearn time and again. A good teacher

does not provide truth but acts as a mirror facilitating the search for insight among learners.

The vividness of principles and practices of the philosophy of education of Edith Stein –St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross– and St. Augustine of Hippo could aid in the guidance of both the lay and the religious in their journey with one mind and heart toward God. The way of life of both of these two great saints could become an inspiration to all persons who seek to live a life that is centred on Christ. Both of them became saints not because of their intellectual gifts and knowledge but because they became better witnesses of Christ.

Augustine integrated the philosophy of education in his way of life. His love for wisdom led him to the search for truth. His life-integrated learning experience showed him the true path. In his early childhood, his parents formed his intellectual traits and personal character. The early Christian formation he learned and integrated from his mother, St. Monica, was the starting point of his search for truth. As a good and intelligent student, he learned fast the lessons and discovered new ideas and thoughts. At an early age, he already fell in love with philosophical wisdom and knowledge. He considered the exercise of philosophizing as essential in education and formation. When he became a teacher, he committed himself not only to teaching but also to learning and self-integration of knowledge. He taught that the acquisition of any knowledge should be dealt with utmost care and a wise attitude. Knowledge can lead somebody either to the right path or the wrong direction. He described in his book *The Confessions* how he struggled to get rid of false teachings and beliefs.

His encounter with the word of God through the writings of the great apostle, St. Paul, was the beginning of his intellectual conversion and faith in the Divine Teacher. He discovered in the Sacred Scriptures what was missing in the philosophical works of his time. He taught that faith and reason, belief and understanding should go together because it is how the truth can be known with reason and accepted with faith. When he became a priest and bishop, he did not stop searching for truth instead, he worked more for the understanding of truth, not only for himself but also for his entire Christian community of friends and brothers.

Likewise, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, otherwise known as Edith Stein, integrated into her educational philosophy the intrinsic relationship of truth and love. She stressed that truth and love should not be separated. To accept the truth means to accept the love (Stein, 1992). Furthermore, her philosophical endeavour and discovery led her to go beyond reason and embrace religious faith and truth (Stein, 2000).

Integration of one's learnings and experiences is one of the best methods of education. The teachers may guide the students in learning but true learning and transformation happen when the students integrate the lessons within themselves. As affirmed by St. Augustine, his knowledge comes from his experience of learning, "I would not know myself if I had not learned through experience" (Letter, 21, 3; Teske et al., 2004).

Edith Stein and Augustine both demonstrate in their works the significance of truth and love; faith and reason; and individual and community. Their educational vision and understanding of values inspired many educators and students. Searching for truth is the everyday task of a Christian who likes to follow Jesus Christ, the Truth. Augustine, as a Steward of Truth, tells us that we are pilgrims on this earth who are always in a constant search and discovery (Augustine, Hill, & Rotelle, 1991). This search for truth is possible if it is accompanied by *caritas* which is the core of his teaching. In the same way, Edith Stein acknowledges that truth and love have an intrinsic relationship because truth must be accepted along with love and love with truth (Stein, 2013).

Faith and reason have also an intrinsic relationship. When faith and reason become one, the truth becomes clearer and attainable. Edith Stein in *Faith and Knowledge* (2000), demonstrates the relationship and harmony of faith and reason. Faith accompanied with reason is a powerful armour against the evil forces that can destroy the spiritual and physical well-being of the person. In the same way, Augustine, in the *City of God* (Augustine, & Bettenson, 1972), believes that reason, which is incorporated in the nature of man, and faith, which is illuminated by the Divine, can control the evil that corrupts the soul of man.

Augustine, guided by his work *The Rule* (Verhayen, 1991) which serves as a rule of religious life in a community, set up and found a Christian communi-

ty in Thagaste, Africa. His community is composed of his friends and brothers, which had the goal of living in one heart and mind intent upon God. Many men, Christians, and non-Christians were attracted and joined his community of brothers and friends. They lived and learned together under Augustine's leadership and guidance. They devoted themselves to observing and practicing the teachings of the Church such as philosophical and theological discussions, good works, and acts of mercy towards themselves and their neighbours.

