

House of Cooper

St. Maximilian & St. Edith Stein



Fr. Donald Theodore Cooper



- **General Biography:**
 - Born in Houston, TX on July 26th, 1923.
 - Nicknames were “Don” and “Coop” and “Mr. St. Thomas”.
 - Graduate of STH Class of 1940.
 - Only class to experience both the old school and the new school.
 - Ordained to the priesthood in Houston at St. Ann’s on June 29th, 1950.
 - Served at STH more than 30 years.
 - Principal from 1968-1976.
 - Stints as teacher, coach (tennis), and development director.
 - Pastor of St. Theresa’s in Sugar Land.

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- Hall of Honor member.
- **Notable Information:**
 - Personal Characteristics:
 - Humble and unassuming, quiet, reserved, polite, southern manners but also known for great leadership ability and his public speaking skills. Known for great diligence, simple lifestyle and appreciation for the basics of life. Never known for taking trips or vacations other than to visit his parents or serve the mission. Loved water skiing but never got to do it much. Was asked by fellow Basilians when he would take a break, he would always reply, “When I meet St. Peter.”
 - Known for walking the STH campus, praying the rosary on a daily basis.
 - Round-Up:
 - Helped to make Round-Up what it is by pushing sales into the tens of thousands.
 - Academic focus:
 - Assumed role of principal after the “School of Champions” era in STH history. Sought to ensure the academic excellence of the school, and saw this as his primary mission.
 - Felt there was a need to bolster the academic program at STH. Added LOTE, Science classes, Art, and English classes, and partnered with Duchesne and Incarnate Word for joint class offerings.
 - During his tenure, enrollment grew in greatest percentage since 1940.
 - Selling of Property:

Sold the property east of the school (where apartments are now) to pay for the school to have air conditioning installed throughout, to renovate the gym, build the cafeteria, build new science labs, the LC, and football stadium.
 - Time-capsule story:

Three seniors of the class of 1970 who were helping to redo the gym floor decided to place a piece of paper under the floor for a future generation of Eagles to find. It was discovered in 1985 by a work crew renovating the floor, but then filed away, not to be discovered again until 1995. In the letter, the three students mention their admiration for their principal, Father Cooper.
 - Not holding a grudge:

Many alumni comment that Father Cooper never held a grudge. The next time he would see you after meting out a punishment, it would be as if it had never happened.
 - “Cooper Time”:

He always showed up 15 minutes early to everything, and expected others to be on time.
 - A steady ship in the turbulent waters of the ‘60’s and ‘70’s.

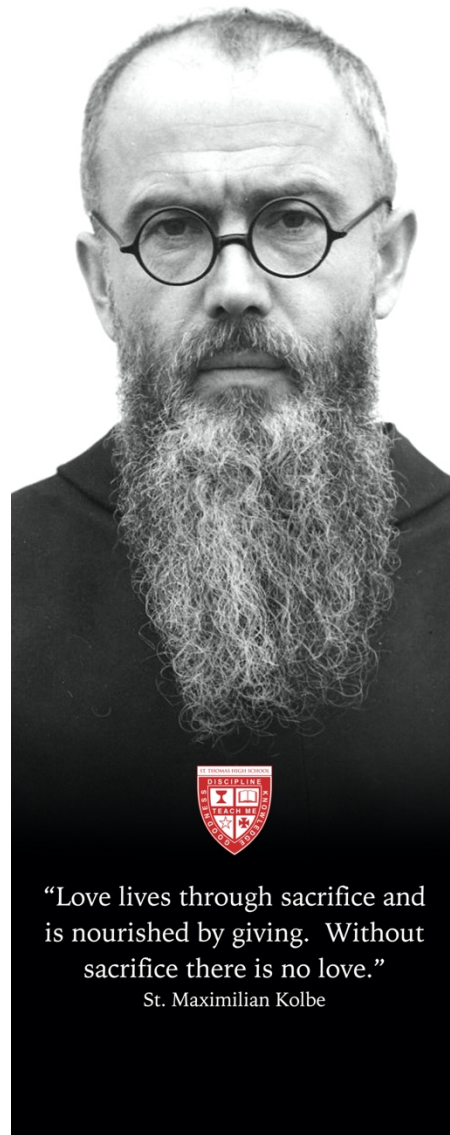
Many alumni commented that Father Cooper was a “rock” for the student body during this pivotal era of the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War,

