

A. SUMMARY of CONTENT**SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE****SUBMISSION
From Robin Ruth Henderson**To The Senate Inquiry - "Abducted by Nuns- My Story" in brief

I am an ex-nun. In 1959, I was 15 years of age, a young working girl and part time student. My divorcee Mother boarded me out entrusting me to the care of the Pastorelle Sisters at their Hostel for Girls in Carlton, Victoria, so they would oversee that I went to work every day and to College at night. The curfew was 9pm, she made arrangements regarding this for the four College nights and believed she had found a safe environment for me. Mum had worked since she and Dad separated in 1949 and since then I had been in Boarding School and had boarded with friends. Mum had to go to work and could not look out for me. Dad had remarried, Mum had been given sole custody. She also had a bad temper and had realised that her outbursts and arguments with landlords in the rooms she rented for us were having an adverse effect on me. Mum paid the board, visited the Hostel occasionally, we went out on week-ends and had lunch together every day in the city since we worked in adjacent buildings. I had a lovely boyfriend to whom I was unofficially engaged with our parents' consent. I was studying to be a Designer and Illustrator. I loved sport and I was a happy, healthy, outgoing girl with many dreams and ambitions of Career and children.

In the space of eight months at the Pastorelle Sisters' Hostel for working girls, the Pastorelle Sisters had convinced me to leave my job, lie to my Mother, forget my studies and dreams and they had procured my passage to Italy to become a Nun at their novitiate in Rome.

My Mother found out one week before I was due to sail. She was rendered powerless. She was not good in crises and would collapse. This was too much for her. She had no assets and had always spent what money she accumulated on my education.

The Pastorelle Sisters or their agent falsified my Passport Application documents and they abducted me.

In Rome I was sexually molested, physically abused and ill treated and terribly neglected to the point where my youthful vigour waned and I became very ill.

Robin R. Henderson
21.03.2004

B. Summary of Content – cont....

I was detained, they took away my Passport. I had no money, no civilian clothes, no friends on the outside, could not speak the language, correspondences were censored, all activities were monitored, I was not allowed to use the telephone and the gates in the walls were controlled at the office, the windows on the ground floor had bars.

I was subjected to 'behaviour modification'. I was rendered powerless, afraid, obedient - stirring oratory, indoctrination, affection, punishments for imperfection, belittlement, derision, promises and reassurances that I was among God's Elite. I was 'held' in Italy in this way for close on 7 years... **in the last two years of my residence in Italy I was a stateless person- my Passport had expired after 5 yrs and I had not been taken to apply for a replacement. On reaching 18 yrs, I had not been permitted to enrol to vote in Australian Federal and State Elections. I was never allowed to read an Australian newspaper and my Home Country seemed to have vanished from under my feet..... No Southern Cross in the night sky!** In 1966 I was returned to Melbourne and I worked for the Pastorelle Sisters until I became gravely ill. At the Convent in Thornbury, Melbourne and in Stanthorpe, Queensland, the abuses and neglect continued on a different level. Since I was the only Australian 'Vows Member' for a while, this proved to be quite an asset to the Pastorelle Sisters in Australia. They made good use of me. I deteriorated in body mind and spirit. **The Pastorelle Sisters failed miserably in their duty of care in my regard.** In 1973, after long, debilitating illnesses and surgeries, which, I discovered later, had deprived me of ever having children, and which had damaged my vocal cords so I could not speak, I left the Convent on an Invalid (now Disability) Pension of \$43.15 fortnight - I had no home and no family. The Pastorelle Sisters gave me \$600 and some second hand civilian clothes. They discontinued my MBF cover. I was physically exhausted and weak, emotionally and mentally unstable. I had absolutely no experience of the outside world. **By then my Mother had gone insane with grief, lost her job, had become a nomad working and living in Hotels and moving from place to place. She was lost to me.**

For the last thirty one years I have been in receipt of a Disability Pension. I have lived a lonely, reclusive, poverty-stricken life and I have had to cope as best I could with my chronic illnesses, my 'demons in the dungeon', my insecurities, my inexperience of the workings of the world and people, and with not being able to make friends or maintain a close relationship with another human being. I have been deprived of children and of the only family I had.

