

Silence, Suffering and Strength.

Whilst my story is long, I wanted to give a feel for the intensity of what our childhood was made up of and why it had such an impact on the rest of our lives, including to this day.

I would also like to thank the charities that visited us over the years for their gift of time. It made a difference to us all.

I had been able to stumble onto two good jobs that I loved. The first being a physical Education Teacher, then when I had my first child I decided become a full time mother. However, I had difficulty in this role only knowing not what to do and not knowing what to do! So I started doing voluntary work with the PYC's specializing in a sport that I had grown to love whilst teaching. From this point on and then 28 years later I had reach a very competent level and it had become my profession.

During all this time I had never really related my difficulties at home to the orphanage. I just always felt that I was never good enough. In 1996 I had an accident at work and a boss who had been harassing me for months (I had no idea of my right's). I tried 3 times to return to work but my boss kept telling me to go home. Eventually things turned nasty and I became traumatized which created another trauma of regressed memories. This to a serious attempt at suicide.

I have had treatment for the past 17 years and continue today to try to unravel the past and free me of the memories and the effects. It has plagued me, but what is more important, I want to live in the moment to free up the pain my children and husband have suffered as a result of my upbringing.

Move to Nazareth House Orphanage. 1954

I was 3 when my sisters and I were put in Nazareth House and 14+ when I left the first time. My Father and Mother had separated and she was unable to look after us. Nazareth House is huge, it was like a castle. It was made up into 5 sections. An Infirmary for the sick and dying ladies as well as paying accommodation for residential. This section was housed on the top floor of the building. The Convent also had it's separate section taking up two floors of a wing of the building. The old mens section was in those days on the bottom floor which also housed the kitchen. The Children and Babies Section was housed on the second floor, as well as the parlor, linen rooms, accommodation for visiting nuns and priests plus the concert hall. Then there was the Laundry which looked after all the washing from all sections.

Infants and Baby Section. Ages 3 years old.

This section was for babies months old to 5 years of age. It was well separated from the children's or senior's sections as we knew it. There was no encouragement nor time allowed for sisters to share time together. Separation began from this point.

My memories of this time were of the dormitories with all the cots and beds in two lines. There was always crying and the smell of urine at night times and mornings. I don't remember anyone either speaking or touching me with kindness. Touching was kept to grouping you for washing and speaking was to tell us what to do.

I don't remember any of this time, but if it was like the same as what I saw and remember as I got older it would have been horrific with the cries and screams of children being pulled out of mothers arms and children being dragged inside the large doors from the parlor into the the main section of the orphanage by nuns and a senior girl or girls. Then, if there was more than one child and the sister was 5 years old they would then go through being separated with the older sister or sisters going to the children's section and the younger one going to the babies section.

If you wet your bed as you got to the age of 3 or 4 they would put the wet part of the sheet over your head while standing in the corner of the dormitory. I was always scared and feared the nuns as I was always scared of doing something wrong (even if I didn't know it) and being hit for it.

As time went on, my sister, was classed as a disruptive child and she was always in trouble. She would strike back at the nuns. They nicked named her Jack the Ripper and even made a song up about her which everyone knew and sang it at her. She was always getting hit and beaten over the knee for normal behavior like kids teasing her and singing this song to her, losing a shoe or dirtying her play dress or wetting her pants (which the nun or the senior girls had to give permission to go to the toilet). If they wet their pants, sometimes they would have to stand outside with the other children in the play area with their wet pants over their heads. Seeing how my sister was treated, beaten on her bum as the Nuns put her over their

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knees and used the back of a wooden round hairbrush, she would scream and scream. I remember her bottom being so raw all over that she couldn't sit down for days. I use to cry and cry for them to stop hitting her.

Depending on the number of children in the babies section, there would be one or two girls from the senior section that would stay back from church in the mornings at 6.am to get the babies

Dressed, washed and fed by the time the first Nun would come on duty about 7am (This is when I would listen to the sound of the heaviness of the heels of the nun coming to know if she was cross or not before I saw her). Our Breakfast would be sent over from the kitchen, most times it was porridge and it would be too much like glue to eat but we did and we would have a glass of milk each. The Nun and the senior girls would help to feed us. There was always crying as many of the children didn't like the breakfast but were force fed.

After breakfast, two seniors would come to change the beds and make the beds. They were also responsible for ensuring that the dormitory, bathroom and breakfast room were in faultless order in case visitors came during the day as the Nuns would show the visitors around. The two girls who would have been anything between 10 and 16 year's old had to have all this work done between 7am and 8.30.am to get back to the children's section and dressed ready for school line up.

After breakfast we would be sent out to play in the baby section yard which was divided by a lattice fence and a red pathway on the children's side. I really can't remember my older sister being in the babies section, but I do remember trying to see her through the square of the lattice fence. I don't remember ever seeing her. I know if we got caught, the sister's would be told to move away. I used to see the other sisters trying to touch hands and talk through the fence.

I remember playing in the mornings outside on the concrete. There were some old toys but the best dolls and toys were kept in what they called the playroom on show in case visitors came and that was the only time we were allowed in there. When visitors left we had to put the dolls back on the little chairs and leave the room.

Many visitors came to look at and choose a child they liked to either foster, adopted or take out for the day. We would all have to be cleaned up before the visitors saw us. Children were selected by their looks and age. I look back and feel sure that the Nun's held back on the children they didn't like.

A senior girl about the age of 16 would work in the babies section full time to help the Nun's as there were always two Nun's appointed to each children's sections with one being on roster at a time. This girl would be responsible for folding the clothes, preparing the clothes for the babies and changing the clothes of little ones who wet themselves during the day. She would also be responsible for the rest of the cleaning of the baby section and cleaning up. (no payment was ever given).

Morning Tea -

All sitting on benches for milk that had been left out in the sun by the kitchen workers. It had skin on top of the milk which always made me feeling sick.

Lunch.12pm -

A heavy hot lunch was always served with dessert. The same scenario with children not wanting or liking the food would occur. Always crying and screaming if forced fed. Older kids would be made to stay at the table until they ate their food. If not eaten after some time, punishment of over the knee with the wooden brush was used. Then a little play time

Sleep time

Everyone had to find a spot on the floor and go to sleep. Babies would be put into their cots for this time. If a nice nun or senior girl was on duty they would read us a story as we went to sleep.

2.pm walk time

The babies between 2 to 4 years old would go for a walk on the road around the home

3pm Afternoon tea.

