

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

St. Paul Province

(*Mary Faustina*)

Georgetta Driscoll, CSJ

1904 — 2000



"Long have I waited for your coming home to me
and living deeply our new life"

Weston Priory

It was a long journey, and a long life, for Mary Driscoll from her birth August 28, 1904 in Freetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada to her death on February 21, 2000 at Bethany Convent in St. Paul, Minnesota. At the age of 20, she had followed her aunts, Mary Charles McIver and Damien McIver, to join the Sisters of St. Joseph on March 19, 1925 and received the name of Georgetta, a form of her mother's name.

She made the long journey back to Prince Edward Island many times to visit her family, her parents, her brother Lorne, her sisters Marion and Georgie, nieces and nephews, her beloved "Island". This homeland was always a very deep and important part of who Georgetta was!

As a sister, while still a novice, she began her long ministry of teaching. For most of those years, she taught seventh and eighth graders with her real speciality being literature. Which came first — her love of reading or the love that developed because of teaching it? It doesn't really matter because she instilled a love of classic prose and poetry in her students and continued to deepen her love also as she read everything under the sun!

Georgetta had a great thirst for knowledge. She explored many areas. She read contemporary theology, kept current on movements within the church, was aware of developments in society around the world. She continued throughout her life to seek knowledge and to learn new things.

On March 19, 2000, Georgetta won't be physically among us to celebrate 75 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, but her strong, independent spirit will remain with us. May she rest in peace!

Georgetta is survived by her sister, Marion McSorley of Canada, Twin Cities cousins Eileen and Ed Favreau, and many nieces and nephews. Mass of Christian burial was celebrated on Thursday, February 24 at Bethany Convent. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery.

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Genealogy Request

Family Name Driscoll, Mary Faustina

Sister Name (if applicable) Georgetta

Birth Date/Place 8-28-04 Freetown, P.E.I., Canada

Reception into Novitiate 3-19-25

First Vows 3-19-27 Final Vows 8-15-1930

Date/Place of Death Sister Georgetta Driscoll is retired + living

~~Date/Place of Interment~~ at Bethany Convent, St Paul, Mn.

Education B.A.

Ministry teacher

Mother's Maiden Name Georgina McIver

Birth Date/Place ? Newton, P.E.I., Canada

Father's Name Michael Driscoll

Birth Date/Place ? Cape Traverse, P.E.I., Canada

Other Notes

Homily for the Funeral Liturgy of Sister Georgetta Driscoll

August 28, 1904 – February 21, 2000

Mass of Christian Burial

February 24, 2000

We offer our sincere sympathy to Eileen, Georgetta's dear and faithful cousin, to Eileen's husband Ed whose stories brought a twinkle to Georgetta's eyes, and to their children Mary, Ed Jr., Ellen, Lisa and Danny, grandchildren Scott, Jena, Sarah, Alanna, and Shawn, and great grandchild Julius all of whom Georgetta loved dearly. We also remember Georgetta's sister Marion and her nieces, nephews, and cousins in Canada who have lost someone very dear to them.

When I think about Georgetta, I see a person who had the concept of home woven deeply into the fiber of her being. Like Lucy Maud Montgomery in our second reading, Georgetta loved her homeland, Prince Edward Island. Like the writer of our first reading from Ecclesiastes, Georgetta was at home with enjoying each day as a gift from God. Like Jesus in the Gospel reading, Georgetta opened her heart to others, especially to children, making them feel at home with her and teaching them lessons which touched their minds and their lives. Let us take a few moments to look at this notion of home in Georgetta's life from three perspectives, leaving home, being at home, and going home.

Each one of us has had the experience of leaving home. Think for a moment of what that was like. Perhaps it was going off to college, or entering a religious community, or getting married, or moving out of the family home into a place of one's own. Most likely it was a bittersweet experience. We were leaving what we knew and loved for a new and uncharted life. And so it was for Georgetta. At the age of 20 she left her home, a crescent-shaped island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Mary O'Brien describes the experience of flying over PEI, looking down, and seeing what appears to be a crocheted afghan, rimmed in a yellow orange color created by looking through the blue water at the red sand beneath. The patches of the afghan are squares of green potato fields and green and red plots of land and roads. Dark green spruce trees and fences separate the squares. As we heard in the second reading, one can never know what peace is until one walks here. And leaving the land meant leaving her beloved family, mother and father Georgina and Michael, brother Lorne and sisters Georgie and Marion. She

returned to visit as often as she could. When Georgetta or anyone else would come back to PEI for a visit, the Islanders would say, "She's home from away." Anyone who knew Georgetta realized that although she physically left home at the age of 20, a part of her heart remained on the Island. With Lucy Maud Montgomery, Georgetta would undoubtedly say, "For few things am I more thankful than for the fact that I was born and bred beside that beautiful St. Lawrence Gulf."

