

The manner of its revival in a legitimate and ordered form (for it must have strict ordering and the outward signs of religion: the poor cell, the habit, mortification, the regularity of Office and prayer) remains to be considered. Perhaps it will go hand in hand with the foundation of village mission priories to evangelise the entirely non-Catholic areas of our land. It is doubtful if even a modified form of the life of an anker will revive outside the purlieus of religious houses, but a form of hermit life—confined perhaps to those who have passed their first youth and have received the necessary preliminary training in religious life—suited to the age we live in, but moulded on traditional lines, may well come into being. Perhaps it will grow from, or itself mould, some of those adaptations of conventual life which are taking the attention in France and England of religious directors. It may be that there will arise a Mother House for the training of solitaries to which—reversing the Carmelite way—solitaries will return for periods of communal life from time to time, and from which visitations of hermitages would be made (though the ‘Obedience’ of a solitary, be it man or woman, would no doubt be to a Priest-Director). These and similar points would need ‘religious’ consideration. One thing would have to be clear: the training, even if in a community house, would have to be a training of solitaries, not of coenobitical religious. This is the thing that would need most care.

RUSTICUS.



## THE ROAD TO CARMEL

### HOW I ENTERED THE CARMEL IN COLOGNE

BY

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*Fourth Sunday of Advent,*  
18th December 1938.



PERHAPS I shall leave this house soon after Christmas. The circumstances which have compelled us to arrange my transfer to Echt are strongly reminiscent of the conditions at the time I entered. There is, no doubt, an inner link between them.

When the Third Reich was set up at the beginning of 1933 I had been for about a year a lecturer at the ‘German Institute for Educational Studies’ in Münster. I lived in the *Collegium Marianum* with a large number of nuns of various

<sup>1</sup> Translated by C. Hastings.

Orders who were there for study and a small group of other students, all of us well taken care of by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

One evening in Lent I came back late from a meeting of the Catholic Academic Union. I do not know whether it was that I had forgotten my key or that there was a key in the lock on the inside, but in any case I could not get in. I rang and knocked to try to get someone to come to a window, but without success. The students living in the rooms overlooking the street had gone on holiday. A gentleman passing by asked if he could be of assistance. As I turned to him he bowed and said, 'Dr Stein—I have only this moment recognised you'. He was a Catholic teacher who took part in a working party at the Institute. He excused himself for a moment to explain things to his wife who with another lady had already gone by. He said a few words to her and then came back to me. 'My wife cordially invites you to spend the night with us.' It was a good solution and I gratefully accepted. They took me to an unpretentious bourgeois house. We sat down in the sitting room. My kind hostess put a bowl of fruit on the table and then went to get a room ready for me. Her husband began a conversation, and told me what American newspapers were publishing about the atrocities being committed against the Jews. They were unconfirmed reports which I will not repeat. I am only concerned with the impression made upon me that evening. I had indeed already heard of severe measures being taken against the Jews. But now on a sudden it was luminously clear to me that once again God's hand was heavy on his people, and that the destiny of this people was my own. I did not let the man sitting opposite me see what was going on inside me. It was plain that he knew nothing of my origin. I usually explain the position on such occasions, but this time I did not. It seemed to me that it would be a violation of the law of hospitality to spoil his night's rest by telling him such a thing.

On Thursday in Passion Week I went to Beuron. Every year since 1928 I had kept Holy Week and Easter with them there, and given myself a quiet time of recollection. This time I had a special reason for wanting to go. I had been constantly thinking during the last few weeks whether there was not something I could do in the Jewish question. I had finally conceived the plan of going to Rome and asking the Holy Father in private audience to issue an Encyclical. But I did not want to take such a step on my own account. I had taken the three vows privately years before. I had found my monastic home, so to speak, in Beuron, and so could regard Abbot Raphael as my father in religion and bring all ques-

tions of importance to him for decision. It was not, however, certain that I should see him. At the beginning of January he had gone on a journey to Japan. But I knew that he would do all he could to be home for Holy Week.