Stein (2000), in her treatise *Individual and Community*, examines how valuation forms the community. Values unite the community since they are the spiritual motivating factors. It is by the value of self-constitution or self-identification, that a person shares his or her own world with others. It is therefore the values that build the structure of the human person.

2. COMPARISON OF UNDERSTANDINGS OF SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND LOVE

Edith Stein and Augustine are both searchers of truth and teachers of love. Their writings and works in philosophy as well as in theology demonstrate their understanding and experience in their search for truth. Both acknowledge that God is Truth and Love and Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Truth. Many of the problems of people nowadays stem from a crisis of the true meaning of truth and love which is lost inevitably because of the erroneous conscience. The corrupted notions of the meaning of truth and love could be the result of the erroneous teachings of some individuals. But Edith Stein and Augustine have dedicated their lives in search of the truth, and once they found it, they passionately lived by it and they could not stop loving it. Their voluminous writings are testimonies of their endless love for the truth.

Edith Stein, who is a "searcher of truth and martyr for love" understands and accepts that truth and love have an intrinsic relationship. To accept the truth means to accept the love. One without the other could lead to destruction (Stein, 1992). Furthermore, her philosophical endeavour and discovery led her to go beyond reason and embrace religious faith and truth (Stein, 2000).

There are many truths that the institutions and schools follow. For example, an erring student who did not meet the academic requirements because of too many absences or was not able to take the exams will not be able to graduate. The truth is that the action per se of the student is wrong but if he is immediately condemned and will not be given a chance to explain and take an exam in the future, there is truth but no love. The search for truth and its expression in love call for one another. Each one complements each other because they need each other. In one of her writings, she demonstrated that God is truth and He reveals himself to those who seek and love him:

Because God is truth and because he wants to be found by those who seek him with their whole hearts, sooner or later the star had to appear to show these wise men the way to truth. And so, they now stand before the Incarnate Truth, bow down and worship it, and place their crowns at its feet, because all the treasures of the world are but a little dust compared to it. (Stein, 1992).

Since God wants to be found by those who seek Him, Edith Stein found the truth and that truth had a name: Jesus Christ. Her mind never stopped of searching for truth and her heart never tired of loving for wisdom. Philosophy, as a rigorous science, became her means to search for the truth. She travelled the arduous path of philosophy and theology with passion and love until she found the truth or better until the truth found her. It was not her who first found the truth but it was the truth who found her first. When she found the truth, who is the incarnate Word, she made it her One and All, First and Last, and Beginning and End. When she was already a Carmelite nun, she wrote to her friend: “Whoever seeks the truth is seeking God, whether unconsciously or consciously”.

It means that she also searched for the truth, God, unconsciously and consciously during her philosophical endeavour and later after her conversion to Christianity. Her Mistress of Novices, Sr. Teresia Renata Posselt, published her biography in 1952 and dedicated it to her with the wonderful words of praise to a woman who illuminated the light of truth in a time when many people loved darkness more than light. Posselt’s book describes Edith Stein as a searcher of truth and that truth is not dependent on footnotes (Posselt, 1952).

God, the truth, also touches the soul who seeks the truth and makes it happy. During the ecstasy, aside from having a superabundance of intelligence, the soul comes into a full awareness of the truth, who is God, and a complete unification of consciousness. Therefore, Edith Stein could have an experience of divine ecstasy in the sense that she had a superabundance of intelligence; heightened spiritual sensitivity; change in manner of life and more virtue; and a deeper love for the Church and God, the truth. Although she did not explicitly mention in her writings that she underwent a mystical experiential knowledge undeniably, based on the observation and analysis of her experience and that of others, she is a mystic by taking into consideration these three essential points: her conversion; her understanding and practice of the revelation of God, and her martyrdom.

Ann Michele Nolan, in her thesis for Master's degree entitled *Edith Stein: A Study in Twentieth Century Mysticism*, argues that "Edith Stein is a mystic in a twentieth-century sense of the words mystic and mystical journey, in that she focuses...on the essential hidden life of deep prayer...She was an ordinary person, but her extraordinary demonstration of her commitment to union with God through the spiritual life she led distinguishes her as a mystic." (Nolan, 1993, p. 5).