I come to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee with this Submission in the hope that it is pertinent to the Inquiry and that the Inquiry will somehow lead to redress from the Pastorelle Sisters.

Robin Ruth Henderson

Robin R. Henderson

21.03.2004

C. **Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee
Inquiry into Children in Institutional care**

Submission by - Robin Ruth Henderson

Summary – Terms of Reference Points Addressed

1 (a)

(ii) – **...unsafe, improper, unlawful care or treatment...**

I addressed this point on pages 1,2 and 3 of my Submission.

- As a 15 yr. old working girl- placed in the care of Nuns at a working Girls' Hostel by divorcee Mother - Nuns entrusted to
- Keep the agreements made with my Mother.
- See to my wellbeing.
- Eight months later the Nuns, having 'talked me around', had me lie to and deceive my Mother, leave my job and cease going to night classes and arranged for my departure on a ship to Italy to become a Nun.
- Improper care at the Hostel.
- Abuses in the Convent.
- Consequences to both my Mother and myself.

1(b)...**the extent and impact of long term social and economical...
adequacy of existing remedies....**

- Extent of impact on me, the individual – Disability Pension for the rest of my life after the Convent = 31 years
- Extent of impact on my Mother, my only family – Nervous breakdown, strokes, personality changes, loss of legal job, nomadic existence, disappearance.
- Impact on Australian society as a whole - \$300.000 paid out in Pension alone
- Loss of the contribution to society and to the economy of an otherwise valuable citizen.

1(d)...**need for formal acknowledgement by governments of human
anguish....**

- Institutions need to be made aware that Australia values its future citizens....
- An endeavour to heal the pain and rehabilitate the wounded people...
- Seriousness of the need for acknowledgement and some examples of my experiences to illustrate this point

Robin R. Henderson

21.03.2004

D.

1(e)...what measures of reparation.....

- Alleviate the anguish by addressing the needs..
- Restitution from the Institutions
- Compensation for loss of income
- Provisions for self-funded retirement
- Policies limiting abuse of power and for more accountability
- Grants for Class Actions on behalf of all categories of 'abused' private sector, corporate and government funded
- Provisions for Pro Bono advocacy and/or Legal representation on a No-Win No-Pay basis for those who desire this in order to persue legal action.

1(g) (i) and (ii).... review of public, social and legal policy

- Religious and private Institutions acting outside of government regulations – examples-
- Deceit taught to children – deception of government supervisors – contraventions of regulations and laws.

1(f)..whether statutory and administrative barriers adversely...

- Silence of victims – repressed memories for many, many years = no access to redress due to statutory and administrative barriers – coupled with lack of finance – unable to work for rest of life after leaving Institution...
- My personal dilemma – jurisdictional barriers. .lack of finance and all of the above.

Afterthoughts and some questions concerning 1(a) (ii), 1(g) (ii).

Robin Ruth Henderson



Date..... 21. 03. 2004

SUBMISSION -

1. SUBMISSION

**Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee
Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care**

Submission from - Robin Ruth Henderson

1. Matters for enquiry and report ...

(a) in relation to any government or non government institutions established.....

Institution -

Religious Congregation -Pastorelle Sisters- (Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd)

Establishment - Hostel for Girls – Rathdown Street Carlton, Melb. Vic.

Year – 1959 – 60

On 14th November 1955 three Italian migrant nuns of the Congregation Pastorelle Sisters disembarked at Port Melbourne to work in the Catholic Parish of St. George, later re-named Sacred Heart Parish , managing a boarding Hostel for Italian migrant girls who had been married by Proxy and rejected by their husbands.

The Pastorelle Sisters' Girls' Hostel was initially staffed by three Italian migrant nuns. By 1960 these had been joined by three more nuns from Italy.

