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27/8/2012.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE.
SPRING ST.
EAST MELBOURNE VICTORIA 3002.

Dear Committee,

I was put in the convent of the Good Shepherd in Abbotsford Victoria when I was ten years old, along with my two sisters who were about 6 + 8 years old. We were in St. Joseph's section which was the orphanage part of the convent. It was run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

My father had taken my two sisters and I to the movies. He left us in the picture theatre to get some refreshments and he didn't come back. The movie finished, a lady came who knew our names and asked us to go with her. I was scared, I didn't know her. She said our father had sent her. We went with her in her car. That was over 50 YEARS ago and I remember it clearly when we pulled up outside Good Shepherd Convent I

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had no idea what it was. We entered a huge stone building. First the nuns took ^{us} ~~us~~ to a bathroom where we were washed and our ~~hair~~ hair combed with a nit comb. I did not know how to protect my sisters we were ^{put} in separate dormitories, my little sisters cried a lot we all did.

We ate in the Refectory (dining room) I mostly remember porridge, sometimes waffles. We had bread that was baked by the nuns with jam. I remember apple pie once, Sago we ~~were~~ ^{were} often hungry. One of my sisters stole the communion hosts she was so hungry and ate them.

My littlest sister vomited up food and was made to eat her own vomit. This was so ~~so~~ cruel. Also my sisters sometimes wet the bed and like all the girls who were bed wetters she had to wear her wet knickers on her head - and the wet sheets around her shoulders.

We often went to church in the early morning it was very cold but the flowers in church were beautiful. We went to school across the road from Good Shepherd, I don't remember learning much we learnt the CATECHISM which is religious teaching. We polished the floors of school and dormitories with rags on our feet. I also worked in kitchen cleaning and learnt to "darn" socks...

There was a ~~laundry~~ laundry at St. Josephs and I remember girls and women worked there. But we were

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not allowed to talk to them. There was an INFIRMARY FOR SICK kids

I was so scared. Sometimes at night I heard horrible screaming of terrified girls which came from somewhere outside dormitory. I remember one of the nuns said "don't listen to them, the devil is in them"

Those screams haunted me my whole life. My mother came to see us sometimes, I remember one time she brought some apples. One of the girls asked if she could have my ~~core~~ apple core which still trouble me.

Some of the girls had been there their whole life. We were in there in 1956 and 1957 the nuns I remember were [REDACTED]

One of the girls punched me sometimes. Often when we played basketball she would wind me by punching me in stomach. She never stopped bullying. I remember being cold and hungry a lot as were my sisters.

Our parents reconciled for awhile and got us out of Abbotsford we went to Sydney then Brisbane. Dad's drinking never stopped. I think my father drank to forget World War II.

I have had flashback memories of the screaming and horrible memories all my life. I tried to tell a few people but because we weren't real orphans they didn't really listen and our mother encouraged us not to talk about it.

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I left School early as my mother disappeared for awhile as did dad, I got a job in Brisbane and was able to feed them ^(MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS) luckily my 2 little brothers never went to an institution.

It took me many years to enjoy going to movies after being left in that cinema in Melbourne.

It was about ¹⁰ years ago I saw an ad for someone wanting memorabilia from orphanages for a museum. I rang, after carrying the number around for a few years as I looked after my mum in her later years.

After mum died I rang the number it was CLAN (CARE LEAVERS AUSTRALIA NETWORK) and I spoke to Leonie Sheedy she was fantastic

I was surprised to learn there were ~~so~~ many orphanages and ~~any~~ many kids spent their whole lives in orphanages. For me and my sisters it was 1956 AND 1957 but I carry those memories with me always and have nightmares about screaming girls and little kids made to eat vomit and the rest of the horrors that happened there.

Please excuse my writing as I am in hurry to get this to you by Friday 31st August, I hope this helps to stop child abuse everywhere.

Very Sincerely, thank-you

Yvette Parr
YVETTE PARR.