The love of Christ was the fire that ignited and inflamed the hearts and minds of Edith Stein and Augustine to search for true love. The Spirit of Truth had to come first to open their eyes to the mystery of love of the Incarnated Word. Both became the slave of darkness before they experienced the true freedom and conversion brought by the light and love of Christ.

At the beginning, Edith Stein devoted herself to false freedom and philosophy. In the beginning of her search for truth, at the early age of 14, she had consciously and deliberately stopped praying and growing in spirituality but at the end, her search for truth led her to find and discover the Truth, Jesus Christ, who showed her the true love and freedom. She discovered that only those who commit and consecrate themselves to the love of Jesus Christ are truly free.

In the same way, as that of Edith Stein, Augustine's love for wisdom led him to the search for truth. His life-integrated learning experience showed him the true path. In his early childhood, his parents formed his intellectual traits

and personal character. The early Christian formation he learned and integrated from his mother, St. Monica, was the starting point of his search for truth. As a good and intelligent student, he learned the lessons quickly and used them to discover new ideas and thoughts. At an early age, he already fell in love with philosophical wisdom and knowledge. He considered the exercise of philosophizing as essential in education and formation. When he became a teacher, he committed himself not only to teaching but also to learning and self-integration of knowledge. He taught that the acquisition of any knowledge should be dealt with utmost care and a wise attitude. Knowledge can lead somebody either to the right path or the wrong direction. He described in his book *The Confessions* how he struggled to get rid of false teachings and beliefs. His encounter with the word of God through the writings of the great apostle, St. Paul, was the beginning of his intellectual conversion and faith in the Divine Teacher. He discovered in the *Sacred Scriptures* what was missing in the philosophical works of his time. In the *Sermons*, he wrote that we must walk by faith in the truth:

Persevere now in walking by faith in the truth, that you may succeed in coming at a definite and due time to the sight of the same truth. For as the apostle says, ‘While staying here in the body, we are away from the Lord. For we are walking by faith, not by sight’ (2 Corinthians 5:6-7). We are led to the direct sight and vision of the Father by the Christian faith. That is why the Lord says, ‘No one comes to the Father except through me’ (Sermon 12.5; Hill, & Rotelle, 1997).

Augustine taught that truth, love, and faith should be in harmony with one another because it is how truth and love can be known with reason and accepted with faith. When he became a priest and bishop, he did not stop searching for truth, instead, he worked more for the understanding of truth not only for himself but also for his entire Christian community of friends and brothers.

Augustine’s three simple steps to attain the truth is first humility, second humility, third humility (Letter 118). No matter how often he will be asked, his answer will be the same over and over again. He believes that only a person with humility can attain and accept the genuine truth. His struggle and labour

in becoming a good Christian and follower of Christ, the model of humility, gives birth to humility in his mind and heart.

Both Edith Stein and Augustine believed in the words of Jesus Christ who unequivocally stated to his disciples: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Many would say that *I have the truth* or *I can teach the truth* but it is only Jesus Christ who can claim that I am the truth because he possesses in himself the fullness of truth. Jesus is the truth and he speaks the truth because the truth proceeds from God the Father. In the *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine writes:

That, after all, is what the Lord meant by saying, I am the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6); that is ‘It is along me that you come, at me that you arrive, in me that you abide’. For when you reach him, you also reach the Father, because it is through his equality that the one to whom he is equal can be recognized, with the Holy Spirit binding and so to say gluing us in there, so that we may abide forever in that supreme and unchangeable good (*De Doctrina Christiana*, I, 34; in Hill, & Rotelle, 2010).

Jesus promised to his disciples and to all will follow him until the end that they would learn the truth and the truth would set them free (John 8:31). The truth which Jesus proclaims has the power to set everyone free from ignorance, falsehood, deception, division, and slavery to sin. This truth that Jesus proclaimed touched the minds and hearts of Edith Stein and Augustine because they saw that Jesus embodies the truth and love in his whole person, whether in speech, deed, or action. And it is because of the love of God that they, the beloved sinners, were able to reciprocate that love.

3. COMPARISON OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE RELATION OF FAITH AND REASON

Edith Stein and Augustine both seek an understanding of being. However, both understand that this understanding of being remains incomplete if it is based on human reason alone without the faith. A complete understanding of being and structure of the human person is made possible by the intermingling of faith and reason. Faith could be a source of knowledge and could go beyond

reason. It is therefore important the blending of philosophy and theology in understanding the meaning and purpose of being in this world.