Milk that had been left out in the sun by the kitchen workers for us to drink.

4.pm. Bath time ready for bed

Two additional girls would come over from the children's section to also be on hand with the children. This was always a chaotic time for everyone.

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5pm - dinner time - Once again a very heavy hot dinner and dessert (old English). Same scenario as breakfast and dinner with force feeding and crying. It was always a hurried time to get things done by 6pm for the senior girls to get back to the children's section to not to be late for their meal.

6pm bed time - No nun on duty Senior girls and two helpers would put the babies to bed, all of them . Many tears were shed by the babies and the infants. Some calling for their mummies or daddies but there was little time and not enough arms to console them all. Everyone was rushed for time or else they would be late for their meal or other duties.

Education.

I can't remember any early learning as such. I only remember learning in the children's section. I've phoned a few girls that I am still in contact with and they say the same. They too, only remember if we got a story ready to us as this was something special they liked.

One of the girls reminded me of the other big play grounds where there were swings and climbing things. I have since remembered. They also reminded me of the terror of goannas and snakes that used to be in the same play ground.

Sunday Mass.

Any children who were 4 year's would have to be up at 5.45 am to go to Mass. Sunday Mass was special because the church was opened to the local community and this was an opportunity for people to see the older babies. Each child had a special dress appointed to them and they would have to wear it until they grew out of it. When they were dressed they could have some breakfast and then meet up with the rest of all the other children and seniors from the other section to join the line on the passage way to walk over to the church together.

They had the same rules applied to them as the others and that was: no fidgeting, no talking, no looking around, no crying, no playing, no laughing. As with the seniors they would be punished at breakfast time if they broke the rules. With the older children the severity of the punishment was dealt out depending on two things. The degree of the breaking of the rules and how angry the Nun was within herself (this could depend on just how much she either like the child or how she was feeling herself that day).

Visiting Sunday's.

Once a month between 1 and 3 pm, we were allowed to have visits from either friends or family. It was called "Visiting Sunday". Again we would be given a visiting outfit until we out grew out of it. We had no choice in what we wanted to wear, it just depended if the senior girl or Nun who was handing them out if they liked you or not. If she did, you would get a nice dress.

I know I got visitors sometimes, as I have a photo of my grandmother an aunty and my mother visiting us. At such an age I don't remember any feelings or memories of the visits.

What I do remember were the tears and longing to be called for a visitor if I didn't get one. This was the same for most of the children who didn't get visitors. The waiting for our names to be called out was the worst feeling each time if it wasn't our name. They would call out our last names only if the door bell rang and it was for us like " Smith". This would be the only time a family would be consistently recognized as sisters. This was always a good time to be with our sisters together.

If children came back from a visit with clothes, they would be just put with every one else, it didn't mean you got to keep it. These Sundays could be horrific for us as we would all be dressed doing something quietly in case the door bell rang and it would be for you.

The Nun would walk you to the parlor where you would greet your visitor. I know I got visits from my grandmother whom I can't remember and my mother as I have photos of those visits. I can't remember any thing of them whilst in the baby section. We were never to tell our visitors about being punished but rather to tell them that we like being there and having fun and how kind the Nuns were.

We could never be late returning as the Nuns would be cross because Benediction started at 3.pm and we had to be ready to line up to go to church for

Again, I can't remember myself, but I saw little ones screaming and running back down the stairs and out of the orphanage not wanting to come back. It was always a horrible scene. If children came back from a visit with lollies or other goodies, they would be put away in a cupboard and shared amongst the other children at a time suitable to the Nuns. I was sent over to the children's section the year I was to turn 5years old. I had to be separated from my sister knowing I couldn't protect her or be with her. I still can't remember my older sister was already in the children's section, but I didn't really know her. I can't remember any connection between us.

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Junior Section. 5 years to 10 years old. Senior Section was 10 years and over.

I can't remember any of this time. I do know that when a new 5 year old came to the children's section, they were given a charge to look after them and show them what and when to do things. I don't remember if it was Sister or not. We were given a table to sit at permanently. The only girls I would have known in this section would have been the girls who were on roster to work in the babies section when it was their turn and Sister. As new girls to the junior section we would be given a number (mine was 24). This number was allocated to be used to identify our given towel, face washer, brush, tooth brush, our daily changing of clothes case and our Sunday shoe pigeon hole.

Daily Schedule that never changed throughout my Juniors and Seniors Years.

Weekly Mass. Each day of the week except Thursday, but if it fell on a feast day or a Holy Day in the Catholic Calendar then we would go to mass.

5.45am.

The Nun on duty would go to each dormitory and stand at the door and clap 3 times. By the third clap you had to be out of our beds and kneeling beside ready to say a morning prayer, then pull our beds back over the bed end. If we had wet our bed this is when they would find out, (our charge would have to help their junior if they were too young) and tidy our nets a certain way (as the Nun walked up and down the dormitory watching us).

We would all go to the wash room to wash our faces and brush our teeth (no talking was allowed). After we were finished we would all go to the changing room where every body would change into their uniform ready for mass. (this was an open room where no privacy was available to anyone). The Nun would stand watching us always. Nothing to eat or drink until after breakfast so that 7 years and over could take communion during Mass.

Following changing, we would all walk in a line back into the Junior Dormitory to kneel down to say another set of prayers. We would have to kneel on solid timber floors that had cracks between them which would leave red marks down our knees. We would then move into two lines with the smaller girls leading in readiness to walk down the long passage that led to the church. Mantillas were worn for some years until it was changed to berets'.

No talking was allowed, just silence. At the end of the passage we would have to stop for the Nun to check us all and in case any elderly ladies would be getting off the lift which was at the same spot. We would all have to smile and say good morning to the elderly ladies, if we didn't the Nun would interpret this as disgracing them and it could lead to either verbal or physical punishment (most times later in the morning) or a slap on the face if they were sure no one was watching.

7am Mass.

From this point on we were really had to be on our best behavior as from here we were out side on the pathway to the church and any one could see us. This could mean anyone from the old men's place, Nuns, elderly women or even the priest and monks or visiting Nuns. Absolute silence was required, perfect presentation with eyes lowered. We would move into the church in lines until we reached our benches that were always the first rows through to the mid back. Two Nuns would kneel with us one behind the juniors and one behind the seniors.

