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I grew up with a mother who was very abusive & I was sexually abused on & off from the age of 7 the perpetrator who was responsible for this was a close friend of my mother's & when I tried to tell her on a number of occasions & although I begged her not to let me see him she continued to do so saying I was being ridiculous & that 'he' would never do that. Gradually my grades at school dropped & I started running away from home there were a few suicide attempts too which I ~~then~~ now realize were cries for help. My mother had never really wanted me because I was a girl & was always told what an embarrassment I was to her. Eventually she decided to make me a ward of the state, but found out she had insufficient grounds, then she found out about the Home of Good Shepards & told me I was going to a home for bad girls because that was what I deserved I'm pretty sure it was 1970 & I think I was 14 but I can't remember dates & have no idea how long I was there.

It was a terrible place the Nuns were horrible & I think there were a few women lay workers. At first I was sent to the school classes but this was hopeless because they had all ages of girls in the class & we all had the same lessons - so I was put to work in the laundry which was very hard work & so hot, we weren't allowed to speak to each other or to the Nuns we used to work in there all day & I don't remember having free time after a while I couldn't wait for morning to come & to go to the laundry because the nightmare really began when the key turned in the door to the dormitory & the lights went out. In the dormitory that I shared with the other girls of various ages there were two old women (I realize now that they were senile) they were so frightening they drooled & didn't talk only muttered, when I used to get out of bed to go to the toilet they would follow me in there & one of them would hold me & the other would touch my body my breasts & vagina trying to get as many fingers in as they could - then they would swap around they had incredible strength & I will never forget their hands

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they had very long fingernails that were dirty & - I always thought of their hands as being claws - when I told the other girls they just laughed & said they liked the new young ones - some times I would bleed internally because their nails were so sharp - so my choice was to wet the bed - which we were punished & humiliated for, or just put up with it - I chose the later - at one stage I had terrible pain & was very sore & bleeding a lot - one of the girls pinched some salt from the kitchen & I bathed with that - I realize now that it would have been an infection & when this continued for the rest of my time there - thankfully it wasn't every night - I have come to the conclusion that these creatures were either nuns or girls who had been there for years & gone completely mad. I left that institution with many scars both physical & emotional - to this day I have to sleep with the light on & have nightmares of terrible hands like claws. I only started to deal with my past 5 years ago & the results were devastating - I was unable to relate sexually to my husband & he couldn't cope with all the stress we were all going through, this cost me my marriage - I over compensated with my children so wanting to be the perfect mother consequently I think they felt smothered a lot of the time - I have isolated myself for most of my life & felt very alone but the worst thing of all has been not being able to trust people. I have had counselling on & off for the last 5 years & suffer from depression which is treated with anti depressants. I am so fortunate to have a very supportive G.P. & have finally found a wonderful counsellor who I trust. Through Cam I've met other people in the same position & feel that their plights are far worse than mine. I have written this submission to add my voice to those who have been forgotten.