

## **Jubilee for The World of Education 2025 Value, Neurodiversity and Education with Edith Stein 27<sup>th</sup> October–1<sup>st</sup> November 2025**

Following an enquiry with the Dicastery for Culture and Education, it came to our attention that, in this Jubilee year, the celebration of 'The World of Education', 27<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025<sup>1</sup>, had nothing available which explored and celebrated the value of neurodiversity in education. Seeing this as an important issue to be considered, the Pontifical Dicastery for Culture and Education have patroned our exploration of this human experience, including our events in the planned activities for their Jubilee celebrations.

Cristina Gangemi, the director of the Kairos Forum, is currently completing a PhD study, which explores Theology, Disability, Education and Catechesis. In this endeavour, her conversation partner is the phenomenologist Edith Stein, Saint Theresa Benedict of the Cross. Seeking to be of some help in closing the identified gap in the Jubilee, Gangemi, a well-known figure in these areas<sup>2</sup>, and Fr Christof Betschart o.c.d, President of the Pontifical Faculty of Theology Teresianum, will present a creative, three-day pilgrimage. The focus for this will be the valuing of people, who experience disability and neurodiversity. The aim is to make a valuable contribution to the lives and faith of people, as well as contribute to the work of the Dicastery, within the World of Education.

The main Jubilee programme is structured around the three languages of education proposed by Pope Francis: the language of the mind, the hands, and the heart. Our conference and workshops will follow this pattern, addressing how to enable the experiences of individuals who live with an experience of neurodiversity. The day will highlight these direct experiences, questioning how far the world of education has travelled in both theory and practice to respond to and celebrate such experiences. This will be addressed by a panel of Edith Stein specialists, who will provide insights based on their understanding of Steinian studies, emphasising the significance of her voice, knowledge and writings for this ongoing journey towards 'value-ability' ©Gangemi 2022.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/pellegrinaggio/calendario-giubileo/GrandiEventi/Giubileo-del-Mondo-Educativo.html>

<sup>2</sup> Cristina Gangemi, 'Ways of Knowing God, Becoming Friends in Time ; a Timeless Conversation between Disability, Theology, Edith Stein and Professor John Swinton', *Journal of Disability & Religion* 24 (22 April 2020): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2020.1750537>. see also Cristina Gangemi, *Because I Am; Christian Accompaniment through the Experience of a Pre-Birth Diagnosis of a Possible Disability*, Parish Resource (Chawton: Redemptorist Publications, 2018).

**The Method for the Conference is based upon Whitehead and Whitehead's  
'Method in Ministry; Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry'  
Whitehead and Whitehead<sup>3</sup>**

This method is a correlative approach to meeting pastoral concerns, bringing three elements into critical conversation with one another. The method invites an investigation of the insights from each element to get to the heart of the matter. This is compatible with the phenomenological method, which seeks to peel back any layers of presumptive consciousness to examine 'the thing in itself'.

**Wisdom of Tradition:** The Christian Story and Gospel Directives regarding issues within the experience of disability. The teachings and thinking of Edith Stein.

**Wisdom of Culture:** Culture of education and within an experience of neurodiversity.

**Wisdom of Experience:** Insight into the stories of people who live with an experience of neurodiversity, regarding various services within the World of Education.

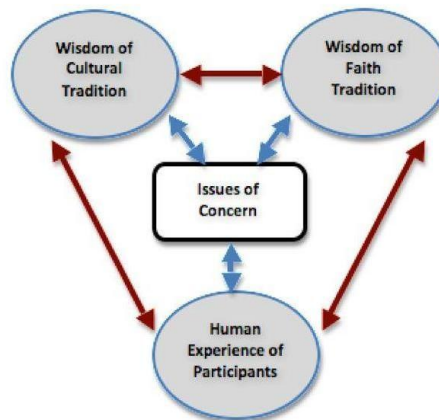
The method undertakes three tasks within such a conversation:

1. **Attending:** Attention here is given to the World of Education and the experience of neurodiversity within it.
2. **Assertion:** We place the narratives of the people who live with this experience into open and unbiased conversations with the knowledge of experts who have studied the subjects of Edith Stein, Disability and Education. The purpose of such correlation ensures that the experts can assert all that they have studied within this area of knowledge responding to real experiences, placing their knowledge at the service of such narratives. This is to be done without judgment and from a standpoint of exploration.
3. **Responding to the pastoral concern:** Once the first two processes take place, the pastoral concern begins to emerge, but from a more informed perspective, which has been informed by honest dialogue. This raises new questions for tradition to respond to, in the light of experience, working towards an honest culture that includes all people.

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<sup>3</sup> Evelyn E and James D Whitehead, *Method in Ministry; Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* (Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed & Ward, 1995).

## WHITEHEADS' MODEL FOR 'DOING THEOLOGY'



Our conference will therefore adopt this method in search for insights, raise awareness, which can transform practice and meet the needs expressed. The culture in which we must work, moving beyond this time together, will be what the conference seeks to discover.

