

## Abstract

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The research undertaken here, based on the writings of Edith Stein – Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, aims to examine the structure of man in the context of his union with God. The first part of the dissertation applies a Christological hermeneutical key to establish the ontological status of the first human couple in the light of the biblical descriptions of creation. The issue of the image of God in creation and man is analyzed, with particular emphasis on sexual division. The next chapter analyzes the essence of original sin and the presence of grace when a person is taking a volitional position. The effects of sin on man are presented – in both the spiritual and the physical dimension, as well as in man’s relationship to others and to God. The third chapter discusses the significance of the Person of Jesus Christ – the new Adam – for the condition of human nature. The analysis focuses on the nature of Jesus Christ, and especially on the hypostatic union and its implications for the entire human race. The condition of redeemed human nature is also outlined. The fourth chapter analyses the spiritual and physical structure of man, understood as a “space for cooperation” with grace. The following components of man are examined: body, soul and spirit. In order to symbolically present man and his spiritual life, Edith Stein used the image of the “inner fortress”, which she borrowed from Saint Teresa of Avila. According to this concept, man is inhabited in his inner center by God himself. The paths leading to this “inner fortress” are also discussed. The last chapter analyzes the essence of human formation, its dimensions and goals. It highlights ascetic formation, understood as man’s free response to God’s call and as the beginning of the path leading towards the mystical union with God. Individual stages of the journey towards that goal are distinguished, with a focus on the purification of man’s spiritual powers and man’s mystical transformation. The last section outlines the concept of integral humanity.