Edith Stein's discovery moves beyond the realm of pure reason because reason is illuminated by religious faith and experience which led her to the attainment of truth. In some of her works such as *Faith and Knowledge*, she explores the formal distinction between knowledge by reason and religious belief. She presented in a form of dialogue the comparison between Edmund Husserl's and Thomas Aquinas' concept of faith and reason. It is also an attempt to contrast the Phenomenology of Husserl and the Philosophy of Aquinas, especially on the topics of Natural and Supernatural Reason, Faith and Knowledge, and the Ways to Know God (Stein, 2000). She stated that philosophy stays only in the realm of human reason, whereas theology rests on Divine Revelation. She did not put a barrier between philosophy and theology but synthesized faith and reason.

Augustine was a great Christian teacher of faith and reason. Upon his conversion, he spent his entire energy and time in learning and teaching the knowledge he gained through divine illumination. Most of his great works and books are meant for the greater glory of the Kingdom of the Divine Teacher on earth and in heaven. As a consecrated bishop of Hippo, he wrote some major works concerning education such as *Christian Education*, *Confessions*, *Concerning the Instruction of the Uninstructed*, *The Principle of Order*, and *City of God*. His intentions and reasons for writing *Christian Education* are to explain and bring into light the Christian teacher's basic responsibilities which include in educating the students in faith and with the aid of reason. *The Confessions* (Pilkington, 1943), which is still widely read nowadays, shows the self-education of Augustine from his infancy to adulthood. It is a recollection of his life experiences in the light of his new faith in the Divine Teacher.

The *Concerning the Instruction of the Uninstructed* is a method of instruction for the Christian teacher who teaches the candidates for Christian baptism of the basic knowledge of the Christian faith. It presents the principles and methods of the Christian teacher to be more effective in imparting knowledge to the students. *The Principle of the Order* shows that authority and reason are two factors and pathways on learning the truth. Reason guides and strengthens the accepted faith. In some of his works, Augustine explains that faith and

reason, thought and belief, are complementary factors in learning and education. *The City of God* discusses the notion of understanding and certainty of knowledge. Certainty of knowledge, which is free of deceptive fantasies, is very important for the education to be effective and bear fruit. With the idea of Plato and Platonist, Augustine formulates that intelligence, reason and wisdom are important factors to true understanding and knowledge.

As a philosopher, Edith Stein, seeks understanding of being and structure of the human person in the light of the faith which is a source of knowledge and goes beyond the realm of human reason. She writes that faith “is not in fact a specific philosophical issue, but one of marking the bounds of natural reason and at the same time the bounds of a philosophy based on purely natural reason” (Stein, 2000, p. 15). A philosophy that seeks the assistance of faith will lead to a better understanding of truth. Faith is a way to truth or to truths and it is the surest way to truth.

For philosophy is also a matter of *ratio* for Thomas, in the broad sense that includes natural and supernatural reason. And it follows from what I said above that he does not take faith to be irrational at all; that is, having nothing to do with truth and falsehood. On the contrary, faith is a way to truth. Indeed, in the first place, it is a way to truths –plural– which would otherwise be closed to us, and in the second place it is the surest way to truth. For there is no greater certainty than that of faith; what is more, for human beings *in statu viae* –in the state of being on our earthly journey– no knowledge lends a certainty that can come up to that proper to faith, albeit the certainty of faith lacks the obviousness of insight (Stein, 2000).

Edith Stein discovers that the ultimate meaningfulness, which is far from human meaningfulness, is found only in the Eternal Being. This ultimate meaningfulness is achievable through true philosophy which engenders reason and through theology which begets faith. But she saw in the latter the surest method and the truer way towards the Uncaused, Omniscient, and Eternal Being.

She knows that human finite minds cannot totally comprehend the meaning of the existence of the Eternal and Infinite Being in relation to the temporary and finite being. She stresses: “The way of faith gives us more than the way of philosophical knowledge: it gives us the God of personal nearness, the loving and merciful One, and a certainty such as no natural knowledge can

give. Yet even the way of faith is a dark way” (Nota, 1987, p. 56). The way of faith and philosophical knowledge, as demonstrated by Edith Stein, should also pass in the dark way which symbolizes the struggles and hardships in attaining the personal closeness of the Merciful Being.