I don't know what age my sister was but she use to faint in church frequently the nun's use to punish her (physically with the white stick or what ever). The nuns use to say she was pretending so that she could leave Mass. In later years, when she fell pregnant the doctors told her she had mild epilepsy through questioning they explained it to her, that's when she remembered what use to happen in church, the doctors said that she probably grew out of it but were still observed her throughout the pregnancy. (Sister was 15 when she fell pregnant she had left the orphanage).

7.40 to 8.10am - Breakfast

If late for any meal bell, children would have to line up in the passageway for punishment. Each person would have to hold their hand up while the nun would lift their arm up as high as their shoulder sometimes and with great force hit the hand with either a twig or a thick white piece of wood. Sometimes some girls would be favored with either a light tap or just let off. Sometimes, the girls would pull their hand back out of fear of the hit. They would be told to put their hand back out. If this kept up, the Nun would just get more violent and sometimes would hit the girl all over her body while she would be in a fetal position on the floor.

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This would occur while everyone else watched on standing behind their chairs before saying Grace before eating. This was where so many times I would dissociate. I could hear and see what was happening but I couldn't feel. In my head it would start with a small black circle and then it would go around and around getting bigger and bigger until I couldn't feel. After it was all over we would say Grace and sit down to eat our meal.

If you were told to go to the bathroom, this was when you knew you'd be in for any type of beating. Sometimes, a whole group of girls names would be called out for the bathroom. Once in there, we would all be crying and calling out asking God not to let it hurt so much, some just screaming, some frozen in fear, waiting for the nun to come in to beat us.

Week days Daily Duties.

- ☑ Seniors only. Two seniors had to wake at 5.00 am. One would have to be at the kitchen door ready to pour these huge containers of fresh milk from Mr. Smith's farm that surrounded the full orphage(later I found out that he leased it from the Catholic Church and the Nuns). The Milk had to be poured into large silver jugs ready for the kitchen Nun and staff. There were many jugs to fill as the kitchen prepared meals for all sections of the orphanage. The senior would have to be back in the children's place by 6.30 to be ready for Mass.
- ☑ The other Senior girl would be up at the same time and she would also go to the kitchen and unlock the door to the coal room. A man would back up his truck to the door and unload coal into a special area to be stored.
- ☑ The senior girl would then have to shovel coal into buckets and carry them into the huge kitchen that had about 4 huge stoves (like ARGA stoves today) and shovel the coal into ovens in readiness for the Nun and staff. I think we had to light them too, but I'm not 100 percent sure. I just feel we did. She too had to be back at 6.30 cleaned and ready for mass.
- ☑ Jr. 5 to 7 years. Senior 10y rs to whatever the eldest girls were at the time, which could be 15,16 or 17 years old.
- ☑ After that some girls were sent to live in the old ladies section permanently. They would work within the orphanage until they either just went away or some went to the "Mater Hospital" to become nurse assistants, or some were just sent away as domestics for contact families or businesses that the Nuns had.

After Breakfast.Daily Duties.

These duties were shared amongst all children and older girls used juniors for polishing floors or just helping if the Nun allowed it.

- ☑ All children were broken up into rostered duties. Duties were checked by the Nun in charge. If all was good and there was time to play then we did. If not, we would have to correct our mistakes.
- ☑ Dormitories. Beds made, floors swept and "foot polished" (using a rag under each girls right foot as they went forward and backwards along each board). We'd sing as we did it holding the juniors hands as we strung out in a row, keeping together as we went along and making sure not to miss any boards that would leave smudge marks. Bed nets had to be perfectly rolled and even and tucked in behind the backs of the brass beds. Change any sheets on the wet beds, make all beds in the dormitory ensuring that the folded hospital corners were perfect, and dust these really high window silts, make sure every thing was perfect.
- ☑ Toilets in Senior and Junior Dormitories. (the Senior toilets were used throughout the day as well). One or two (junior) girls would have to throughly clean every part of the toilets, even put their hands down the bowl to scrub stains left behind by the children. There would be no part of the toilets that were not to be sparkling, even the walls and doors. We would work on our knees to clean the toilets using buckets, scrubbing brushes and gumption (called Clever Mary). Finished off by cleaning the floors with dettol.
- ☑ Dinning Room. (one girl).10 tables for all girls with most times 8 to 10 girls at a table, plus 1 small one for the 5 year olds to sit at. Wiping each table over to remove any food scraps. Washing and polishing each table, wiping the chairs. Sweeping the floor and cleaning the floors if any spills and making sure the large windows sills were wiped and dusted.
- ☑ Scullery. (Two sinks, 2 Seniors with 3 junior's helping.) Washing, drying, and putting away of all the plates and cutlery used by all children. Senior girls would be responsible for the sweeping and polishing of the floor. The room had to be perfect (sometimes the kids couldn't reach up to the sink). Scullery This was also one of the most common

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tasks that a child from say 10 years. And upwards would get to do on their own as an extra punishment should the Nun choose to hand it out.

- ☑ Wash Room. One senior plus 2 juniors would be responsible for washing thoroughly in detail all the sinks, foot tubs, towels and face washers hung up under their right numbers as well as brushes and combs put into the correct number boxes. Floor and window sills dusted and wiped.
- ☑ Big changing and little changing rooms. Spotlessly cleaned
- ☑ Class rooms. Swept with everything ready for morning class. Besides cleaning blackboard, ruler and chalk ready for use. Catechisms ready for reading with charts in the junior class room. Grades 1 to 3 and Senior class rooms 4 to 6.
- ☑ Recreation Room. A large room where assembly for Morning prayers and general gathering. Swept and tidy. Later it became the TV room where benches were provided to watch a television show every now and then.
- ☑ Concert Hall. Swept and polished with large mop, 8 large windows sills dusted and polished.
- ☑ Babies Section. Dormitory. Toilets and bathroom cleaned spotless.
- ☑ Children's concrete back yard, back verandah and red path. One senior would have to sweep, and drain cleaned. If it had rained and water was lying around we had to sweep the water down the drain, then mop up any left overs. Verandah windows sills cleaned and dusted. Floors swept on red path and verandah.
- ☑ Children's Bathroom. All baths (4) completely cleaned, cubical walls cleaned, towels hung on correct numbers under baths swept and mirror cleaned.
- ☑ Passageways. Swept and polished. One again with juniors assisting with cloths under foot. Later in years we would have to do them by ourselves. The passageways were like marble and we would have to repeat the polish if there were any gaps in the shine.
- ☑ Old Ladies, and Old Men's, Laundry and Kitchen. (these duties would follow each meal)
- ☑ Two children would be sent to help feed the invalids in the old people's sections. Most of us were afraid due to having some die on us as we were feeding them. Two children would be sent to the laundry and kitchen to help with the load of work in each section, especially in the cleaning. I hated the smell of death and stench in the Ladie's section. I only tried to help carry trays in the Men's section as I was too afraid to touch a man. I didn't care how many reports and beatings I got. In the end, the Nun's gave up on sending me to the Mens place. These sections were the only times we ever got a thank you if the old people or Nun thought of it when we finished
- ☑ The above tasks were all to be completed by 8.45am, This was always a time for panic and anxiety for me. Especially if I had a junior to look after as I got older. As a junior, I was scared not only of the Nun but also my charge so I would make sure I was watching what everybody else was doing to make sure I was doing the same.
- ☑ Then followed by us changing into school uniform and be ready for school, lining up in two lines by 8.55am, before walking into the Recreation room to say morning prayers before starting school. We would break off into our class rooms lines walk to a seat stand and say another lot of prayers. Then we would start with catechism and teachings on the catholic church. Grades 4,5 and 6 would also include Latin responses for Mass.
- ☑ Each 6 weeks the senior girl would be rotated to another duty, but the format was the same.