**Method:** Conversation in the Spirit, which is part of the synodal journey as requested by Pope Francis:

1. **Attend:** Narrative and experience from an experience of neurodiversity and education.
2. **Assert:** Input from an academic regarding relative issues.
3. **Pastoral response from panel:** 5 minutes for each panel member, who will speak about what struck them and how their field would respond to such an experience. This is a spontaneous movement of the Spirit of God within the panel member. They are also able to comment or question the speaker.
4. **The Chair opens Q and A to the field,** who are also welcome to ask a question following the spontaneous movement of the Spirit.

Therefore, each section is guided by such correlative and revelatory conversation, following the flow and movement above. These will then inform the practical workshops for the next day, which bring all these areas into conversation with practice and methods for response.

**Day One      27<sup>th</sup> October: Conference at Pontifical Faculty of Theology Teresianum**

07.00      Optional mass at hotel

08.15      Coach pick up from hotel

08.00–09.00      Registration

09.15      **Welcome and opening prayer** *Fr Christof Betschart, o.c.d.*  
Introducing opening speaker:

**(Attend to context of the pedagogy of Edith Stein in response to a pastoral concern)**

09.30      **Speaker 1:** The Value of Neurodiversity in a Steinian perspective. *Prof.ssa Angela Ales Bello*

09.50      **Chair 1:** Introduction and setting the context *Dr Zachariah Duke*

10.10      **Stories from the Field 1:** Service users (UK)

10.10      a. Living and learning with a neurodiversity *Shirley Jones*  
*Hannah Sephton-Smith*

10.30      b. The Deaf child in the classroom *Fr Paul Fletcher*

**(Assertion for Edith Stein and her approach to education)**

10.50      **Speaker 2:** Edith Stein, the teacher-pupil relationship *Prof.ssa AnnaMaria Pezzella*

11.20      *Refreshment break*

**(Pastoral response from academic and then from audience)**

11.40      **Academic Response from Disability Theologian** *Dr Liam Waldron*  
followed by Q&A

**(Attend to the experience and nature of service provision)**

12.10      **Stories from the Field 2:** Service providers (UK)

12.10      a. Accessible curriculum in secondary education *Cristina Gangemi*

12.25      b. Accessible curriculum in primary education *Catholic Plus*

12.45      *Lunch break*

14.15      **Chair 2:** Introduction to afternoon *Joey Draycott*

**(Assertion from Disability and Theology)**

14.30      **Speaker 3:** What is Disability Theology and why is it important for the World of Education? *Prof. John Swinton*

**(Pastoral response from academic and then from audience)**

15.00      **Academic response from Edith Stein and disability specialist**, followed by Q&A      *Dr Mariele Courtois*

**(Attention to the experience of autism in education)**

15.30      **Stories from the Field 3: Service Users**

15.30      a. Access and autism in seminary formation      *Deacon Mark Paine (UK)*

15.50      b. Faith Pathways: Adult formation in the USA      *Dr Anne Chrzan (USA)*

16.10      *Refreshment break*

**(Pastoral response: change in pattern occurs here as we bring the correlative conversation from the day into focus, bringing theology, Stein and education into a practical conversation between experience, tradition and culture. This is the growing end of theology.)**

16.30      **Speaker 4:**

Bildung      *Prof.ssa Giulia Brunetti*

17.10      **Speaker 5:** Il linguaggio alternativa, nel mondo d'educazione e Disabilità, Mente, Mani e Cuore (Theology)  
Accessible education for everyone or no-one

17.40      Introducing closing speaker:      *Prof. Shahid Mobeen*

17.45      **Speaker 6:** Otherness and intersubjectivity: Difference and neurodiversity in Edith Stein. Reflecting upon the pastoral concern      *Fr David Mughal*

18.10      **Prayer:** Edith Stein drama in the chapel      *Kairos Drama Group with MAiC*

18.40      Closing with a reflection prayer      *Bishop Paul Hendricks*

18.55      End of Day One

19.10      Coach pick up to restaurant

20.00      Conference Supper at *Fieramosca*, Piazza Dei Mercanti, Trastevere  
**Welcome and grace**      *Bishop Paul Hendricks*

22.30      Coach pick up back to hotel

**Day Two      28<sup>th</sup> October: Edith Stein Church and Centre**  
**Pope Francis call for a Jubilee of Hope in Education.**  
**Our workshop day is a response to this call: it is Hope in Action.**

The practical workshops will include the teaching of a language of the mind, hands and heart, utilising multimedia ways of communicating in the classroom, including Makaton sign, for which all delegates will receive a beginner's certificate. The practical workshops will give practical skills for motivating empathy and value, within the life-long educational journey of people who live with an experience of disability, and much, much more. People can take time to meet with the panel and progress any questions from the day before.

There will be four workshop sections. Delegates will sign up for them in advance. They can choose one from each session, with 20-25 max. attendees per workshop.