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and the Social Revolution. The sixteen black students at STH during the time said they loved St. Thomas because Father Cooper was always respectful and understanding of them, regarding what was going on in the outside world. One of them wrote a reflection about Father Cooper upon his death. He made it safe for them at STH, and they truly felt like Eagles. He ensured that everyone understood where the Church stood in regards to human dignity. Students also remembered his decrying the Roe v. Wade decision in 1972 in a school address he gave about the tragic decision.

- End of Life:
Was praying for St. Thomas and his students right up to the moment of his death.

St. Maximilian Kolbe



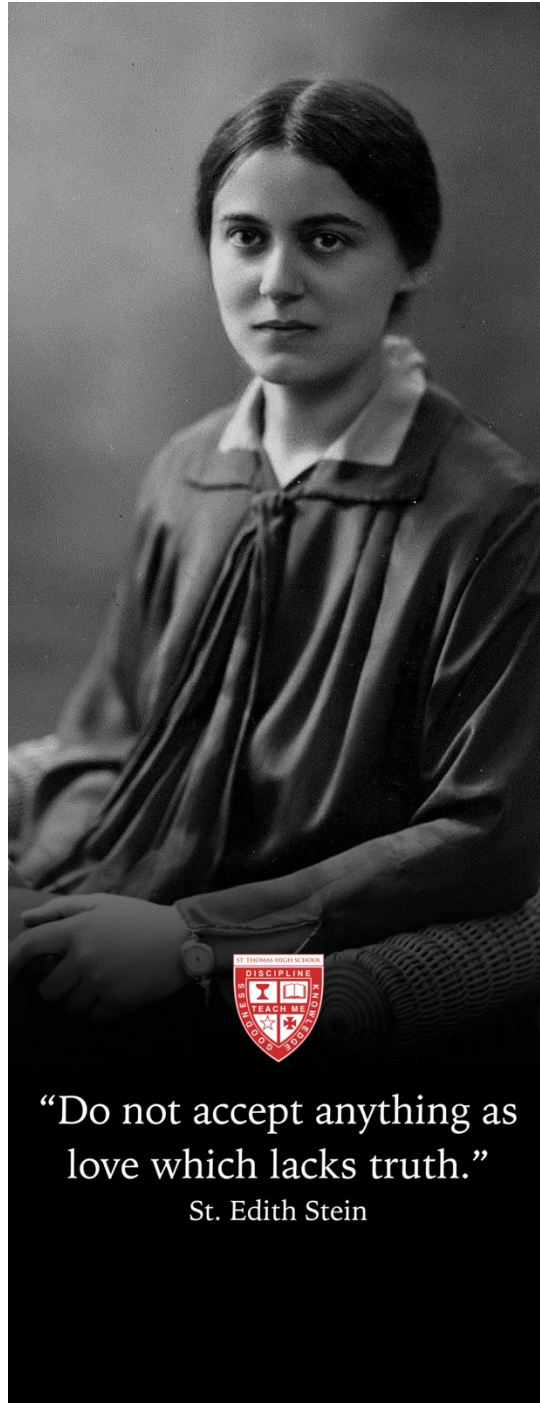
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- Born in Poland on January 8th, 1894 and died in Auschwitz Nazi Death Camp on August 14th, 1941.
- Feast Day: August 14th.
- **Notable Information:**
 - Franciscan priest.
 - From an early age, demonstrated great devotion to the Blessed Mother.
 - He began a newspaper, Immaculata, which criticized, among other movements, the rise of Nazism.
 - Once the Germans took over Poland, he helped hide over 2,000 Jews in his monastery. In response, in February, 1941, the Nazis shut down his monastery and arrested him. He was eventually sent to the most notorious death camp, Auschwitz, and became prisoner 16670. There, he continued to minister to others as a priest, but was subject to constant harassment and beatings. In July of 1941, ten prisoners escaped from the camp. As punishment and to deter any further escapes, the camp commandant chose 10 men to be locked into an underground bunker to be starved to death. One prisoner, Franciszek Gajowniczek, cried out, "My wife! My children!" and fell to his knees. Maximilian Kolbe stepped forward, saying, "I will take his place. I am a Catholic priest. Take me." For three weeks, Father Kolbe and the other men were starved. Throughout the ordeal, Father Kolbe encouraged his fellow prisoners with prayers and hymns and also said Mass, using tiny morsels of bread as the Host. After three weeks, Father Kolbe was the only survivor. He was then injected with carbolic acid and died.
The man whose place Father Kolbe had taken for this special punishment was present at Father Kolbe's canonization mass in 1982.
- **Quotes:**
 - "No one in the world can change Truth. What we can do and should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it. The real conflict is the inner conflict. Beyond armies of occupation and the hecatombs [e.g. the sacrifice of many victims] of extermination camps, there are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love. And what use are the victories on the battlefield if we ourselves are defeated in our innermost personal selves?"
 - "That night, I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me, a Child of Faith. Then she came to me holding two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both."
 - "If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion."
 - "For Jesus Christ I am prepared to suffer still more."
 - "The most deadly poison of our times is indifference."
 - "The cross is the school of love."
 - "Courage, my sons. Don't you see that we are leaving on a mission? They pay our fare in the bargain. What a piece of good luck! The thing to do now is to pray well in order to win as many souls as possible." [Said when he was first arrested.]