The Hostel housed six nuns and a fluctuating number of between six to twelve girls.

- see "Testimonianza" Sr. Tarcisia Magarotto – translation -
- copies Archival Records – Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese –
- photograph- Founder of the Congregation visiting the Hostel in 1963

Most of the girls boarding at the Hostel worked in the Melbourne manufacturing industry which employed many migrants during those years.

(i) whether any unsafe, improper or unlawful care or treatment occurred...

In April 1959, my Mother boarded me out at this Hostel when I was 15yrs 7 mths old. Previously I had been boarding with friends who had recently relocated Interstate. Vacancies at inner city boarding Hostels for working women were few. My Mother was a divorcee single working parent. She had been given sole custody of me, she worked hard to keep me at good Catholic boarding schools since the age of 7 years and had been diligent about my education. Mum had no property, few assets and lived in rented rooms. Her bad temper and what we know today as PMS caused friction with landladies so she moved around a lot.

Robin R. Henderson
21.04.2004

2. SUBMISSION CONT. -

- Mum found she could not afford to keep me at boarding school any longer. I had obtained my Intermediate Certificate, had left school, was working as a filing clerk in the city and attending night school four nights a week at the Caulfield Technical College (now Monash University) studying Design and Illustration. It had become impossible living with Mum, the arguments and the moving were having a detrimental effect on me and on my studies. Mum decided that a boarding Hostel would be a solution, and this is how I came to be at the Pastorelle Sisters' Girls' Hostel.

Mum placed me in the care of these Sisters to oversee my wellbeing, protect me (curfew was at 9pm.) and to see that I attended night school and went to work each day. Arrangements were made about the curfew on College nights. I would meet other College students at the railway station and we would travel together.

- Mum paid my board, provided my school needs and any other personal requirements I was unable to afford.
- We worked in adjacent buildings, we had lunch together every day, we would go out on week-ends and Mum visited the Hostel occasionally.
- Mum was satisfied I was in a safe environment. She would have preferred St. Ann's Hostel run by the Sisters of Charity, but vacancies were rare and there was a long waiting list.

Abduction of a minor – sent to Italy

- In April 1959 Mum placed me at the Pastorelle Sisters' Hostel and gave instructions for my care.
- By November 1959 the Sisters were preparing me to go to Italy to enter their Novitiate to become a nun.
- They had convinced me I had a vocation to religious life and they had been very persuasive indeed.
- They had me leave my job and cease going to College and I had become totally dependent on them for everything.
- I was lying to my Mother and deceiving her by going to lunch as if I were still at work.
- The College contacted my Mother about my non- attendances.
- I lied and said it was because I had had been feeling sick, so Mum took me to see the doctor. The doctor noticed I had been inoculated as for an overseas trip and this was why I was feeling sick.
- Just one week before I was due to depart for Italy, about 18th-19th January 1960 Mum discovered the truth and was furious and very upset – Mum was not good in any sort of crises, she just collapsed and became incapable.
- I recall I was very harsh with her and I regret it still today.

The Pastorelle Sisters had arranged finance for my passage on the Lloyd Triestino Liner "Oceania" and had supplied all my needs.

I was to depart on 26th January 1960 and my Mother was rendered powerless to stop me. The Sisters kept close watch like a group of body guards.

John R. Henderson

21.03.2004

3. SUBMISSION CONT. -

My Passport documents had been falsified by the Sisters' agent, a solicitor-my Mother had not signed them.

The reason for departure was filled out as "Holiday 3 years" and this was transcribed to the Passenger list of the Lloyd Triestino liner "Oceania". (see page 20 of accompanying document- "Abducted by NUNS - My Story")

The authorities at the Passport Office had been told I would travel accompanied by an adult couple and their name was given.

The Sisters had taken me once to meet a Sicilian couple at their fruit shop. I remember only the name "Signora Francesca".

