

SISTER GISELE

OF ST. JOHN

MENOS



*BORN TO EARTHLY LIFE:
NOVEMBER 29, 1928*

*BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE:
SEPTEMBER 10, 2011*

**Sister Gisèle Ménos
Province of U.S.A & Canada
1928 - 2011**

“Seigneur, mon seul bonheur est de t’aimer!”

These words discovered on a card on Sister Gisèle’s desk after her death speak of the desire of the heart of this daughter of Blessed Anne Marie to love God wholeheartedly. She learned early in her home from her devoted Catholic family the virtue of love.

The Menos family welcomed their first child, Gisèle into the world on November 27th, 1928. She was the oldest of four children of John Ménos and Nina Richardson Ménos. Born in Port au Prince, Haiti, she remained attached to her homeland, but after some years of study and ministry in the United States she became a Naturalized Citizen and took this commitment very seriously while always helping to promote education in her native land.

Little Gisèle flourished as she tells us that she “experienced a loving extended family, numerous friends, and an intense joie de vivre”. She shared also that “she enjoyed robust health”. Down through the years her hearty laugh rang out when she was happy.

As a student at the Cluny School, Ste Rose de Lima, in Port au Prince, Gisèle developed a love for learning that was a life-long pursuit. Her teachers, Cluny Sisters, inspired her, above all Sister Bernard. Later Gisèle was heard saying that this sister inspired her by her example, and motivated Gisèle to say, “I want to be a Sister like Sister Bernard. Clearly she was to be the instrument that led me to Him.”

As she entered her teen years Gisèle had many opportunities to visit countries abroad. She studied and worked for some years in the business world in the United States where a number of her extended family lived. She had an especially close relationship with her Aunts, Ella and Amy who lived in Pennsylvania.

The call to Cluny never left Gisèle's mind however. "I must confess", she told a friend, "that the choice was a difficult one for me. On the other hand I was blessed with an innate generosity manifested by a longing and a pursuit of the good, the true and the beautiful."

A life of prayer and an interest in biblical studies brought Gisèle to a deeper discernment. The divine call was becoming increasingly more urgent and frequent, she tells us she heard the inner voice clearly say, "I want you, Gisèle, and I want you NOW!" "After a five year struggle I chose to answer with enthusiasm: Yes, Lord, I shall follow you NOW."

And so she did, entering on March 17th, 1951 at Port au Prince Novitiate. She was received as a Novice on August 6th, 1951 at the chapel there. Sister Gisèle, as she was now called, arrived at the Mother House in Paris in October, 1952. There she taught students for the Baccalauréat 11, and volunteered as a catechist. It was here at the Mother House in Paris that Sister Gisèle professed her first vows on September 12, 1953.

In October 1953 Sister Gisèle returned to Haiti to St. Rose, her alma mater. There she taught several classes and was the head of the Sodality until 1960 when she was missioned to St. Joseph's, Cluny Convent, Newport, R.I. Cluny School was in its infancy and needed Sisters. After professing her final vows on September 3, 1960, Sister Gisèle taught Grades 4-8, Confirmation class, and served as Provincial Bursar.

An opening at St. Anthony High School in Long Beach, California in 1972 was a welcome change as now she was teaching teenagers once more. She was named Assistant Chairperson of the Religion Department at St. Anthony's and in 1973 was named Chairperson of the Department.

In 1976 the call of obedience once again found Sister Gisèle back in Rhode Island as a member of the Community at St. Margaret's,

Providence. Parish ministry was now the role for Sister for many years. She was Director of Religious Education at St. Peter's Parish Warwick, R.I. Ten years later she moved to Cluny Convent, R.I. continuing as Director at St. Peter's, Warwick.

1988 St. Michael's Parish Swansea needed a Director of Religious Education. Sister Gisèle responded and served faithfully at St. Michael's until 1998. During which time she was an officer on the Board of Trustees for Cluny School, Newport.

Service within the community was the next call for Sister. In 1998 she was named Local Coordinator for Cluny Convent in Newport, where she served until 2001.

From among her many friends Sister Gisèle formed the first Associate Program on the East Coast, and helped spread the good news of Blessed Anne Marie and our beautiful charism.

Devotion to her spiritual development was always a priority for Sister. She took every opportunity for retreats and days of recollection, and brought other women with her to help spread the Good News. From 2001 until the spring of 2007 Sister Gisèle acted as Religious Resource for Cluny School, Newport, R.I. using her many gifts and rich background.

After many years of study, teaching, and guiding parents, teachers and students in many areas of service at Cluny School, Sister Gisèle was finally unable to continue the demanding schedule. On May 5th, 2011 she moved to a beautiful Assisted Living Center, Franklin Court in Bristol, R.I. where she continued meeting and greeting those around her, especially the Sisters of Mercy who were her friends and co-workers for many years as well as others she met along her life journey. She even developed a love for jigsaw puzzles!

Sister Gisèle had a great love for enjoyment and was always the life of the party. Her many friends were there to the end. The day before she became ill she had a wonderful lunch with dear friends,

and a happy visit with Sister Joan, the Provincial Superior. The very next morning Sister suffered a disastrous stroke that resulted in a comatose condition from which she never awakened. Surrounded at her bedside by her Cluny Sisters in presence and prayer, and after anointing and blessings by the chaplain, Sister Gisèle passed beyond the veil from this life into the eternal loving embrace of God, having lived her commitment to the Beloved for many long years. May she rest in peace and receive the reward of all who find their happiness in love of God.

“Lord, my only happiness is to love you! St. Therese