

My name is Marilyn Wakefield, I attended Holy Childhood School, in Harbor Springs Mich...I attended first grade until 6th grade...I am a survivor of the school...my treatment and trauma that I received while I was there...is still with me....it is a part of me that doesn't go away. In August of 2021, I learned of remains of children buried in the streets of Harbor Springs, which brought another trauma from the school I would have to face, to bring death of children to my life...I am devastated for the children.

My abuse started when, I was making my communion, everyone that was in my class, the girls in their white dresses, the boys in black pants and white shirts...girls in their white socks and white shoes, boys in their black shoes, I in my white socks and black shoes...I don't know why they did this to me....has haunted me to this day.

The next time I remember my emotional torture, my mom and dad brought my siblings, to the school, I was standing in the vesta buel, with sister Maxine, Naomi, I didn't see my siblings, as they always separated us when we got there...Naomi said she had a treat for me, in the dining room, to go and get it....so I went to the dining room, as she stayed with my mom and dad...and found a coffee plate with a raisin cookie on it, it was her ultimate torture for me, as she knew I hated raisins, in which this was in a lot of the foods we ate...

One day, while not feeling good after breakfast, I told her I was not feeling good and she had me go upstairs and asked me if I wanted anything, I asked her for a glass of orange juice...and went and got into my bed in the little girls dorm...as I lay in bed not feeling good, waiting for something to drink...she came upstairs with orange juice in a big metal pitcher, used for what they called, milking the cow...a milk stand that was just outside the dining room....

she gave me a glass of it, as I was getting ready to fall asleep, she said oh no, you have to drink all of this, I was just a child, what happened next, I started drinking glass after glass after glass until I was running for the bathroom as she stood over by bed watching me, as she was ironing her clothes...I turned around to look at her as I was running for the bathroom...she was standing looking at me with a smile on her face saying nothing.... I got back in my bed and went to sleep...

Another time the all the girls were watching a small black and white tv, on a Saturday afternoon...a Don Melvoin, movie, the kitchen nuns bagged us a late afternoon dinner as we sat

having our bagged lunch, we had a Waldorf salad of type, which contained raisins, again, I threw mine out in my milk carton, and in the trash it went....not realizing she was watching me...had me dig in the garbage to find my milk carton, dig the raisins out and eat them...

I ran all the way down to the dining room from third floor and spit them out in the garbage, ran back upstairs before she knew I was missing....I was hit by a paddle as well as my sister Mary, we were taken to a second floor closet after the nun hit us, we were told to get back up stairs and put a smile on our faces to make the other girls think something good just happened to us....

One day I was outside walking along the front of the school, hanging onto the black bar rail, that ran the front of the church to the school, a couple of boys came up to me and was saying tell her, tell her....for ever this stuck out in my mind, so one day as an adult I asked my brother Frank what were they talking about and he told me....that in the boys play room, he is younger than me, he had peed his pants and his dorm room nun had stripped him down in front of all the boys, drug him upstairs and gave him a bath...then brought him back to the playroom....I asked him why he didn't tell us, he said he didn't think anyone cared....another time again with my brother, when I got older and aged out of the school, Frank was still in there...living on Mackinac Island, one day my dad asked me if I would pick up the mail after school, I told him I would...when my dad got home from work he got the mail from me, I told him he got a bill from burns clinic, he said he shouldn't have no one was sick, he opened it up and found out my brother Frank was in the hospital and had been for 2 weeks, he was an alter boy and had slipped on the sidewalk and split his kneecap opened and had surgery in Petoskey....sending my dad the bill....if my dad had not gotten the bill he would have never known my brother was in the hospital....my brother continued to run away from the school and finally got away

My sister Mary, a year older than myself, was a nail biter, they , the nuns got her a over sized pacifier and tried to shame, belittle and just laughed at her and said if you want to suck on something suck on this...another time, we, the girls went on a day trip to cross village, I was looking for her, we were there for a long time that day....when we went back to the school toward evening time....I looked by the fire escape and she was kneeling by the doorway...she was happy we were back, she was there for nine hours....nobody knew she was there except for Naomi....she was always kneeling for something...as a child

One thing I talked to my mom about, was a physical we had to get, I asked her if she signed any consent form for us to have at the school, all the girls had to get dressed in their house robes and stand in line on the second floor and wait in line to get checked out by someone, while there were sheets that separated the playroom from one side from the other....the boys were on the other side....my mom knew nothing about it....I want to know what that was all about....

I witnessed my cousin Judy being yelled at my Naomi, one year we were on our hands and knees scrubbing the stairways and she was screaming at Judy she was missing a spot and would she like to start over....many many stairs

Halloween was a complete nightmare....powder on the stairs, ghosts and goblins, when the lights went out all heck broke loose...the nuns would dress up and scare us....dumping us out of bed....shaking us, the powder was supposed to be devils powder, and if you got any on you...he was going to get you...when I aged out of the little girls dorm and moved into the big girls dorm, I thought it wouldn't be as bad....I was getting older, maybe I was going to be safer, in there.....

