

I, Mrs Margaret Therese Burke
 of, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

do solemnly and sincerely declare the following to be a true and accurate declaration.

I am writing this statement hoping to find justice re the shocking torture during my childhood years!

It all began in 1937 when we were torn away from my Parents;

We were made Wards of the State, then were taken to Royal Park - Receiving Home, then taken to The Good Shepard Convent - Clarke Street, Abbotsford, Victoria.

The Woman who did this was a Welfare Officer ([REDACTED])

My dear parents were left sobbing, and I never did see them again while at this Abbotsford Convent. I was then nine years of age. Every day I received some dreadful punishment while in the trust and care of these nuns! I was then known as Minnette Burke - changed by Deed-Poll in 1947 to the above name Margaret Therese, which was my confirmation name I liked, of one very nice Nun, Mother Therese (Gaspar) asked me to take the same name.

Unfortunately she died from cancer of the face.

As the days went by I was forced to hard labour, cleaning drains, filthy toilets, scrub floors forty feet long, from 7am until 5.30pm - daily, then made to take all the horse hair and fibre from old-mattresses, boil it, dry it and remake again.

This went on for years, in between floggings, was refused Education, only went to grade 5, then forced to work daily in the kitchen, laundry and other places!

Please turn over

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At a very tender age of nine years old, a Nun known as Mother [REDACTED] dragged me by the hair into what was known as the "flogging room". I was then stripped naked, placed face down on the floor, was shown the large stick, four older women held me face down, while Mother [REDACTED] - flogged me for a half hour. The stick broke in two pieces! She then took a three foot ruler, 1/2 inch thick, and thrashed me - until the flesh was hanging off my little body! She also hit me in the vagina, then took a strap and flogged the soles of my feet, when all that had finished, the four older women carried me to what was known as - "the dug out" - a war shelter!

"Solitary confinement - for six weeks; only bread and water to eat"!

This was passed through bars on a small window!

These four women who carried me to the dug out, "then got a broom-handle and pushed it into my vagina"!

I had to have many serious operations on the uterus!

Two surgeons, named - Professor [REDACTED] and Mr [REDACTED] told me that my insides were shocking, had to be operated on many times, some wire mesh had to be stitched into my uterus - trying to hold it into position! I was also told that I would never be able to have children - due to my shocking injuries!!

Many times my parents and brothers called for a visit - they were then turned away, being told that I was suffering from Typhoid Fever.

This was a shocking terrible lie! My body was in a shocking state; that's the reason they would not allow my parents in for a visit!

Then eventually after all that time in solitary confinement, I was then allowed out, could not see, due to being all that time in darkness!

Then as time went by, my ankles were so weak, that I went over on my shoes, my legs trembled, I was seriously ill, despair!

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This Mother [REDACTED] had two older girls hold me down, then she thrashed me with an iron bar - my kneecap was broken, plus the main bone in my leg - this now needs reconstruction!

After twenty five hits with this iron bar plus, my tibia was also beaten with this iron bar, had a compound fracture of same - was operated on by surgeon Mr [REDACTED] in 1949!

Then as time went by, Mother [REDACTED] was acting out her atrocities on my poor little body yet again, with more "floggings"!

She then put me naked all night on the "Flagstone Courtyard", yes all night in the freezing cold, and if that wasn't enough, once the morning came, she then proceeded to thrash me with a cane, How I lived, I just don't know, then placed in solitary confinement yet again, atrocities, no one deserves this treatment, absolutely no one, try, and imagine the fear this child felt!

In grade five there was a Nun by the name of [REDACTED], she forced the girls to hold my right hand out, then hit me with a three foot ruler, this ruler broke across my hand, I then collapsed!

I was then placed once again in solitary confinement!!

I have since had an operation on my right hand and also plastic surgery on same - [REDACTED] - surgeon.

Then there was this other Mother, help of Christians ([REDACTED]), took hold of a blackboard pointer, then hit me across the face, then shoved this pointer (steel tipped) into my head!!

I have a large hole in my skull with x-rays to prove it!

Also, on that day, Mother [REDACTED] hit me across the back of my head!

I have a huge bump (bone) distorted. I need an operation to relieve pressure on the brain! Also, due to all the floggings on my body that I have endured, my lungs are in a dreadful state!

Bronchectasis in the right middle lobe, also had a collapsed left lower lobe, left lung, many other injuries - I could go on forever it seems, unfortunately of so many atrocities!

Mother [REDACTED] also cut all my hair off.

Now, there was a dear little girl named [REDACTED], aged 8 years. The nun said she was pretending to have epileptic fits, the poor child was fitting badly, and being flogged at the same time, she bit her tongue out, the poor wee darling, the poor darling, I picked [REDACTED] tongue up, and was thrashed for trying to help.

She was then placed in a boot cupboard, where she died in my arms, there was no pulse! I know that God has [REDACTED] as The Lord said, Come little children unto me!

I was told she was then put into the huge boiler furnace and burnt! I do not think this was ever revealed to the outside world! I was only told by the older girls, that she was placed in the boiler.

However, I do know how the dear pet suffered at the hands of those terrible monsters, a small child, 8 years old and innocent!

Some Royal Commission must be held, most definitely, to find out what went on in that horrible prison! The truth must come out!

I have heard now that this Abbotsford Convent has been sold, and is now a University. I feel that they had to sell up, as they were afraid of anyone knowing or finding out of the truth, how these evil shocking atrocities went on, I pray for justice to be done!

When I turned thirteen years of age, I was placed in a private home, with a Magistrate, his wife and five children. Mr. [REDACTED] Esq.

This was known as slave labour, five shillings a week, however, they were nice people to me, which was a change for the better!

But I was warned by Mother [REDACTED] that should I tell the Magistrate's family what happened in the Convent, I would be sent back to what is known as the overclads, which meant much worse torture, that would be given to me!

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My reason for writing all of this is, the C.I.B in [redacted] asked me to come to Victoria to see the Community Service, to have these people charged.

Also my solicitor- [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Also, these Nuns now reside at what is known as [redacted], sometimes known as [redacted]

I do know that these nuns are still alive, although - one has left - Mother [redacted]

[redacted]

I must make it absolutely clear, due to all the shocking torture and floggings that did 100% went on, My life has been totally ruined, it's amazing that I'm still alive! Due to nervous tension and heart break of much despair, especially of not knowing whatever happened to my dear parents. However I did find out later on, from my brother, that they both died from cancer and broken hearts!!

I would be most grateful, if these nuns are charged, for the disgusting treatment I received whilst in their trust and care! And with it also bringing justice to [redacted]! whatever time I have left of my life, I want to be freed from these atrocities with justice and Gods Blessings!

I am sincerely
Margaret Therese Burke