Although taking an outward step of this sort was in accordance with my nature, I felt that it was not yet 'the real thing'. But neither did I know in what the real thing consisted. I broke my journey at Cologne from Thursday afternoon till Friday morning. I had a catechumen there to whom I had to devote some of my time whenever I had an opportunity. I wrote to her to find out where we could go to the Holy Hour that evening. It was the eve of the First Friday in April, and in that Holy Year 1933 our Lord's sufferings were everywhere being commemorated with special solemnity. At eight that evening we found ourselves at the Holy Hour in the Carmel of Cologne-Lindenthal. A priest (Canon Wüsten, as I learnt later) gave an address and announced that this service would be held every Thursday from then on. He spoke beautifully and movingly, but something else deeper than his words was occupying me. I spoke to our Saviour and told him that I knew that it was his cross which was now being laid on the Jewish people. Most of them did not understand it; but those who did understand must accept it willingly in the name of all. I wanted to do that, let him only show me how. When the service was over I had an interior conviction that I had been heard. But in what the bearing of the cross was to consist I did not yet know.

I went on to Beuron next morning. Changing at Immendingen in the evening I met Father Aloys Mager. We went the last part of the journey together. Soon after we had exchanged greetings he told me, as the most important piece of Beuron news: 'Father Abbot arrived back safely from Japan this morning'. So that was all right.

From my enquiries in Rome I learned that, owing to the great pressure of business, I had no chance of a private audience. Only a 'special audience' (that is, in a small group) could be arranged for me. This would not serve my purpose, so I gave up the idea of the journey and submitted my plea in writing. I know that my letter was handed, sealed, to the Holy Father; and some time afterwards I received his blessing for myself and my family. There was no further result. But I have often wondered since whether my letter may not sometimes have come into his mind. For what I predicted about the future of Catholics in Germany was fulfilled step by step in the following years.

Before leaving Beuron I asked Father Abbot what I ought to

do if I had to give up my work in Münster. He found it quite impossible to believe that this could happen. On the journey to Münster I read a newspaper report of a big National Socialist teachers' conference in which denominational organisations too had had to take part. It was clear to me that in educational matters least of all would there be toleration of influences opposed to the régime. The Institute at which I worked was purely Catholic, founded and maintained by the Catholic teachers' union. So its days were doubtless numbered. I must count straight away on the conclusion of my short career as a lecturer.

I arrived back in Münster on 19th April and next day I went to the Institute. The Director was on holiday in Greece. The manager, a Catholic teacher, took me into his office and told me his tale of woe. For weeks he had been having most disturbing interviews and was already quite worn out. 'Just think, Doctor, there has been someone here already saying that no doubt Dr Stein will not be giving lectures any more?' It might be best, he said, if I gave up lecturing for this summer and worked quietly in the Marianum. The situation would be clarified by the autumn, the Institute would perhaps be taken over by the Church, there would then be nothing to prevent my working with it. I took the news very calmly, without accepting the consolation. 'If I can't go on here', I said, 'there is nothing possible for me any more in Germany at all.' The manager expressed his surprise that I should see so clearly although I lived in such retirement and took no further interest in the affairs of the world.

I was almost relieved that the common fate had now really come upon me, but I had of course to consider what I was to do. I asked the president of the Catholic women teachers' union for her opinion. It was at her suggestion that I had come to Münster. She advised me to stay in Münster for the summer at least and to go on with some work I had begun. The union would take care of my maintenance, since the result of my work would in any case be useful to it. If it were not possible to resume my activities at the Institute I could later look round for possibilities abroad. In point of fact I soon received an offer from South America. But by the time that came I had already been shown quite a different road.

About ten days after I returned from Beuron the thought came to me: is it not time at last to enter Carmel? For nearly twelve years Carmel had been my goal; since the summer of 1921 when the 'Life' of our holy mother St Teresa had fallen into my hands and brought to an end my long search for the true faith. When on New Year's Day 1922 I received Holy Baptism I thought that this

was but a preparation for entering the Order. But when a few months later I stood before my mother for the first time since my baptism, it was clear to me that she was not yet ready for this second blow. She would not die, but it would fill her with a bitterness for which I could not be answerable. I must wait in patience. My spiritual advisers too assured me of this. Waiting had lately become very hard. I had become a stranger in the world. Before I took the Münster post and after my first term there I had begged to be allowed to enter the Order. I was refused, out of consideration for my mother and also of the influence which I had had for some years in Catholic life. I had submitted. But now these barriers had broken down. My influence was at an end, and would my mother not rather think of me in a convent in Germany than in a school in South America? On the 30th April—Good Shepherd Sunday—the Church of St Ludger was celebrating his feast with a thirteen hours prayer. I went there late in the afternoon, and said to myself: I will not leave until I see clearly whether I may now enter Carmel. As the final blessing was given, I received the Good Shepherd's consent.