I did not travel accompanied by these people. They were on the ship but in First Class and I was invited to join them once during a voyage of 36 days. They took no interest in my wellbeing and disembarked at Sicily without even saying "Good bye". I have no evidence, but I believe that, should it have been a legal requirement that I be accompanied by an adult, their passage would have been taken care of by the same person/s who organised mine - Mrs. Lena Santospirito. She had many dealings with politicians concerning the immigration of Italian workers and she had agreements with the Lloyd Triestino Line concerning passage for migrants.

For further information concerning the work of Lena Santospirito- See - COASIT website. There's an archive: - "The case for the Pastorelle Sisters". I have not been able to access it.

1 (a)

(i)....improper care...at the Hostel -

- The food at the Hostel was meagre, we were given our plates with the food already on them - no seconds. I was always hungry.
- Breakfast was... 'continental'... nothing but coffee and bread. The food was insufficient for a 15-16 year old adolescent.
- The sleeping quarters were cramped, and the clothes storage was shared between four or five girls in a room - so the B.O of the girls got into my clothes. I resorted to a plastic hanging wardrobe. There was no privacy except for curtains around each iron bed.
- Bedlinen was provided once monthly.
- We were obliged to attend Chapel and accompany the Sisters to Parish Services.
- We were made to scrub the floor boards and wax them on hands and knees.
- One bathroom and toilet for all the boarders
- No proper kitchen for the girls to cook if wanted
- The girls' laundry was ill equipped

Robert R. Henderson
21.03.2004

4. SUBMISSION CONT. -

Consequences of my abduction to my Mother -

- The agreements she had made with the Pastorelle Sisters as my sole custodian concerning my care were broken.
- She was deceived by the Sisters and I was made party to this.
- She suffered a nervous breakdown after my departure and was never well again. She was 44 years old, I was her only child.

1 (b) - ..the extent and impact of long term social and economical consequences of child abuse and neglect ..on individuals , families, Australian society as a whole...

- adequacy of existing remedies and support mechanisms....

Extent of impact on me as an individual - Disability Pension paid to me for 31 years - I have been unable to earn a living due to psychiatric illness and chronic physical illnesses which worsen with age.

In the Convent, as a Nun among the Pastorelle Sisters, both in Italy and in Australia I was sexually molested by the Founder of the Congregation and by a Nun, physically assaulted, abused and mistreated, my health was neglected, I was given inadequate nourishment, denied water (expected not to drink outside of meals without requesting permission - which permission was often given grudgingly, and even during hard labour outside in the sun.). I was subjected to very hard work and some harsh punishments in the nature of work, I was mentally and emotionally abused, taunted and bullied, subjected to unhygienic conditions and practices, deprived of reasonable comfort, cooling and warmth - little heating, no air conditioning or fans, uncomfortable, temporary and/or dilapidated bedding - (in one place I was sent I had to sleep on a table for a week). I was exposed to dampness and to TB in closed, crowded dormitories. I was detained in Italy since I was not allowed to keep my Passport. I was subjected to behavioural modification through progressive indoctrinations and actually terrorised by one particular Recruit Assistant.(I still have nightmares about her.) I was also required to practise deception when it was considered warranted - in Australia to effect the immigration of a Phillipino girl whose parents in the Phillipines offered financial considerations to the Congregation there.

It has taken all of 30 years to de-program myself.

Extent of impact on my Mother - my only Family -

- Nervous breakdown after my departure.
- A series of small undetected strokes which had an effect on her personality to the extent that she lost her job as a legal clerk with Dudley A. Tregent and Sons in Collins Street Melbourne where she was held in esteem and respected for her abilities. The only work she could do aged 45 was cooking and cleaning, she lived in Hotels and at private live-in jobs until she received the Age Pension and then she became a nomad roaming the country from place to place.

Allen R. Henderson
21.03.2004

5. SUBMISSION CONT. -

The last letters I received from her indicated her state of mind, they had no addresses and I lost track of her completely.