School

My junior classes (Grades 1 to 4) Morning's 9.10am to 10.30am.

I don't have any memories of myself or my sisters in grades 1 and 2. My memories are of grades 3 and 4. Overall, I know I liked learning. However, the fear of the punishments if I got something wrong interfered with my memories. We always started school Religious Knowledge, we did tables, sums spelling, reading and writing. I remember that at times if a girl had wet her bed that they may have to stand in the corner in front of us all with the wet part of the sheet over their head for some time. I can't remember if I ever did but I know my sister had to.

The atmosphere of the day would depend on what mood the Nun would be in. Most times, if which ever Nun was on duty after breakfast, we would have a good idea of what the morning was going to be like.

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I learnt to work hard to remember what I was taught but if the Nun would walk around the room, looking over my shoulder, I would do something wrong out of fear and I might get a slap across the back of my head or the side of the ruler used to hit my fingers. I wouldn't know if I was going to cop it or not as she would be behind me. This happened to all the girls.

If you needed to go to the toilet at any time, it would be up to the Nun if she felt like letting you go. If they said no, sometimes we would wet our pants while we sat in our set and quietly cry knowing how embarrassed you felt. If that happened, you would have to go and get the mop and clean it up while the Nun would be berating you the whole time. Then you would have to stand in the front of the class with your pants on top of your head until they dried, then put them on again (because we only got clean pants once a week)

Another form of punishment was. hands on head, standing with a long piece of wood or broom handle behind our backs with our harms folded backwards to hold the stick up across our shoulder blades. For as long as they wanted us to. Nuns walking behind us as we doing either reading or writing and whacking us across the back of our heads if we were writing and going out of the line.

To this day, I cannot write straight without lines and have to turn the book I am writing in vertical so I can see if its straight. Any thing that involves working on a straight line, be it cutting or just drawing or writing on a card, I fear as I suffer anxiety just contemplating it. As a result of the Nuns walking behind us and never knowing if I was going to be hit across the head, I get anxious and even if I know what I am doing is right I make mistakes because of this anxiety.

10am. 10.15am Morning Tea.

Free play if we weren't practicing for concerts for visitors

Back into school.

11.45am -Change for Dinner

12noon to 12.30pm Dinner time (Full hot lunch) G and A said first. If late for bell, would line up outside dinning room to be punished for being late if your reason didn't suit the nun. Another thing we were punished for was if we vomited up the food we were eating, as this was seen as waste. The Nun on duty would stand over you and force you to eat the food and vomit on your plate. I can remember several times being forced to eat I had regurgitated food.

12.30 - 1.15pm - Duties and free play for some, if no practicing for concerts for visitors.

1.15 - 1.30pm change and ready to line up again for school.

1.30 - 3pm School.- School if no practice for concert.

3.00 - 3.30 Church (Rosary). Unless May where novena's were held every day by each child at a half hour change over throughout month. or every Thursday were Station's of the Cross.

3.45pm Changing into day cloths and shoe, and afternoon milk.

4pm - 5pm Duties and free play for some.

5pm.5.30. All children into washing room to wash your body down, lined up behind sinks with a couple of seniors washing the 5 year olds. We would line up behind the foot tubs where we would wash and wipe our feet before the next girl had her time. The nun would always hurrying us up and watching every body. As I got older I hated! Hated! this. Sometimes I would pretend I had had a wash just so I didn't have to go through the humiliation of the other girls laughing if our breasts were developing and the nuns looking.

As our bodies developed washing ourselves and bathing once a week became toucher as the kids and sometimes the nun's would make a comment in front of everyone. There was no privacy it was all in together. I remember seeing the older girls wearing a strip of material across their breast instead of bra's and I dreaded the thought of this when my body reached this stage. However, many of us girls found a way to try to get as much privacy from the towel as we undressed and dressed also standing in line for a bath..

We would go back to the changing room and put the same cloths on even underwear (unless it was a Thursday when clean underwear would be given out) We were all made to line up once a week and have our underpants inspected for marks, then the person who had the stained underwear would get a beating. Sometimes this was with the cane or other times with whatever the Nun had handy to use, the ironing cord or belt or a hairbrush. I can remember being hit by the nun for having stains on our pants.. We had to be fully dressed ready for the dinner bell went.

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5.45pm - 6.15pm. Tea Time. Say Grace and the Angelus (prayers)

(The usual punishments if late or if a nun had other punishments to hand out)

6.15 - 6.30. Novena's each night in front of the picture of the "Sacred Heart"

6.30-7.30pm Duties for some girls and free play for others except we if we had to practice for display or concert for visitors. Or the nun might have everyone playing the same game in groups. If it was raining we would practice singing as we sat on the verandah.

Knitting or listening to the gramophone I always loved music and stories like those of Danny Kay and Celtic singing. I would listen to the story in the songs to take me to places so I would forget where I was. 'Sometimes' we would even scale through each others heads for lice. Junior girls went to bed at 7pm while everyone else went to bed by 7.30pm. lights were out at 8pm.

