

To Pope Francis
Sent on November 12, 2020

In the hands of authorities, A child's cry

When Saint Joseph's Orphanage was built, the place was meant for orphans to have a place to be loved and cared for in a safe environment. In 1961 my dad was in the military and mom had five of us children and one on the way. Four of us were put in Saint Joseph's Orphanage for six months because mom couldn't take care of us all (we were ages 2-6- I was three). On my first day, I was put in a closet for crying because mom left me there. I watched a nun kick a little boy down the hallway. I watched the same nun make a child eat vomit because he didn't like his breakfast, not all in the same day, but within my six-month stay. On weekends, I would tell my mom about what happened; some days were worse than others.

One day a little African-American boy showed up. He was taller than my brothers and he was my brother's friend. They were both four and loved to climb anything. Let's be frank, they got in trouble a lot. This nun would become so frustrated and upset with them; she would kick, hit, and throw them in closets a lot. Well, one weekend we went home. Of course, I told my mom everything then we went back Sunday morning for church.

We were on the balcony of the second floor- that's where 2-5 year-olds would go to church. There was a statue on the front of the balcony. We could see the head of the statue sticking up above the railings of the balcony and my brother and his friend wanted to climb on it. I kept saying 'no, don't, she will get you after church!' The nun brought the other children to their place after church, but three of us stayed on the balcony. The nun didn't see the two boys get on the railing so that they could get to the statue. The African-American boy made it to the statue and my brother was still on the railing. The nun came and saw them and I started screaming 'Stop, she's coming to kill you!' I tried so hard to make that boy come back but he didn't and my brother came back off the railing.

The nun had the boy by his feet upside down saying 'you could fall like this' as I was trying to bite her and hit her. Then I heard her scream 'Look what you did' and she picked me up and shook me and threw me in the closet behind the stairs. Later a nun came out and got me and all I kept saying is 'where is that little boy, you know the African American boy, where did he go?' I kept talking about this little boy and I asked my brother. My brother said be quiet, they don't want us to talk about it ever again. I would keep asking everybody and anybody. I went home that weekend and told my mom. My mom was concerned so she asked the nun on Sunday morning about it and of course the nun said: 'it's in the eyes of a child, it's the way she sees the story and I don't know where the little boy is'. I looked at my mom and said 'this is his home, he said the nuns were his mom.'

My mom didn't believe me and she told the nun, 'I will see you on Friday to pick up my children and she left.'

I was put in the closet because I kept opening my mouth. I had to stay in the closet until lunch and then I went to play/ However a couple of nights later, the nun came into the room and took me in her arms down the stairs and out the door. She then took me down a path, it was very dark, and put me in a boat. It was like a fishing flat bottom boat and there was another nun with a bag and they threw it in the lake and said 'this could happen to you!' I'm three years old what's going to happen to me? I told mom about it and the weekend of Christmas she just picked us up and we left on a train to California to meet dad.

I never did find out what happened to that little boy or why they threw this bag in the lake and said this could happen to me. All my life I have been petrified of teachers, doctors, any authority figures. My life is all about basically saving all the children, really loving them. I was never trusting of moms or dads, not even my own mother. I was totally destroyed by that place so I went out and tried to investigate myself because nobody else was listening. We could tell the police...they weren't listening. As far as they were concerned, we were just looking for a way out. Kids would run away and police would bring them back. Kids would cry and say 'they're abusing us over there' and nobody was doing anything about it.

I know in my research, in Quebec Canada they had what you call sisters of Providence, Sisters of Grey etc. They also had a governor named Duplessis. He ran the government in Quebec, Canada, and he taught the nuns how to do lobotomies, electric shock treatments, and medicate the children who were in the Orphanage. He believed that if women were having children out of wedlock, it was legal to do whatever they wanted. They would beat, sell, and destroy the children, and treat them as slaves to make money for the churches. If you ever want to look it up it's called Duplessis children.

For the Catholic church, this is so unbelievable. Look into it. In 1950, these orphanages were caught giving children medication to make them look retarded or mental so they were closed down. That was in Quebec. The nuns obviously had no place to go so they were free to go wherever they were needed. The Burlington Vermont Orphanage needed nuns to help take care of the children so they sent for some of them, and they came here to Vermont. Knowing that these nuns were trained to do illegal things in Canada, they came to the US, and they did the same things that they were taught in Canada when they came to Vermont.

These nuns should have not been allowed to come to the US A. With these teachings, they shouldn't of been able to come take care of children. They have damaged a lot of children; the trauma crippled children emotionally, mentally, and physically. I'm asking you if there was a way that you could help us live a better rest of our lives? We are a group of 30. The Diocese here in Vermont has a few lawsuits and lost a lot of money and they don't have money to help us. There have been a few men in our group raped by nuns and priests, same with some of the girls. I have witnessed crimes along with others. The Attorney General is looking into the crimes but it's many years ago and we're not doing civil suits yet unless necessary. Were just asking to live the rest of our lives comfortably. We honestly deserve that, don't you think? At least, anyway, I'm hoping you can help us.

I don't believe this is my own opinion and that the good Lord would want these crimes to happen. I do think you had a handful of nuns that were abusive and they got caught up in a different country, and it's sad because I know that most are honest and genuine and loving and caring deep down. I just don't get how they could hide such a crime and try to pass it off. This is never going to go away, and that's just my personal feeling. Thank you for listening.

Maura LaBelle
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Maura Lee LaBelle

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I am a person that has a good amount of Christian knowledge that I have gained over the years. I believe the catholic church created the persona of a nun out of their own control and power. Nothing to do with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ teachings. No mortal woman on this earth is God's wife. Mortals become missionaries. So much abuse has come out of the catholic church in the name of God and that is sin. In reality it is mortals' power and sin. No church has all the truths. God speaks to us through many writings. He sent his tribes all to different parts of the earth and sent them with different understandings in hopes that mortals would learn as much as they can.

We are supposed to love each other in a way that Heavenly Father himself does. There must be many priest and nuns living in darkness in the immortal world awaiting final judgement. A lot of repenting to do.

Do you know about ACE's "adverse childhood experiences"? Scientist have discovered by studying the brain that for children who have grown and developed in abuse, their development is often damaged for life. You need to read up on this.

Regarding the damage done, you owe the remaining generation compensation. Victims need to receive justice in order to heal. This has affected their children and their entire life. It has taken guts and courage to survive. What are you going to say to the Lord when He asks you why did you let this happen and why did you not try to make it up to all those who suffered? When the Lord says to you as a deceased mortal why did you create so much horrific matters in my name. You will answer to the Lord, no one escapes that, no matter how many prayers you do each day. You and your peers had plenty of opportunity to make things right.

"The "Quebec Duplessis Scandal" in the forties and fifties should have rendered those nuns the death sentence. And you sent those nuns on to Vermont to dish out similar abuse. Those nuns knew it was abuse, they enjoyed it. There is so much I want to say, but I can't say it all as I am sickened when I think about what the catholic church appears to stand for in my opinion.

Regardless of what I have been through, I have lived a very decent life, my daughter says a life of innocence.

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