The union or synthesis of philosophical and theological insights in Edith Stein’s works is the fruit of her conversion and mystical journey. Edith Stein asserts that the separation of philosophy and theology takes away the true meaning of philosophy which is founded in eternal principles. The Eternal Being is her eternal principle. Furthermore, she concludes that the finite being finds its meaning and destiny in the providence of the Eternal being who is beyond time and not subject to past, present, and future. She says:

I am more and more firmly convinced that my whole life, including the smallest details, is part of God’s providence...! look forward joyously to the beatific vision in heaven, when the meaning of all happenings will become clear, not only the happenings of individual lives but of all mankind, and even beyond that, the meaning of the totality of all being (Nota, 1987, p. 56).

Edith Stein’s study on St. Augustine’s *The Trinity* influenced her theological understanding of the image of the Trinity. In line with the idea of St. Augustine, she believes that in the Trinity, the Eternal Being is manifested truly and most fully and that the finite being is made in the image and likeness of the Infinite Being, who is God (Genesis 1, 26-27). Since the finite being is made in the image and likeness of the Infinite Being, the finite being can have a share in the eternity of the Eternal Being. Her understanding of the mystery of the Trinity reflects her mystical analysis and strong faith which is accompanied by reason. She says:

God is utter generosity -the Father stripping Himself of His Nature, as it were, for the sake of His Son, and yet losing nothing; the Father and the Son giving Themselves to the Holy Spirit, and yet retaining the fullness of divine Nature; each Person being in Himself and yet wholly in the Others. A thing so inward is spirit –an inwardness entirely non-spatial– that in going out of itself it remains within itself. And this going out of itself is of its very nature, for spirit is selfless, not in that it has no self, rather in that it gives itself com-

pletely, without losing it, becoming manifest in this very generosity. Insofar as he is spirit, the image of the Triune God, man goes outside of himself to enter an opening world, without, however, leaving himself, for this is the way of spirit. (Nota, 1987, pp. 333-335).

In the *De Trinitate* (12.15.24), Augustine believes that reason is part of the nature of the human creature and it is subjoined by the Creator to rational things through the incorporeal light (Hill, & Rotelle, 1991) Here, Augustine opposes the idea of Plato regarding the principles of reason and knowledge being recollected in the past life of a re-incarnated man. He accepts Plato's idea on the nature of knowledge and reason but he does not accept the pre-existence of the soul before it is united to the body. Plato (*Republic*, IV, 3) believes that the forms are the agency through which the principle of reason operates in the universe and the forms of beds we see are just mere copies (Stumpf, & Fieser, 2008). Augustine believes that reason is incorporated in man's natural order and through the Divine Illumination, man can discover the truth. He supports the ideas of Platonists that intelligence and reason is needed to control the forbidden dark side of the soul of man (Augustine, & Bettenson, 1972).

Edith Stein, upon reflecting the nature of the soul in the light of faith and reason, explains that there are three ways of the soul, in which our whole being is centred. These three ways of the soul, namely: sense-soul, spirit-soul, and as soul in the strict sense, are the principles of life that men are confronted with in this world:

The ways of the soul, in which our whole being is centred, are three. As sense-soul, it dwells in the body, in all its members and parts, being dependent on it and in turn sustaining and shaping it. As spirit-soul, it mounts above itself, looking into a world beyond itself, into a world of things, events, persons and entering into conversation with it. As soul in the strict sense, it dwells in itself, there the personal I is at home, there is gathered together everything that comes from the world beyond it, there we are confronted with that world and take a stand, there we win from it what becomes our personal possession. (Nota, 1987, pp. 342-344).

Edith Stein's analysis of the image of the Trinity and of the soul is more of mystical theology than philosophy. The union of philosophy and theology in her works expresses her renewed faith and reason. Through this unification of faith and reason the finite being will be united more to the Infinite Being. Her philosophical notion of the Finite and Eternal Being is greatly influenced by Thomas Aquinas and she has taken his methodology by heart. In the same way, the mystical works of Teresa of Avila are also reflected in her mystical works. Moreover, her notions of truth, faith, and reason are also reflected in the works of Augustine.