The nun would walk up and down for a while until she thought everyone was asleep. But, before doing so she would tell us about the if we didn't cross our arms over our chess (like the virgin Mary) or if we put are legs and arms out " the devil would come in the shape of a black dog and bite our arms and legs off". My younger sister and I remember this to this day and I still feel sick as I think of it. I use to have night mares of this scene so I did this practice at always, even sometimes now I will do it

The nun's had a room where they slept and washed which was called a Cell. Each nun's cell was at the end of their dormitory.

Specialist who visited the orphanage

A Local Doctor-He would come to the orphanage when needed.

A Dentist. One a year he would come and attend to all sections like the Dentist, but he would come twice a year at the same time. He was merciless and clumsy. Many children had cut gums from where he missed and would bleed for hours. He would have no mercy for anyone. He would tell the nuns if you didn't sit still and we would get a beating if it was bad enough in their eyes to have disgraced the nuns. I remember one of the girls who had been to the Dentist that day was sleeping next to me. I was woken up by a lot of movement and talking around the next girls bed, I turned to look at the girl beside me and I remember seeing blood every where. One Nun angrily told me to turn back away from the girl. I fell back to sleep but in the morning the girl was gone and I don't remember ever seeing her again.

Visitors.

The Catholic 'Archbishop', visiting Nuns from interstate or overseas' for rest. Priest and VIP visitors would come at any time during the day. Sometimes they would come announced and it was always a rush to tidy up the play area and get us into the visitors play room. Regularly they would take those children who were deemed disruptive away somewhere else so they weren't seen until the visitors left. While they would know which girls would know how to answer questions if asked, the way the nuns had programmed us to.

Feast day's. If one of the nun's in either the babies section or children's section had a Feast Day (meaning that the Saints name they had taken was celebrated). We would get a special meal of chicken, mash potatoes and peas and gravy, jelly and custard was desert. (This is the same meal I love today).

How I left the orphanage

During eating dinner (lunch). The nun on duty called out that my sister and I were to be leaving for good after lunch. I don't remember how I felt immediately as my sister was still on punishment duties in the scullery and I was to finish off washing the blue winter jumpers with another girl. At 1pm we had to be dressed and ready to leave. I remember the feeling of panic, fear, abandonment by nuns, apprehension of being with my mother? Sadness and grief on leaving the other kids in the orphanage. Absolute fear of the world! (No preparation skills to simulate into the outside world.)

No knowledge, understanding or how to live a normal daily life. How to read a bus schedule, how to catch a bus, how to use money to pay for a bus, how to know when and how to get off. How to use money-How to add up change, how to buy the right things that my mother sent us to the shop for. Ridicule and shame was constant in so many situations.

Fear of what happens at a normal school and especially finding out that we were so far behind in our schooling shame and humiliation, fear of them finding out what we didn't know. I thought everyone was friends I didn't know how to deal with

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bullies, we were laughed at because we were different and because there was no one to turn to tell them to stop them from doing so and no one to go home to tell and help me.

I know we had a woman from the Children Service's come to the house many times, she came when our mother wasn't home but we really didn't understand what she was there for I just thought she heard about us being from the orphanage and she was visiting us. I remember her being really nice to us she was tall with dark hair.

I don't remember telling her about what was really happening with me on any level emotional, mentally or emotionally in any circumstance how we were being subjected to daily humiliation by teachers, kids, shop keepers, my mother and her friends (because she told them that we were in a boarding school). I had to pretend that I knew things that I had no idea nor understanding of then if I got it wrong (as I did so many times) I would be subjected to ridicule, humiliation or punishment by my mother. No different to the treatment I received in the orphanage.

There was never any constant food in the house other than weet-bix, butter, sugar, vegemite and peanut butter and milk(sometimes). My mother made us work the whole time, my older sister learnt how to cook for my mother and us.

My mother never came to the school nor did she take an interest in how we were settling in it was though the State Department just made her take us, so we had no one to help us. In time we I learnt to look at the teachers as the nuns so afraid of the kids and the ridicule that I clung to two teachers one the Principle who was kind and gentle, the other the singing teacher who liked my sisters and I because we could sing. This only escalated the ridicule but it wasn't as bad because I would stay close to the teachers at every opportunity I could, even though my sisters were making friends with some kids but I was too scared too.

My mother exposed us to men that she bought home with her after going out to pubs, roller game, and the wrestling. I hated, hated, hated men, I was scared, terrified of them, they always had alcohol and many time were drunk. If we woke up because of the noise after she came home about 12pm, she would start a party the house was full of drunk men and women the men would want to dance with us, at first I thought this was fun but then I became scared as many times a fight would start between the men. The men would tell us to dance with them, I didn't want to but my mother would make us. Many of these men and women she would bring home from the pubs especially the army and navy.

When we were asleep 3 times men interfered with my sister and I. The first time I woke up by a man having his hand down my pants. We told our mother the first time and she told me that I was dreaming. When I told her of the other two times she just ignored me and told that they wouldn't have done it. I then would lock myself in my sisters bedroom we also put stack things against the door to keep men away. I remember the door handle turning, my sister and I just sat on our beds rocking in terror and soundless, begging for who ever it was not to be able to open the door. Eventually who ever it was went away, we made this a practice we stuck too whenever my mother went out on the town which was 4 nights of the week and then on the Sunday's we would try to creep out before she got up and just roam the streets as long as we could.

My older sister fell pregnant at 15 years of age. I remember her telling my mother and my mother kicked down the stairs. I was screaming for her to stop. It only came to me in later years just what she did. I hated her but I feared her at the time to do year's anything.

The constant hiding and pretending to know things just so I could be accepted by my mother, other kids, teachers, my mother's friends, shop keepers, bus drivers, kids parents just about everyone and anyone. I missed the only world I knew, I missed the kids in the orphanage, I missed the dancing and singing in the orphanage. I liked the freedom from the nuns and priest, the church and the beatings and all that went with them but what had now taken its place was a raw fear of the constant unknown.

I knew this thing in the orphanage but I now that unknown was now more powerful as it was everywhere I turned, everywhere I looked, everywhere I went, every person I met, every thing I was trying to do, and every thing, I was expected to know, and everything I was expected to do.

I was 14 years old and had the life skills of a 3 year old, as for the emotional experience I can't tell you because the only time I was every very really happy was when I was singing, dancing or helping someone.

I remember that this lady came and told my mother how she could get school uniforms and books for the next year when I was going to High School. I was so happy that I was getting something new especially clothes, because I would look like all the other kids. She helped me to understand that my younger sister was not going to be coming with me because she was a year younger and in grade 7. I began to cry I didn't understand, I didn't want to go without her.