Things just got worse, we would often take trips to Wolverine state park on weekends, we now had a bus driver, and I was watching the news one night and saw a commercial about if your hurt or something like that, tell someone...so I told our bus driver, some of the things we were going through, only to find out he told Naomi what I said to him and she dragged me to of bed early one morning and made me wash under closing screaming at me, about what I said....

One time during one of her birthdays she had us bend over on our bus drivers lap for a birthday spanking for her birthday, one of the girls was sick, so he went up stairs and dumped her bed over and she landed on the floor....

and Halloween had taken a step up in the scary....we now were being taken to the cemetery and being dropped off....I would not get out of the truck...I just closed my eyes...and sat there shaking, Naomi asked me if I wanted to get out , I was just shaking and saw lights behind tombstones and people dressed in scary costumes crouching behind tombstones.... I didn't remember getting back to the school, but I knew I was safe back in my horror....

Naomi had taken a toll on me....I once was caught in the winter time washing my face in the morning with warm water.....she came up to me and turned on the cold faucet side and made me wash my face in cold.....I couldn't free myself from her...

I have looked back on my time there many times..... I didn't suffer in school...in the classroom...how could my suffering continue by just a few flights of stairs away....

One night as I lay in bed, I hear the screaming of Naomi across the big girls dorm....she was screaming at Debbie Scott, a little older than myself, I sat up in bed and looked across the dorm and then looked at her, Naomi was screaming at the top of her lungs at Debbie, she had started her period,, and didn't know what to do, so she hid all her dirty clothes in her dresser, a small stand next to her bed....as we all had one.....Debbie started screaming and crying, she was holding her head...I was holding my breath, as I think we all were, I was so scared for her...I couldn't sleep, she was just screaming....the next day we were back in school, we were there for our education....I was so confused about the night before, but went to school in the morning....when different girls were asking about Debbie, we were told she went back home... no one ever saw her again....to this day I would like to know what happened to her....

My cousin Doris was on the radar as her and Naomi never got along...Doris hid in the infirmary one day and into the night...Naomi was looking for her....Naomi went through the big girls dorm screaming Doris's name, I had my covers covering my head...trying to block it out, trying not to listen, after what seemed like an eternity, she finally caught her and chased her to the

front of the dorm....and I said out loud, oh my god, they are by the Virgin Mary picture....they were at each other....screaming...I just laid down and blocked it out and went back to sleep .  
....for tomorrow we will be safe, back in the classroom....

My cousin Will, who was so small, tiny built, Doris brother, was swiped a few times across the face by a bear paw, and the blood of a bear paw, that a donor have given the school for us...I sat there in horror for my cousin, he just sat there...getting ready to eat....I was a witness to this horror.... I can't ever erase this from my mind.....

Every Christmas, we had to as the children of Holy Childhood had to get dressed up for the benefactors of holy childhood, and sing for them at the Perry Davis Hotel in Petoskey...I often wondered who they were....and what were they to us....it was not until I got older to understand what this school was all about...

As a teenager, moved back home to Mackinac Island, I had a difficult time adjusting to what, I have lived through in Harbor Springs, and being home and starting school on the Island was so very difficult for me, not my studies, but trying to fit in, emotionally, coming back home where, everyday life is still going on around us, and putting harbor springs behind, I couldn't adjust...I didn't fit, in, I found relief in pot and alcohol....left school in my senior year, my focus was not on...I was so smart back then....being called names, no self esteem, I just couldn't take it anymore.... I did go back and get my ged.....and slowly started to get myself together in my mid twenties....by 28 I was married, and started to figure out what I had been through.....

I never gave up God....He has....been there for me....

I have been to the Holy Land.... I have taught religion education, for the same diocese that I just spoken about....10 years.....this is my first year in 11 years I have not taught....for the diocese of Gaylord....

I was going to go to my grave, with what I have been through, until hearing about the children, buried beneath the streets in harbor springs, I could not sit still....for them,,,,,and now for us....all of us...

We are the elders now, we are the ones who are here for us and all the babies....and parents of this babies and their families....I am sure they're are still many memories, that are still beneath the surface of myself....I have had trouble trusting people....especially people in authority positions...

I know this happened to myself, for sure is true, I know I am not alone in my suffering, there are many of us who have had their childhood stolen and worked all their lives to find normalcy, I am one of them....while I thought this only happened to me and my family...it happened to many....their stories resembles mine, but, each story I have heard, or watched has their own trauma...as far as cultural teachings and language, I never knew it existed....