There will be a poster presentation workshop for the first hour of the parallel academic workshop session: four posters, 10 minutes' presentation, with 5 minutes' Q&A each.

07.00	Optional mass at hotel	
08.00	Coach pick up from hotel	
09.15	Opening address in main hall	<i>Prof. Joachim Feldes</i>
09.25	Introduction	<i>Cristina Gangemi</i>
09.30–11.30	<b>Workshops 1 in break-out rooms</b> <i>Each workshop is repeated</i>	<i>An hour each workshop</i>

**The Language of the Mind (choose one):**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| a. Responding and valuing neurodiversity in the classroom/religious community (practical tools including Book Beyond Words) | <i>Cristina Gangemi</i> |
| b. Accessible Religious Education   | <i>Catholic Plus</i>    |

**The Language of the Hands and Body (choose one):**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| c. Making education and spirituality accessible to the Deaf child in the classroom/religious community | <i>Dr Minna Moffatt-Feldman</i>    |
| d. Multi-modal communication, including the use of Sign: a Steinian vocabulary                         | <i>Mike Harris and Sean Rooney</i> |

09.30–11.30	<b>Parallel academic workshops – in main hall</b>	
09.30–10.30	<b>Academic Posters:</b> Growing the field of disability, theology and education in conversation with Edith Stein	<i>Dr Mariele Courtois</i> <i>Chair</i>

10.30–11.30	<b>Time with Speakers:</b> Informal Q&A with Opening address : Hope in Action:	<i>Dr Zachariah Duke, Moderator</i>
11.30	<i>Refreshment Break – Poster room open</i>	
11.45–12.45	<b>Workshops 2 in break-out rooms</b>	<i>An hour each workshop</i>
<b>The Language of the Mind (choose one):</b>		
	a. Preparing for ordination with autism	<i>Deacon Mark Paine</i>
	b. Accessible Religious Education	<i>Catholic Plus</i>
12.45	Inclusive Service of Affirming Baptism	<i>Prof. Joachim Feldes</i> <i>Prof. John Swinton</i>
13.15	<i>Lunch – Poster room open 14.00</i>	
14.30–15.30	<b>Workshops 3 in break out rooms</b>	<i>An hour each workshop</i>
<b>The Language of the Heart (choose one):</b>		
	a. Involving Youth Blesses Everyone.	<i>Chareen Katra</i>
	b. Pathways to adult formation RCIA and beyond	<i>Dr Anne Chrzan</i>
15.30	<b>Conclusions:</b> (all in main hall) <i>Sending out of prophets for creative communication, with questions to pose in the Jubilee events regarding differentiated education and disability, within each context</i> <b>Q&amp;A from the floor</b>	<i>Cristina Gangemi</i>
15.45	<b>Lectio Magistralis:</b> Closing insights and opening the field	<i>Prof.ssa Angela Ales Bello</i>
16.15	Thanksgiving and Commissioning	<i>Prof. Joachim Feldes</i>
16.45	End of Day Two	
17.00	Coach pick up to book launch	
18.15	Book launch (location to be advised) <i>With refreshments</i> <b>Introduction and welcome</b>	<i>All delegates</i> <i>Cristina Gangemi</i>
19.30	<i>Free evening – make own way back to hotel</i>	

### **Day Three     29<sup>th</sup> October**

- 07.30            Coach pick up from hotel
- 08.30–09.00    Enter St Peter’s Basilica – seat tickets   **TBC**
- 10.00–11.00    Catechesis and general audience with Pope Leo XIV
- 11.00            *Free time – afternoon and evening*
- 15.00–17.30    Disability and Theology Network Set up:            *Prof. Shahid Mobeen*  
                         Roundtable discussion. **Invitation only.**            *Prof. Zachariah Duke*  
                         *With refreshments*                                    *Cristina Gangemi*

### **Day Four       30<sup>th</sup> October**

- 07.00            Optional mass at hotel  
                         Hotel check out (Pilgrimage)
- 08.00            Coach pick up from hotel
- 10.00            Pilgrimage to St Peter’s Basilica and Holy Door
- 12.00            *Free time – afternoon and evening*
- End of Kairos Pilgrimage**

### **Day Five       31<sup>st</sup> October – optional extra day**

- 07.00            Optional mass at hotel
- 09.30            Meet Kairos team at St Peter’s Square
- 10.30            Pope Leo XIV audience, with educators, at Paul VI Audience Hall  
                         at the Vatican, followed by passage through the Holy Door
- 12.30            *Free time – afternoon and evening*

### **Day Six        1<sup>st</sup> November – optional extra day**

- 07.00            Optional mass at hotel  
                         Hotel check out (extra days)
- 09.00            Meet Kairos team at St Peter’s Square
- 10.00            Mass in St Peter’s Basilica with Pope Leo XIV
- 12.00            *Free time – make your own way to airport/other transport*