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I remember this woman putting her arm around me gently and it was like time stood still. I had never been hugged with such depth of concern and understanding that I have never forgotten that hug to this day. This lady tried to stay until my mother came home but she didn't come home. The lady had to leave. When my mother came home was only interested in what the lady had to say about who was going to pay for the uniforms and where did she have to go to get them. I remember going underneath the house and crying until I laid down on the dirt and fell asleep. She didn't care, I was 14 years old and had only my sister to talk to, but she was mixing with kids I felt scared of so we really didn't talk. I now know that she was from the children's services.

In my first year of high school I learnt to fit in with a group of kids who were not really interested in school but they were the only ones who accepted me. However, I can tell you I really wanted to learn I loved learning. I began to feel safe in class because I was part of a group (the wrong crowd). I wasn't game to let them see that I was really enjoying school so most times I didn't do my homework (many times I just didn't understand it but I would give it a go and not hand it in). Because of not doing my homework, I would be sent to the Headmaster's office and would get hit, if he felt like it. Other times I didn't know why I was being sent and I would be standing there for most periods because I was too scared to move, so eventually I got a bad name by most of the teachers and the other students. (We never did homework in the orphanage)

The year passed and I think I did enough just to pass that year. One day my mother was home when we got home and told me that she was called up to the principals office because of me not doing my homework. She punished me for weeks by making me work around the house and do work for her friends, while they paid her. It didn't matter because I had made friends, some of them were nice kids but like me, they had either one parent or two parents like my mother and didn't care about them either.

The next year my younger sister was coming to join me at high school, by this time she was really street wise and was really getting into some dangerous friends. However, that same lady was still coming and again told me that I could get new uniforms for the coming year. My sister was so excited as she already knew some of the boys for school. So Now I had someone to walk with as most of the kids caught the bus but we had to walk a fair distance. My sister was getting into a lot of trouble for mucking up she was getting violent when someone yelled at her, called her names ridiculed or humiliated her.

However, one day in the first term of year 9 I went home and my mother that she had been called up to the High School during the day and was told her to remove me from the school and that I had been expelled from school. I didn't know what that word meant! When she told me I asked her what I had done wrong as nothing had happened for some time I was starting to feel OK doing school work. She said that the Headmaster had told her to take me out of the school and that I was a trouble maker. I couldn't believe it! I remember crying my eyes out outside under the tree for hours. Sister was also shocked as she didn't understand it either, by this time she herself was calling me " Miss Goody Two Shoes ".

The next morning I got up and got dressed for school made my lunch and started to walk to school when my mother yelled out through the window for everyone to hear "You're Not Allowed Back Into The School Gates"! "You're Expelled" I didn't know what the word expelled meant! So I turned around and went back into the house and just stayed there. I felt so numb, I didn't know what to do! She made me work around the house doing housework (as we were very good at that because of the years of having to do things perfectly for fear of being beaten by the nuns). So to this day I still do not know what I did wrong. So I really don't know what level of education I had.

When I was about +14 years old, I called my mother a prostitute (I didn't really know what it meant but I knew it had something to do with men) by mother beat me to the ground sitting on me and banging my head into the veranda. She kept telling me to say I was sorry but I wouldn't so she just kept on banging my head until she was exhausted. I remember not having any feelings in me. She said she would fix me and went to phone the nuns and I heard her say that if they didn't take me back that she would kill me. They must of said for me to be sent back, I can't remember if she put me in a taxi or sent me by bus (it's a blank) but I do remember crying because my sister was screaming and saying no don't but didn't stop her, so I was separated again from my sister.

At 15 years. of age (1967) I was sent from the orphanage to Mrs C I had always been good at drill in the orphanage (having done it every night, and in most cases morning noon and night if we were to perform for the bishop or any other important visitors or feast day celebrations, which were many). I had no idea where on the planet I was going.

However, when I arrived I was informed that I was a charity case and that to pay for my pocket money I was to clean daily, nanny her grandchildren (her son and daughter in-law were both doctors and had I think 6 kids) on the weekends. It wasn't long before Mrs knew that I had no one to hold her accountable for what she did to me so before long

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about a few weeks she was slapping my face in front of the other girls. I was in such fear of her because she was exactly like the nuns, I never retaliated.

Again I was on show and a trophy for her to show off. She soon became away of my talents and sent me out to teach Physical Education in the catholic primary and high schools around Sydney. I never got paid although I had to bring her cheques from the nuns to her for my work. Sometimes I was so hungry I would steal any food I could find in the staff lunch rooms. 6 months later she flew me to Melbourne to work in catholic primary and high schools again. I was always successful and the kids, nuns and staff always liked me. I felt good at work but feared time away from work. She put me in a girls boarding house that was run by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Albert St in Melbourne. This is where I first became aware that the outside world could be fun.

I made friends with some of the other girls. I was always afraid of the nuns coming into my room and going through my things, because they knew the nuns at Nazareth House and Mrs. [redacted] always felt like I was in a fish bowl and too frightened to do anything to upset them or else they would tell the nuns on me and I would be punished for disgracing them. I started to feel a little less frightened by the outside world when I was with the girls as I felt they looked after me a lot.

They would explain things to me, but most of the time I would say nothing and just watch and learn and try to make sense of what they were saying and doing. Mrs. [redacted] would pay the nuns my pocket money and they would give it to me. I never got a wage only a weekly amount for train and tram fares. I remember the year because it was the time the seekers broke up and I watched their concert from England in the main lounge room. When Christmas time came around Mrs. [redacted] flew us girls that worked for her back home for holiday's. The other girls had parents to meet them and it was good to see them greeting one another. I had no one, so one of the parents gave me a lift to my mothers house.

I wanted to return to Melbourne to continue teaching but I had used the pocket money Mrs. [redacted] gave me on little Christmas gifts for my sisters and mother. When I asked my mother for some money to buy a train ticket back to Melbourne she said I have no money! I didn't know what to do so I went back to the orphanage to teach grade 1 and 2 school work. I was then employed by Nazareth House to be the 'Senior Girl' which meant that I worked from 6am to 8.p.m. With one hour off from 4 to 5 per day Monday to Friday and every 2nd weekend. My pay was \$2.50 (I think). I would go home to week ends I was free. After one year I left Nazareth House for good.