I wrote the same evening to Father Abbot. But he was in Rome, and I did not wish to send my letter across the frontier. It had to wait on my desk until I could send it to Beuron. It was the middle of May by the time I had permission to take the first preliminary steps. I did so without delay. Through my catechumen in Cologne I asked for an interview with Dr Cosack. We had met in Aachen in October 1932. She had introduced herself to me because she knew that I was close in spirit to Carmel, and she told me that she was closely connected with the Order, and especially with the Carmel at Cologne. I wanted now to find out from her what was to be done. She sent me word that she could give me some time the following Sunday—Rogation Sunday—or on the Feast of the Ascension.

I got this news by the morning post on Saturday. At midday I went to Cologne. I telephoned Dr Cosack and made an appointment to go for a walk with her next morning. Neither she nor my catechumen knew yet why I had come. The latter went with me to Mass at the Carmel. On the way back she said, 'Edith, while I was kneeling beside you, the thought came to me: She isn't wanting now to enter Carmel?' I did not want to keep my secret from her any longer. She promised to keep it to herself. A little later Dr C. arrived. As soon as we had set out together on the road to the Stadtwald, I told her what I wanted. I immediately added the things that were against it: my age (42), my Jewish origin, my

lack of funds. She thought all this of no great importance. She even held out the hope that I would be accepted here in Cologne, because a new foundation was being made in Silesia which would leave some vacancies. A new foundation at the gates of my own city, Breslau! It seemed a fresh sign from heaven.

I told Dr C. about my past development, so that she could form her own opinion of my Carmelite vocation. She then herself suggested that we should pay a visit to the Cologne Carmel. She was particularly intimate with Sister Marianne (Countess Prashma), who was to go to Silesia for the new foundation. She wanted to talk to her first. While she was in the parlour I knelt in the chapel, close to the altar of the little St Teresa. There came over me the peace of one who has reached his goal.

The conversation lasted a long time. When Dr C. finally called me she said confidently 'I think it will be all right'. She had talked first with Sister Marianne, then with Mother Prioress (then Mother Josepha of the Most Blessed Sacrament), and prepared the ground for me. But the convent's daily round left no more time now for the parlour. I was to come back after Vespers. I was back in the Chapel long before Vespers, and joined in praying it. Then followed May devotions behind the grill. It was about half past three when I was at last called to the parlour. Mother Josepha and our dear Mother (Teresia Renata de Spiritu Sancto, then sub-prioress and novice-mistress) were at the grill. Once more I gave an account of my journey: how the thought of Carmel had never left me; I had been teaching for eight years with the Dominicans at Speyer, was most intimately united with the whole community, and yet could not enter there; Beuron I thought of as the fore-court of Heaven, but I never thought of becoming a Benedictine; it always seemed to me that our Lord had been keeping something for me in Carmel which I could find only there. This made an impression. Mother Teresa doubted only whether they could accept the responsibility of taking someone out of the world who had still much that she could accomplish outside<sup>2</sup>. Finally I was told that I should come back when Father Provincial was there; he was expected shortly.

That evening I went back to Münster. I had got further than I had expected at my arrival. But there was a long wait for Father Provincial. During the days of Pentecost I spent most of my time in the Cathedral of Münster. The Holy Ghost gave me courage to

<sup>2</sup> A remark intended to remind the postulant that she could not count on being able to continue her intellectual work in Carmel. To this she gave the beautiful answer: 'It is not human activity that can help us but the Passion of Christ. It is a share in that that I desire'.

write to Mother Josepha and ask urgently for an answer, since in my uncertain situation I had to be clear about what I could count on. I was at once summoned to Cologne. The Superior of the Convent would see me, they would not wait for Father Provincial any longer. This time, too, I was to be presented to the Chapter nuns, who had to vote on my admission. I was once again in Cologne from Saturday afternoon till Sunday evening (the 18th and 19th of June, I think), and talked to Mother Josepha, Mother Teresia and Sister Marianne before I visited the Monsignor.

On the way to see Dr Lenné I was caught in a thunderstorm and arrived wet through. I had to wait for an hour before he appeared. When we had exchanged salutations he passed his hand over his forehead and said, 'Now, what was it that you wanted? I have quite forgotten.' I replied that I was a postulant for Carmel and had been sent to see him. He was now *au fait*, and stopped addressing me as 'du'. It was clear to me afterwards that he had done this to try me. . . . He then dismissed me with his blessing.