Augustine, in most of his writings, writes that truth can be best discovered when both faith and reason are united. Reason leads one to understand the invisible truth and faith leads one to believe the unseen truth. Both, reason and faith, are essential factors to discover the Divine Truth, who is the source of all truths. There are always supernatural realities that the mind cannot fully comprehend but the faith can understand and in some cases, there are realities that are difficult to believe but the mind can reason out. Faith is a way to understand the things that are unseen. Reason and understanding is also essential to faith and belief. Augustine teaches that we should not seek understanding in order to believe, but believe that we may understand because it is only in believing that we will truly understand (Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, XXIX, 6).

This gives priority to faith over understanding and reason especially in supernatural and divine realities that are beyond the human comprehension. Some truths of Divine Revelation are beyond the scope and grasp of the finite mind. Understanding could be the price of faith. The role of faith is essential in learning and teaching the Divine Revelation and salvation offered to men by God. The faith and belief in the written and oral Divine Revelation is the best way towards their true understanding. The challenge of Augustine for those persons who have faith but cannot yet understand is to pray and plead to the Divine Truth for the divine assistance and illumination (*Letters* 147, 12, 29; Teske et al., 2004). If the human teacher can grant help to his students how much more the Divine Teacher, who is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. It is the will of God that all men should put their total trust and faith in Him.

For Augustine, faith is justified when it is accompanied with love and work. Faith without work and love is lifeless. With faith and love, one can understand well the realities beyond one's senses especially knowing the will of the Divine Teacher. To fall in love with understanding is the consequence and effect of faith. It is the understanding that there is a Divine Teacher who gives love and must also be loved in return by His creatures. Moreover, faith must also be accompanied with reason and understanding in order to achieve a better knowledge of the Divine.

Reason is necessary and essential to faith and belief. Its role to the life of a philosophically reflective believer is to understand what he believes is true. It removes any hindrance and obstacle to faith and without any obstacles faith becomes stronger and firm. Its function is to clarify the doubts and questions about the things and beings which are beyond the physical senses. Proper reasoning and understanding accompanied by belief and trust leads to proper education and learning.

The importance of reason is also highlighted in the *Letters* where Augustine insists that a believer ought to desire to know what he can now believe in order for him to see the vision he was hoping for:

One who now understands by true reason what he before only believed should certainly be preferred to one who still desires to understand what he believes. But if he does not even desire to understand and thinks that those things which should be understood ought only to be believed, he does not know the benefit faith brings. A believer, therefore, ought to believe what he does not yet see in such a way that he both hopes for and loves that vision. (*Letters*, 120, 8; Teske et al., 2004).

Reason is the benefit of faith. Faith brings understanding and vision to the believer. It is always the hope of the believer to see and know what he believes is true and existing. Invisible realities are seen when they are comprehended and grasped by the mind. We believe in the Risen Christ with the hope and desire to see him with our eyes in due time when we come to Him face to face in heaven.

Augustine clarifies in his other works such as in *Expositions of the Psalms* that the principle of faith comes first before understanding is appropriate and applicable to the Divine Revelation. The belief that God exists should be ac-

accompanied with reason. It is part of the human will to understand what lies in human belief. There are realities which we do not believe unless we understand them and there are realities which we do not understand unless we believe them (*Expositions of the Psalms*, 118; Salmond, 1983). Likewise in *Letters* he explains and rationalizes that “it is reasonable that faith precede reason with respect to certain great truths that cannot yet be grasped, however slight the reason is that persuades us to this, it undoubtedly also come before faith” (*Letters*, 120, 3; Teske et al., 2004). In scientific knowledge, the suspension of belief is necessary until the evidence asserts its certainty. So the principle that reason comes before faith applies to scientific knowledge and the principle that faith comes before reason applies to divine knowledge. In either case, Augustine teaches that love must reign over faith and reason. Love is the essential reason why a person hopes and understands. It is the love that moves a person to faith and understanding, to belief and reason.