At 17 years old I left the orphanage for the last time. I started to feel unable to contend with the difficulties of the outside world because of the constant fear of the unknown, now here I was again outside. I tried so hard that it overwhelmed me and soon after leaving I ended up in Chermside psychiatric ward because I was crying uncontrollably for days and I didn't know why. I had gone to stay with my mother again who couldn't care less about me. I only remember she got sick of me and told me to go and see this doctor she knew which I did and he told her to put me in Chermside Psychiatric Hospital. To this day I still don't understand why any of it happened. My younger sister was already a patient in Chermside at the time and I was so surprised and happy to find her there. Although I can't remember much from that time apart from being terrified of the men, it didn't matter who they were. My time was cut short because someone who knew my mother came to see me and asked me if I wanted to go to Townsville.

I had never heard of this place and she seemed nice so I said yes. The hospital let me go, and I remember finding out she had about 6 kids and we all drove in one car to Townsville.

The Start of my adult life in the outside world.

This was the start of my physical adult life. I stayed with this family for maybe a year or less before I moved into a girls boarding house. I gained employment in the YWCA and then I kept going back to nuns. I was so lonely that I remember walking into a convent and just talking to the nuns after they heard I was from Nazareth House and that I had been sent to the [redacted] school of Physical Education for a year said that they were in need in the Townsville area for a Physical Culture Teacher. They asked me if I would do it, not knowing any better I just said yes.

So I became employed by the Catholic education department as the Physical Education Teacher (in this age it would probably be called coordinator).

It was during this time that I became aware of what is called normal life. I use to walk every where especially in the mornings I would watch how people would be going to work, school, where-ever. One morning it struck me that this is "Normal Life" this strange feeling came over me as though something clicked in my brain. I still can feel this feeling as I am writing this it was a wonderful feeling.

I was very successful and was happy with the work I was doing. I was just starting to understand how liberating life could be as long as I stuck to what I knew. Since leaving the orphanage and my family I was free. It was during this time that I

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met my husband. When I met him I felt something special even though I had not spoken to him, our eyes just met and I knew this was something special.

Now I was learning to be a partner, I was back to square one again and felt like "Alice in Wonderland" although I was happy I was making mistakes and Ray's family and friends were beginning to see some cracks in me because there was so much they would talk about and I didn't understand.

Some times I would run away during an event and just cry where no one would see me then come back to the event as though nothing happened and pretend to be happy. For an example, when Ray and I became engaged I didn't know people had a party, when Ray's parents asked me if I would like to have a party at their house? I said that would be nice and so Ray invited his friends and I asked some from work.

On the night of the engagement I arrived all dressed up and Ray's sisters were in the lounge when I arrived. After walking in I noticed there were lot's of presents on the lounge and I very excitedly I asked who's birthday it was? Ray's sisters laughed and said there your engagement gifts! I replied "do you get gifts for an engagement"? They just laughed again and said yes! I just wanted to die, as I had already become aware of their unkind humor. I just went outside and hid amongst some guests. I had no understanding about these types of things as I had never had anything celebrated for me in my life nor had I seen anything like this other than the nuns feast days or Holy Day's.

Daily life was one continuous struggle for all the above reasons. I can still feel those feelings as I am writing this. In 1979 I went to a primary school in Mackay and asked to be given a test so that I knew what my education level was and after them telling me I was humiliated and devastated when they told me I was equivalent to a grade 3.

In 1990 I was assessed by an Educational Psychologist in Melbourne and she told me that whilst I was a clever person she found evidence that the environment I was exposed to through my early years (humiliation, neglect, fear of punishment if I got something wrong) had prevented me from building confidence in my own abilities resulting in me unable to grow scholastically and has had a life time effect which possibly can't be reversed.

Recently in 2008 I was again assessed by another psychologist who did a full assessment of not only my academic abilities but also a personality values testing and I was so proud to know that this test revealed that I had the potential to be a university graduate and had good personal and work values.

It has been a daily struggle to fit in somewhere in this world. I have only momentarily felt loved by my children although I love them. I have felt such shame because of not knowing things that many times I have humiliated them and my husband.

My struggle is to try to find this feeling that people have to want to stay alive and living. The struggle from my past is so great sometimes that it become too hard to continue to learn so that the issues don't overwhelm me. I am tired, I don't want to remember anymore.

I know I have let my children down they were not meant to have been hurt by my past and they are. I see the fear and hurt in there eyes when I have episodes of reflection.

I am still having therapy but I have learnt much even though the road has been long and sometimes too much to bear alone I have had some very special therapist who have helped me to understand the pieces of the puzzle to reaching the best possible place within myself that I can attain. I have had two long stay's in a Psychiatric Hospital one for 5 and a half months the other for 4 months while having deep therapy daily. I learnt a lot and a lot of my mind was unraveled which was difficult to face and overcome. Deep down I felt nothing be shame and guilt for things I had no control over.

I know I can never be normal, what ever normal is! I know that I have to keep finding and putting more pieces of the puzzle together when I really want to let go sometimes especially now that I am not "Alice in Wonderland" anymore and I can see the dark side of human beings.

A. INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Nazareth House, Wynnum Nth Brisbane.

B. NATURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

- I believe that the education that I received at Nazareth House to be grossly neglected. I believe that I left the Home with practically no worldly knowledge concerning money (how to live normally in a family, in society especially in a

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normal school) and few life skills. This has been bewildering and humiliating for me in life as I feel that I have to continually learn so much after everyday normal life that others take for granted.

- The atmosphere of living in a fear induced system room such a young age has left me with extreme anxiety and panic attacks which created "The Perfectionist" Syndrome.
- The lack exposure to a normal environment of day to day living i.e. learning through a television shows, created a false understanding of life which resulted in me always striving to get my family to be like what I saw in the television. Which led to my children turning away from me and to their father
- Never being allowed to freely express myself has left me with a lack of identity of who I really am. Always trying to please others without ever having a choice of my own. Has left me without a sense of identity.
- The suppressive environment that I endured at Nazareth House has caused me to have low self esteem and self worth. My adult life has been plagued with extreme insecurity, anxiety, worthlessness, self sacrifice, isolation and intimidation leading to repeated severe depression.
- It has been extremely difficult for me to maintain my marriage and raising my three daughters.
- Constant humiliation of no privacy when exposing our bodies for washing, dressing or bathing.
- Never experiencing a loving touch or approval has left me with the inability to feel love for myself at any time. Yet, I can give love and compassion for my children and people in need.
- Self harm thoughts of suicide as I feel so tired of trying to get life right, and that I don't feel that anyone would care if I wasn't here.
- Disassociation when put into certain situations.