After Vespers the assembled Chapter nuns came to the grill. Our dear senior, little Sister Teresia, came up close to it so as to be able to see and hear. Sister Aloysia, the liturgical enthusiast, wanted to hear about Beuron; that was something I had to offer. Finally I had to sing a little song. I had already been told about this the day of my former visit, but I had taken it for a joke. I sang 'Segne, Du Maria' rather shyly and softly. Afterwards I said that it had been harder than speaking before an audience of a thousand people. I heard later that the Sisters did not understand this, because they knew nothing of my speaking activities. After the Sisters had gone Mother Josepha said that the voting could only take place the following morning. So for this evening I had to go away without a decision.

Sister Marianne, with whom I finally spoke alone, held out the prospect of having the verdict by telegram. Next day, in fact, the telegram came: 'Glad agreement. Greetings. Carmel.' I read it and went into the Chapel to make my thanksgiving.

We had already discussed what was to follow. By the 15th July I would have settled everything in Münster, and on the 16th I would keep the feast of the Queen of Carmel with them in Cologne. I was to live for a month as a guest in the outer part of the house. go home for a visit in the middle of August, and on our dear Mother's feast, October 15th, I should be received into the enclosure. There was the further prospect of my being transferred later to the Silesian Carmel.

Six big cases of books preceded me to Cologne. I wrote that I

supposed no Carmelite had ever brought such a dowry before! Sister Ursula took care of them, and gave herself immense trouble trying to keep Theology, Philosophy, Philology, etc., as the cases were marked, separate from each other while unpacking them. But they all got mixed up in the end!

Only a few people in Münster knew where I was going. I wanted to keep it as quiet as possible until my family had been told. The Sister Superior at the Marianum was one of the few. I had confided it to her after the telegram came. She had been much concerned about me, and was now very happy. Shortly before my departure there was a farewell evening in the music room. The students had put great affection into their preparations for it, and the nuns also took part. I said a few words of thanks, and told them that when they heard later where I was they would be glad with me.

The Sisters of the House gave me a cross with relics which the late Bishop Johannes von Poppenburg had given them. The Sister Superior brought it to me on a silver plate covered with roses. Five students and the librarian from the Institute saw me off at the station. I had great bouquets of roses to bring to the Queen of Carmel for her feast. Less than a year and a half before, I had come to Münster as a stranger. Apart from my official activities I had lived in cloistered retirement. Nevertheless I was now leaving behind a large circle of people bound to me in love and loyalty. I have always kept the lovely old town and all the country round Münster in affectionate and grateful remembrance.

I had written home that I had been accepted by some Sisters in Cologne and would be going there for good in October. They took it for a new appointment and congratulated me.

My month outside the enclosure was a very happy time. I followed the daily programme, working except during the hours of prayer, and coming often to the parlour. Any questions that arose I submitted to Mother Josepha; her decision was always the same as I would have reached myself, and this agreement of minds made me very happy. My catechumen was often with me. She wanted to be baptised before my departure, so that I could be her godmother. On 1st August Monsignor Lenné baptised her in the Cathedral Chapter House, and next morning she made her first Communion in the Convent Chapel. Her husband came to both ceremonies, but he could not make up his mind to follow her. On 10th August at Trier I met Father Abbot and received his blessing for my difficult journey to Breslau. I saw the Seamless Robe, and prayed for strength, and I knelt for a long while before the beautiful miraculous statue in St Matthias. I was welcomed for the night at the Carmel



in Cordel, where our dear Mother Teresia Renata had been novice-mistress for nine years before she was called to Cologne as subprioress. On 14th August my godchild took me to Maria Laach for the feast of the Assumption. From there I went on to Breslau.

My sister Rosa was waiting for me at the station. Since she had for a long time belonged at heart to the Church and was completely at one with me, I told her at once what I was doing. She showed no surprise, but I saw that even to her the thought of it had never occurred. The others asked me no questions at all for two or three weeks. Only my nephew Wolfgang (then twenty-one years old) asked as soon as he came to visit me what I was going to do in Cologne. I told him the truth, and begged him to keep it to himself.

The events of the day were causing my mother great suffering. She was continually being aroused to fresh exclamations that 'there could be such wicked people'. On top of this came a personal loss which went very deep. My sister Erna was taking over the practice of our friend Lilli Berg, who was going with her family to Palestine. The Bibersteins had to move into the Bergs' house in the south of the town and leave our home. Erna and her two children were my mother's consolation and joy. To have to do without having them about her was bitterly painful. But despite all these cares pressing upon her, she came to life again when I arrived. Her cheerfulness and her sense of humour broke out again. When she came home from the office, she liked to bring her knitting and sit down beside my desk and talk about all her domestic and business worries. I got her to tell me all her memories, too, as material for a history of our family which I began to write. It was evident that being together like this was doing her good. But all the time I had to think, 'If you knew!'