Georgetta lived nearly 75 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, making home wherever she lived and worked. "Everything in its time," she would say, echoing the thoughts of the author of our first reading from Ecclesiastes, who reminds us to live each day, enjoying whatever comes.

There were times for being silent, and we would see Georgetta sitting quietly reading or praying. She had a thirst for learning, and she almost always had a book with her. The top shelf of the bookcase in her room here at Bethany on the day she died reflects the breadth of her interests. In addition to her Bible, it contained Jane Austen's Emma, Frank McCort's 'Tis, a collection of Agatha Christie's mystery stories, and a book entitled Immortal Poems of the English Language.

There were times for speaking, and Georgetta didn't waste words. She spoke simply and directly. We lived together at Christ the King for seven years about 20 years ago. One evening after dinner she and I were chatting as we were doing dishes. After a short pause she turned to me and said, "Jean, will you hold my hand when I am dying?" I promised her I would if I were anywhere nearby, and thankfully I was able to keep my promise.

There were times for laughter. Georgetta's quick wit enlivened many dinner conversations. Eileen and Ed remember how laughter peeled through the room when Georgetta played the game Shoots and Ladders with their children.

There were times for tears, like the time Mary Lou Murray told Georgetta she would be moving from the house at the end of the school year. Georgetta's heartfelt support through gentle tears spoke of her love and respect for the sisters with whom she lived.

There were times for sewing, and Georgetta's specialty was knitting and crocheting. And anyone who knits or crochets, knows all too much about the times for ripping out.

If the writer of Ecclesiastes had known Georgetta, there would have been a line in the reading that said there are times for going downtown. After she retired, Georgetta would hop on the bus and go downtown Minneapolis sometimes for doctor appointments, sometimes to noon Mass at Saint Olaf's, sometimes for lunch at Peter's Grill or Woolworth's and sometimes to a movie. And she would come back home tired, but happy for being able to be independent.

For over 50 years being a teacher or administrator was Georgetta's ministry. Just as Jesus welcomed and embraced the children so did Georgetta. The story of Jesus and the children appears in all three synoptic gospels. Tonight we heard Mark's version. Jesus became indignant when the disciples turned the children away. Undoubtedly their mothers who seemed to understand something that the disciples did not comprehend had brought the children to Jesus. Jesus insisted that the children were no less deserving of his time than were the more sophisticated adults. In fact, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza writes that in this gospel the child becomes the primary paradigm for true discipleship. Jesus says, "I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child, will never enter it." This saying, says Fiorenza, is not an invitation to childlike innocence and naivete, but a challenge to relinquish all claims of power and domination over others. Jesus insisted that the discipleship of equals must be inclusive of children and serve their needs if the community wants to have Jesus in its midst.

And so it was with Georgetta. Not claiming to have power or domination over her students, she won their respect with her fairness, her humor, and her genuinely excellent teaching. Two of Georgetta's earliest students, Sister Felicitas and Sister Rose Francis, attest to this. She created an environment where her students felt safe and at home with her, and they learned very well.

Late in the evening on Monday, February 21, Georgetta heard God's final call to come home. She did this in her own time and in God's time. In the weeks prior to her death she had her beloved Prince Edward Island on her mind. She told one of the nurses she was going to walk to the Island. A smile would appear on her lips as another of her caregivers teased her, saying that buffalo meat was on the supper menu. Bethany was home to Georgetta for 16 years, and the loving personal and professional care she received throughout these years was never more evident than in the three days when the sisters who live here at Bethany and Eileen and Ed and I sat vigil with her. As Sister

Ancelle explained, "We do this because we are sisters. Her suffering is our suffering and her redemption is also ours."

What a celebration there must have been in heaven when Georgetta arrived home. With her aunts Sisters Mary Charles and Damien, her cousins Sisters St. Hugh, Margaret Pierre, and Frances Marie, her mother and father, Georgina and Michael, her brother Lorne, and her sister Georgie, Georgetta enjoys the heavenly banquet, most likely without buffalo meat.

Georgetta received the bulletin from St. Olaf's Parish in the mail each week. She cut out a section from the bulletin for the week of February 21, 1999, exactly one year prior to the date of her death, and tucked it in the pages of her Bible. I believe it is her message to us tonight. It is entitled *Post Mortem*.

When I am gone, release me, let me go.
You have so many things to see and do,
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that we had so many years.
I gave you my love, you can only guess
how much you gave me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you each have shown.
But now it's time I traveled on alone.
So grieve a while for me, if grieve you must.
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part, so
bless the memories that lie within your heart.
I won't be far away, for life goes on,
But if you need me, call and I will come.
Though you can't see and touch me, I'll be near.
And if you listen with your heart,
you'll hear my love around you soft and clear,
and then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and "Welcome Home."