C. NATURE OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Sever Beatings with full force using, ironing cord, their black belt, thick sticks and hair brushes.
- Being Locked in the black hole until the nun's felt like letting you out.
- *Being forced fed and after regurgitating your food.*
- *Being beaten or hit in front of everyone at meal times while the others children would be standing behind their chairs at their table waiting to say grace before eating a meal.*
- *Kneeling on the timber floor with hands on head with the lights turned out.*
- *Having witch hazel put on our bruises or marks left after a beating*
- *Standing for great lengths of time holding a broom stick behind your back with upper arms behind holding the stick across shoulder blades.*
- *Being pulled around or to the ground by your hair. Also being pulled up a dragged by ears*
- *Being hidden from visitors if you had marks from beating or if they thought you didn't look good*
- *Not being allowed to have visitors.*
- *Being hit over the head by the nun's if they thought you needed it, even if you didn't know why.*
- *Over worked until you were exhausted physically and mentally.*

D. NATURE OF SEXUAL ABUSE

While I was in hospital interstate I decided to give evidence to the "Ford Inquiry" that was being held in Brisbane. While I was in Brisbane I was encouraged to speak to the Police regarding to the Sexual Abuse I suffered at the age of 8 on 3 occasion's. The trauma of these assaults had come out whilst under special therapy by my Psychiatrist and I had repressed them for 30 years. The Police were very caring but throughout as I knew they had to be. I was unsure if they would believe me. Over time they flew me back to Brisbane for a formal report for charges to be made against the Priest after they found him and he was to be extradited back to Brisbane expected to be charged.

However, the week before he was to be extradited the Police phoned to tell me that the Priest had died so they could go no further with the case. I was in a Psychiatric Hospital when the call came to me. I don't remember much after that but I know I was singing nursery rhyme's and I couldn't stop. My doctor was called and suggested that I should be placed in ICU for the night for my safety. My husband was with me and agreed. It was the next day that I got angry within myself as I didn't believe he was dead. As by now I was aware that they moved Priest around and many (like Nun's) have the same name and it's difficult to know what their truth is.

E. MEDICAL TREATMENT

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Depression
- Border Line Personality
- Post natal depression

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- Treatment for 3 attempted suicide
- Eating Disorder
- Back injury
- Asthma (depression induced)

H. CARE PROVIDED BY OTHERS

Currently seeing Psychologist and Psychiatrist ongoing. Since the regressed memories came back by another trauma 16 years. Ago, I have had treatment with two times being hospitalized for months.

THE EFFECT ON MY LIFE

- As a result of the punishment I received in childhood, both in the orphanage and living with a mother who didn't really want me. "I was just a biological reaction" as an adult I have compensated this by over pleasing and over committing through fear of rejection and over punishment.
- I have suffered excessive stress, emotional abuse and manipulation by Employers.
- My last employment led to acceptance as work cover claim, which still exists today.
- I have attempted suicide three times. The last attempt I overdosed and spent 4 days in the intensive care unit and under went intensive psychological treatment.
- I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress disorder after I was triggered by negative experiences at the last place of employment.
- I have had to develop through Therapy confidence and self esteem and address issues.
- For 28 years I coached a competitive sport and was very successful until the accident. It was my life and had enjoyed working with children especially teaching them to love and respect their bodies. But outside of my work I was lost in the world.
- I have the inability to be assertive affected-accepted toxic relationships including personal and work relationships.
- I suffer from panic and anxiety attacks. I have depression, weight issues and and suffer from Post Traumatic Stress.
- I will not have trades people in my home unless my husband is there.
- I have been struggling with my relationships with my children. They know the fringes of things that happened in the home but they do not want to know anymore as they can't manage the truth about what happened. (They cannot contend with the anymore as they have lived enough with the legacy)
- When my children were young I couldn't leave them with anyone.
- In the orphanage we were not allowed to get a thing wrong and I developed perfectionism. Even when cleaning windows I will strive for perfection.
- The hardest thing to do now is to allow my self boundaries. When I get well the family dynamics change but the family doesn't want to change so there is constant conflict learning about boundaries, however the family have to learn to respect and then I fold out of fear of consequence of losing them.
- I dissociate when I'm in an environment of humiliation. I hate being laughed at, I can't cope. If it is severe enough it triggers severe PTSD behavior which can result in physically attacking the person's involved or internalizing it into disassociation or suicidal thoughts or action.
- When I'm in a social setting I can't talk because if I say I was bought up in a orphanage people are uncomfortable and act surprised so I stop. I can't talk about the everyday stuff that other people talk about socially so I just sit and listen.

Key areas of Harm that has denied me the most basic human rights to live a full and fruitful life and to reach my potential as a person, mother, wife, sister, most importantly a human being to be happy in who I am.

- The right to an emotionally safe environment
- The right to a physically safe environment
- The right to a mentally safe environment
- The right to the most basic scholastic education (governed by our laws of the country)
- The right to have a voice
- The right to have emotions and be allowed to express them.
- The right to be nurtured into a well balanced adult
- The right to the life skills, so that we can function in the community and be self sufficient.
- The right to be valued as a human being
- The right to have a voice and to be heard
- The right to be protected by-law by those that were our guardians

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- The right to be recognized and nurtured as a family unit with my sisters.
- The right to ownership of my property.
- The right of choice
- The right to be a child and to be understood as a child.
- The right to be called by my birth name and not a number.
- The right to say no and for that to be respected.
- The right to know we were a part of a country and to address the flag of our nation.
- The right to privacy and space without ridicule
- The right to cry without fear of punishment or humiliation.
- The right to love and be loved.
- The right to have medical treatment when necessary and not just when the nuns felt comfortable to allow a doctor to look at us.
- The right to be valued as a person by our truth and efforts without judgements, not by a measure of how well we pleased our oppressors.

Summary.

As I mentioned in my opening that I wrote my story so that people will understand how life was for us. What is more important that they could come to grips with why we have been so affected. I often wonder about the girls that no one can find as I could understand if they found life was just too hard and decided to take their own lives. I wonder if they have had a proper funeral and who would have been there for them. If they have a special grave or an unmarked grave, or one with a number just as in their children.

I wish for all who have had the same experiences a peaceful and contented next part of their lives.

From number 24.