4. COMPARISON OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE RELATION OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY

Augustine set up and found a Christian community in Thagaste, Africa, composed of his friends and brothers, which had the goal of living in one heart and mind intent upon God. Many men, Christians, and non-Christians, were attracted and joined his community of brothers and friends. They lived and learned together under Augustine’s leadership and guidance. They devoted themselves to observing and practicing the teachings of the Church such as philosophical and theological discussions, good works, and acts of mercy towards themselves and their neighbours.

Augustine also kept in touch with his brothers and friends in far places through letters. In *Letter*, Nebridius, Augustine’s friend and student, described how Augustine devoted enough energy and patience to the affairs of his fellow citizens who made demands of his goodness and wisdom (Teske et al., 2004). Nebridius wrote to Augustine and expressed his appreciation and delight for Augustine’s letters: “I am as delighted to have your letters as I am to have my own eyes. For they are great, not in size, but for things they contain... be de-

lightful for me to hear because of their eloquence, easy to read because of their shortness, and salutary to understand because of their wisdom” (*Letter 6*; Teske et al., 2004).

In his community of friends and brothers, Augustine imparted the knowledge and wisdom he received from the Divine Truth. He shared his philosophical discoveries and research with the aid of the Sacred Scriptures. He solved his problems and doubts through dialogues and sharing with his brothers and friends of their wisdom and knowledge.

When Augustine went to visit Hippo, in North Africa, he was seized by the Christian community, who had the knowledge of his good works in his founded community of friends and brothers, and he was made a priest against his will. He took the call to be a priest as a call of the Divine Truth and he submitted his will to His will. His will was to do the will of the Father. When he resided at Hippo as a priest, he founded a monastic community. Again, after he was consecrated as Bishop of Hippo, he founded more communities composed of priests, nuns, and laymen. Howie points out that the purpose of all these communities was to prepare their members for a more thoughtful, reflective Christian participation in life, not to separate them from the world. (Howie, 2008). Many of Augustine’s students became bishops and great educators.

In *Individual and Community*², Edith Stein also investigates how valuation is community-forming. Although valuing the same values is not the sole method in forming a community, however it is a significant method. Values unite the community since they are the spiritual motivating factors. It is by the value of self-constitution or self-identification, that a person shares his own world with others. It is therefore the values that build the structure of the human person. Moreover, as emphasized by Edith Stein, a superfluous person takes credit only of the values of the hedonist which is the values of comfort and pleasure. The less superfluous person also considers the values of the hero which is appearance, glory, and courage. The values of the genius such as knowledge and brilliance indicate a deepness. But with the saint’s values, such

² This second treatise together with the first treatise entitled *Sentient Causality* are collected into one volume in her collected works translated by Baseheart and Sawicki. See Stein, E. (2000). *Philosophy of Psychology and the humanities*. ICS Publications.

as true, loving, and good, the person's profundity is realized. Thus, the profundity of the individual persons reveals the profundity of the community they impart (Stein, 2000).

In *Structure of the Human Person*, (2013), Edith Stein speaks of the community in its strict sense of the term and not just its common conception which is fleeting and temporary such as travelling companions or schoolmates. She speaks of the community where there is a long-life relationship between persons and that holds them together with lasting imprint. It is also a community of individuals with supra-personal bonds and rule-of-life formation. At the basis of every single human community, there is a universal community that embraces all, and it is called humanity. Furthermore, at the basis of a universal community, there could arise a single community with particular formations that are based on freewill and final rationalization of every individual person (Stein, 2013).

5. CONCLUSIONS

This comparative study on the philosophy of education of Edith Stein and Augustine in the threefold aspects of truth and love, faith and reason, and individual and community has shown the profoundness of their theories and practices which could be the guiding principles to those who are seeking to live a life that is centred on Christ. The values discussed are relevant instruments for the development of the educative community which is currently amid uncertainties caused by the common problems of learners and educators.

A well-defined and rich Augustinian and Steinian philosophy of education offers an opportunity for both students and teachers to design and redesign an effective development program and guiding principles for themselves toward a holistic transformation of the community and society. At the same time, it is a challenge for everyone to understand and adopt their philosophy of education in their way of teaching and learning.

With the profound teachings of Edith Stein and Augustine, the author recommends a further study of their philosophy of education which is to become a guide and guiding principle to both lay and religious in becoming better witnesses of Christ, the Teacher.

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