In 1986 I found Mum in a public hospital in Renmark S.A. where she had been admitted having been misdiagnosed with Grand Mal Epileptic Seizures and a stroke. She had been 'relieved' of her goods and money by unscrupulous people. I brought her home to live with me in Queensland in a small cottage and I became her Carer.

The Blue Nurses of the District assisted me with bathing her.

After 20 days it became apparent to the attending Blue Nurse that I was suffering from exhaustion and depression. Mum's behaviour had become vile and violent and she appeared to have Dementia

The Blue Nurse advised me to and I did have Mum committed to the Stanthorpe Hospital Geriatric ward for psychiatric assessment.

Consequently Mum was admitted for treatment to Baillee Henderson Psychiatric Hospital in Toowoomba, some 150km distant from home. She died in Toowoomba years later and alone, I had been unable to get there in time and, worst of all – **I had been too sick myself to be her full time Carer.**

What the Pastorelle Sisters did to me had, both directly and indirectly, deprived my Mother and myself of each other since my adolescence.

Impact on Australian Society as a whole

- **Government-taxpayer-funded (Invalid) Disability Pension for me for a period of 31 years plus costs of all medical care, medication, and all the discounts and rebates available to pensioners – Estimate of pension paid over 31 years - \$300.000. plus other costs.**

1 (d) – whether there is need for formal acknowledgement by the Australian governments of the human anguish arising from abuse and neglect suffered by children in care...

As a minor adolescent my experiences in the 'care' of the Pastorelle Sisters have impacted adversely on my life as an adult. Illness, depression, loneliness, reclusiveness and all the consequences of these things. I have suffered as an adult because of how I was treated as a child.

The Australian governments do need to acknowledge the human anguish caused so these occurrences will be minimised and hopefully avoided and in order to make Institutions, especially private establishments, aware that the Australian government values and protects its children- future productive citizens, and looks forward to the many and varied contributions they will make to society in general and to the Nation as a whole. *Nobody, not even the Holy Roman Catholic Church shall deprive Australia of healthy citizens and of the intellectual wealth, the financial benefit and the greatness that these can contribute to society, to the economy, to pride in self and to the pride and prestige of the Nation!*

Robert R. Henderson
21.03.2004

6. SUBMISSION CONT. -

- Mount an endeavour to heal the pain of all those citizens who feel valueless and incapable, useless and a burden to their community and to their country due to the long term consequences of the abuses they have suffered in institutions and because they have been unable to contribute meaningfully.

Alas for those who never sing but die with all their music in them!

- Many of these adults abused as children have shining intellects and are endowed with many wonderful talents of mind, body and spirit which could have been of great benefit to and enjoyment for the rest of society and to and for themselves.

I am one of ~~these~~ unfortunate people.

I was not only abused and neglected by the Pastorelle Sisters, I was denied a formal Tertiary education, and I lament all the long hours and years my Mother worked so I could have the best education she could give me.

The following to illustrate the seriousness of the need for supervision of institutions involved in any way with the care of children.

My experiences -

- As a member of the Pastorelle Sisters Congregation it was found that I was naturally very versatile and competent and could carry out any number of assignments with minimal preparation as if I had been specifically trained in that particular field of work. Call it Faith on my part, call it fear, they put me there and I did the job well.
- Kindergarten teacher
- Youth leader
- Counsellor of the troubled and those with marriage problems
- Lecturer...(and I was terrified of public speaking!)
- Music and Voice teacher and Conductor of a 50 person choir...I taught myself music and had a natural ability for singing...

So why educate me when I could accomplish these tasks as well as those trained for the jobs and be convincing?

When I left the Pastorelle Sisters I was a *nothing and a nobody* a reject, a bludger, a good-for-nothing. I had no educational qualifications at 30 years of age and I was very ill indeed.

I had no voice for about 12 years until I decided to re-train my voice to be audible using the only operational vocal cord. If I speak for too long I choke. I shall never be able to sing again. It used to make me so happy and it would have been a good 'tool' for socialising with like-people.