It was a great comfort to me that Sister Marianne, with her cousin Sister Elizabeth [Countess Stolberg, † 1948] were in Breslau getting ready for the new foundation. They had gone from Cologne to Breslau before I did. Sister Marianne had come to see my Mother and give her my love. While I was still away she came twice more to our house and was very charming to my mother. When I went to visit her at the Ursulines in the Ritterplatz where she was staying I was able to speak freely of what was on my mind. I, on the other hand, was brought into all the joys and sorrows of the foundation, and was able once to go with the two Sisters to see the site in Pawelwitz (now Wendelborn).

I helped Erna a great deal during the move. Going on a tram to their new home she finally asked about what was to happen in Cologne. When I gave her my reply she became very pale and

tears came into her eyes. 'It is a terrible world', she said. 'What makes a person happy seems to others the worst thing that could happen to him.' She made no attempt to hold me back. A few days later she gave me a message from her husband, saying that if it was concern for how I was to live that had moved me to this decision, I must know that I could live with them so long as they had anything themselves. (My brother-in-law in Hamburg had said the same.) Erna added that she had to pass this on to me: she knew quite well that as far as I was concerned such motives did not come into the question.

On the first Sunday in September I was alone at home with my mother. She was sitting at the window with her knitting and I was beside her. Suddenly the long-expected question came: 'What are you going to do with the Sisters in Cologne?' 'Live with them.' Then came a desperate effort to deter me. My mother did not stop working. Her wool got into a tangle; she tried with trembling hands to unravel it, and I helped her, while the dispute went on.

There was no more peace from now on. A cloud hung over the whole house. From time to time my mother made a new attempt to shake me. This again would be followed by silent despair. My niece Erika, the most convinced Jewess in the family, also thought it her duty to work on me. My brothers and sisters did not try, because they considered it hopeless. It got even worse when my sister Else came from Hamburg for mother's birthday. Though my mother usually controlled herself when with me, talking to Else she became extremely overwrought. My sister recounted all these outbreaks to me, because she thought that I did not know my mother's state of mind.

The family was also burdened with great economic worry. For a long time the business had been going very badly. And now half our house, where the Bibersteins had been living, stood empty. People came every day to see it, but nothing ever came of it. Among the most eager applicants was a group of Protestant clergy. When two of the pastors came for a second visit, my mother asked me to go into the empty part of the house with them, because she was already very tired. I progressed so far with these two gentlemen that we drew up all the conditions. I passed them on to my mother, and then wrote on her instructions to the Head Pastor to ask him for a written acceptance, which was given. All the same, shortly before my departure the arrangement threatened to break down. I wanted to relieve my mother of this worry at least, and I went to see the clergyman where he was staying. It seemed that there was nothing further to be done. But as I tried to take my leave

he said, 'Now, you are looking really sad. I am sorry.' I told him that my mother had so many troubles to bear at present. He asked sympathetically what sort of troubles they were. I told him briefly of my conversion and my intention of entering a convent. It made a great impression. 'You shall know, before you go there, that you have won a heart here.' He called his wife in, and after a short discussion they decided to call another meeting of the Parish Committee and put the case before them once more. And before my departure the Head Pastor and his colleague came to our house to conclude the agreement. As he went out he said to me in a low voice, 'God keep you'.

Sister Marianne had one more private talk with my mother. It did not achieve much. Sister Marianne could not decide (as my mother hoped) to deter me from going. And no other consolation was acceptable. Neither Sister, on the other hand, dared to encourage and strengthen me in my resolution. The decision was so difficult that no one could say with certainty whether this road or that was the right one. Good reasons could be advanced for either. I had to take the step entirely in the darkness of faith. I often thought during those weeks, 'Which of us will break, my mother or myself?' But we both held till the last day.

Shortly before I went I had my teeth seen to. While I was sitting in the dentist's waiting room the door opened and my niece Susel came in. She flushed with delight. Our appointments had been made for the same time without our knowing it. We went into the surgery together, and then she went home with me. She clutched my arm and I took her brown hand in mine. Susel was then twelve, but very mature and thoughtful for her age. I had never been allowed to talk to the children about the change in my belief. But Erna had now told them everything; I was very grateful to her. I asked the child to go to see her grandmother often after I had gone. She promised. 'Why are you doing this now?' she asked. I could hear in it the kind of parental conversations she had been overhearing. I gave her my reasons as I would to an adult. She listened thoughtfully and understood.