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- “If anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his Mother, he will not have Christ for his Brother.”
- “Let us remember that love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving. Without sacrifice, there is no love.”

St. Edith Stein (also known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)



- Born in Poland on October 12th, 1891 and died on August 9th, 1942 in Auschwitz Death Camp.

- **Notable Information:**

- Born to a Jewish family, but by the time she was a teenager, she was an atheist.
- Became a nurse after being inspired to help, upon seeing the huge numbers of dead from WWI.
- Gifted student, and eventually took up the study of philosophy, studying under some of the most famous philosophers of the 20th century, including Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.
- Introduced to Catholicism after a bout of depression brought on by her atheist views. At one point, Edith saw a woman enter into a Catholic church, and felt the spontaneous need to follow her. As she entered after the woman, Edith knelt and began to pray. This was the beginning of her conversion. She began to study the works of the Christian mystic, St. Teresa of Avila, as well as the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, yeah! She quickly became convinced of the truths of the Catholic faith and was baptized on January 1st, 1922.
- Stein began speaking against the rising threat of Nazism. She became a well-known lecturer and teacher, entered the Carmelite Order in 1933 in Cologne, Germany and eventually moved to a convent in the Netherlands. When the Nazis took over the Netherlands, Stein felt them closing in, as they were determined to get rid of Jews. She began to prepare herself for the concentration camp by fasting and purposefully staying out in the cold. In 1942, in response to the Dutch Catholic Bishops issuing a statement condemning the Nazis, the SS cracked down on the Church and sought out Jews who were being protected by the Church or who had converted to Christianity. Stein and her sister, who was also a Carmelite nun, were arrested on August 2, 1942. They were taken to Auschwitz where Stein took under her care the orphan children of the camp. Along with her sister and countless other prisoners, Edith Stein was killed in the Auschwitz gas chambers. She was canonized on October 11th, 1998.

- **Quotes:**

- “And when night comes, and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been, and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed, just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him.”
- “Those who remain silent are responsible.”
- “Do not accept anything as truth that lacks love, and do not accept anything as love that lacks truth.”
- “Let go of your plans. The first hour of your morning belongs to God. Tackle the day's work that he charges you with, and he will give you the power to accomplish it.”
- “The motive, principle, and end of the religious life is to make an absolute gift of self to God in a self-forgetting love, to end one's own life in order to make room for God's life.”
- “The world doesn't need what women have, it needs what women are.”
- “When you seek truth, you seek God whether you know it or not.”
- “The woman's soul is fashioned as a shelter in which other souls may unfold.”

