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Benedictine Sister Mary Gertrude Gross passes

CLYDE, Mo. - Sister Mary Gertrude Gross, OSB passed away on Feb. 20, 2011, at Our Lady of Rickenbach healthcare facility in Clyde, Mo.

Sister Mary Gertrude was born Catherine Mary Gross on Sept. 28, 1919, in El Centro, Calif., to Dominick and Ottilia Gross, Swiss immigrants.

Catherine was named after her grandmothers, both of whom carried that name. She was the second of three children, having an older sister, Hilda, and Carl, a younger brother.

She attended grade school and high school in El Centro, and after graduation in 1937, enrolled in a business college in Sacramento, Calif.

Before she completed her degree, she took a job with the State of California and later completed her business classes during night school. It took two years to receive her diploma and graduate, showing early her determination and an aptitude for business.

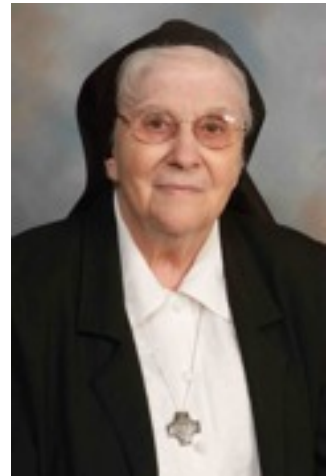
She frequently worked temp jobs to gain work experience and apply her studies. These included stints with the Nurses Association, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Agriculture.

When World War II started, she began working at a nearby U.S. Army base as secretary to an officer in charge of transportation, working mostly with the Western Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads. This led to a job with the Southern Pacific where she met Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Coyle, a Catholic couple. Mr. Coyle's wife was a close friend of the Sacramento Carmelite Nuns, a community Catherine visited regularly.

During a novena with the Carmelites, Catherine met Father O'Hara, a Paulist priest who told her about Clyde and the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

Drawn to Eucharistic Adoration and the life of prayer, Catherine soon visited Clyde with Mrs. Coyle and realized a calling was leading her there permanently.

She entered the Benedictine Sisters in 1947, and upon making her first monastic profession on May 29, 1949, she received the name Sister Mary Gertrude.



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In 1950 she was assigned to the correspondence department to learn the crediting work. After her final monastic profession on July 12, 1954, she was appointed bookkeeper for the Clyde monastery. In 1962 she was named Treasurer General of the Congregation. Four years later she moved to the Sisters' St. Louis monastery when the Generalate and Novitiate were transferred there.

The General Chapter of 1968 elected her to the General Council for a six-year term. After her term ended, she returned to Clyde to work in the correspondence department then served as bookkeeper.

As part of her duties, Sister Mary Gertrude handled the property insurance for all the monasteries for more than 40 years. She also served as notary public for the community and was coordinator of the Marriage Encounter groups. She was a gracious hostess and helped serve meals and guided many of the tour groups at the monastery. She celebrated her 60th Jubilee in 2009.

After a rapid decline of health this past year, Sister Mary Gertrude entered hospice care at Our Lady of Rickenbach in early February. She was surrounded by Sisters when she passed.

During her years in the monastery, her kind and welcoming presence nurtured many friendships, both personal and professional. Her presence will be missed, but our hearts know she is finally with her Lord, in peace and with reward for a life dedicated to Christ.

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