Two days before I left, her father (Hans Biberstein) visited me. He felt impelled to tell me his objections, though he expected no result. What I was planning seemed to him to draw a yet sharper line between me and the Jewish people—at this moment when it was being so oppressed. He could not understand that from my point of view it seemed quite different.

The last day I spent at home was 12th October, my birthday. It was at the same time a Jewish festival, the end of the Feast of

Tabernacles. My mother went to the service at the Synagogue of the Rabbinical Seminary. I went with her, because we wanted to spend this day as far as possible completely in common. Erika's favourite teacher, a distinguished scholar, gave a fine sermon. On the way there in the tram we had not spoken much. So as to give some small comfort I had said the first period was only a trial. But that was no help. 'If you undertake a trial period, I know that you will go through with it.' Now my mother wanted to walk home. About three quarters of an hour, and she was eighty-four! But I had to consent, for I could see that she wanted very much to talk with me undisturbed.

'It was a beautiful sermon, wasn't it?'

'Yes.'

'Then it is possible to be pious as a Jew?'

'Certainly—if one has not learnt anything more.'

Then came the despairing reply:

'Why have you learnt more? I don't want to say anything against him. He may have been a very good man. But why did he make himself God?'

After lunch she went to the office, so that my sister Frieda should not be alone during my brother's lunch hour. But she told me she would come back very soon, and did so (for my sake only; otherwise she was always in the office all day). During the afternoon and evening we had many guests—my brothers and sisters, all their children, my own friends. That was a good thing, because it made a diversion. But it was hard when, one after another, they said goodbye and went away. In the end my mother and I were alone in the room; my sisters still had clearing away and washing up to do. Then she hid her face in her hands and began to weep. I stood behind her chair and laid her silver head on my breast. We stayed so a long while, until she let me persuade her to go to bed. I took her upstairs and helped her to undress, for the first time in my life. Then I stayed sitting on her bed until she herself sent me to get some sleep. I think neither of us had any rest that night.

My train went about eight in the morning. Else and Rosa wanted to go with me to the station. Erna had also wanted to come, but I asked her instead to come to the house early and stay with my mother. I knew that she more than anyone else would be able to calm her. We two youngest girls had always kept our childish tenderness towards our mother. The others were shy of showing it, though their love was certainly not less.

At half past five I went out as always to the first Mass at St Michael's church. Then we were all together for breakfast. Erna

came about seven. My mother tried to take something, but soon she pushed away her cup and began to weep as on the evening before. I went to her again and held her in my arms until it was time to go. Then I signed to Erna to take my place. I put on my hat and coat in the next room. Then came the parting. My mother embraced me and kissed me very tenderly. Erika thanked me for all my help (I had worked with her over her teacher's examination, and while I was packing she had come to me with her questions). Afterwards she said, 'The Eternal be with you'. As I embraced Erna my mother wept aloud. I went quickly out. Rosa and Else followed me. When the tram came past our house there was no one at the window, as there had always been, to wave goodbye again.

At the station we had to wait a little for the train to come in. Else clung tightly to me. When I had secured a seat, and was looking down at my sisters, I was struck by the difference between them. Rosa was as calm as if she were going with me into the peace of the cloister. But Else in her suffering suddenly looked like an old woman.

At last the train began to move. The two of them waved for as long as there was anything to see. Finally they disappeared. I could retreat to my place in the compartment. So what I had hardly dared to hope for was now real. There could be no violent access of joy. All that lay behind me was too terrible for that. But I was in deep peace—in the haven of the divine Will.

It was late in the evening when I got to Cologne. My godchild had begged that I should spend the night with them once more. I was not to be received into the enclosure till after Vespers next day. I told the convent by telephone next morning of my arrival, and was able to come to the grill to be welcomed. We were back soon after lunch, and in the Chapel for Vespers: the First Vespers of our holy Mother. As I was kneeling there before it began, I heard someone whispering at the sacristy turn, 'Is Edith there?' Then some huge white chrysanthemums were brought out. Some teachers from the Palatinate had sent them by way of greetings, and I was to see them before they were made part of the altar decorations.

After Vespers we had to go and have coffee together. Then a lady came who introduced herself as the sister of our dear Mother Teresa Renata. She asked which of us was the postulant, as she wanted to give her some encouragement. But that was not necessary. This patroness and my godchild went with me to the enclosure door. It opened at last, and in deep peace I stepped across the threshold into the House of the Lord.