I was taking some very heavy medications at one time or another - psychotropics, hallucinogens, hypnotics, antidepressants etc. I continued to educate myself at my own pace for my own self-esteem. *As for contributing to society, to the Nation and now to "Queensland The Smart State" ... I feel unworthy of the name Australian.*

Robert R. Henderson
21.03.2004

7. SUBMISSION... CONT. -

(e)...what measures of reparation are required...

Alleviate the anguish – Address the needs

- Restitution from the Institutions responsible - sufficient to enable these adults abused as children to have, for their remaining years, what they would have had if they had been able to live normal working lives and put away superannuation for their retirement.
- Compensation for loss of income from the Institutions, for pain and suffering, for *failing in their duty of care*, for enslaving people's minds and bodies.
- Public apologies and written apologies *obviously owed* by the culprit institutions.
- Policy which puts limits on the arbitrariness of many institutions in their abuse of power – regulating their accountability as an Australian entity...I have no idea how, but it would be a good thing,
- Grants for Class Actions - co- funded, (if needs be) by government, the corporate, business and private sector for all the different categories of 'abused' who have been unable to properly and peacefully re-establish their lives due to traumas inflicted during their time in any institution or place established to care for and/or educate, and/or -
- Provision of Pro Bono advocacy/Legal representation on a "No -Win No -Pay" where applicable, for those wishing to pursue Civil Action or Criminal Action against those who abused them whilst in care.
- Should such funding become available and/or provisions be made for pro bono and "No-Win No-Pay" as above, the 'Ex' * category will also emerge from the shadows and silence to receive Justice and Healing. ***I am astounded at the number of ex-religious who are fearful of seeking redress because of Church reprisals, Unable to seek it due to lack of finance or 'stonewalling' from Church "in house" processes supposed to deal with complaints of abuse, and reluctant to ask for justice because they still feel an obligation of respect towards those Institutions which ruined their lives! They maintain 'cordial rapport' with their former religious Orders/Congregations, and the Church encourages this by minimising their pain, by pious preachings and because these 'abused' have been subjected to behavioural modification techniques to which treatment they still respond.** These people need encouragement to come forward.

Give the Church a child and the Church will have him for life no matter what!

Robin R. Henderson
21.03.2004

8. SUBMISSION... CONT. -

(g)...public, social and legal policy to be reviewed to ensure effective and responsive framework to deal with child abuse matters....

- (i) - any failure to detect or prevent occurrences...
 - (ii) - any necessary changes required in current policies and reporting mechanisms...
- Many private and/or religious-owned institutions act outside of government regulations due to inadequate/insufficient supervision/regulation.

Abuse of regulations for financial gain

The following examples from my experience-

Children in care and adult Institutional members recruited as children deceive government for profit and/or financial gain -

Forced to present as a Kindergarten teacher whilst unqualified

Whilst stationed at the Pastorelle Sisters Convent at 200 Smith Street Thornbury, Melb. Vic. 1966-1969, I was often required to present as a qualified all day Kindergarten Teacher whilst the qualified Sister in Charge, Mother Luigia Cuffolo, went about *administering the Congregation*.

note -This Sisters' qualifications from Italy had been recognised, yet she spoke very little English since she had persistently failed in her undertaking to either attend and to make all effort to benefit from "English for Migrants" classes....and the government-paid teacher came to the Convent to give these classes. = CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF A QUALIFIED TEACHER FOR WHICH THEIR PARENTS WERE PAYING (GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISED KINDERGARTEN - UNQUALIFIED TEACHER.

The "Look-out" kids

Children of 4-5 years old were used as "look-out" when the government supervisor, Miss Bastow was due to arrive. These children were taught to deceive and that being asked to do so was a privilege. They were given a 'post' at the front gate where they stayed and from where they ran to raise the alarm "The Supervisor!"

I was immediately sent to the kindergarten kitchen and the Sister in Charge would emerge wearing the customary blue apron and would sit and read to the children the only story she had memorised - "The Little Yellow Duck".

The children were so used to this procedure that one would grab the chair, another would grab the book from its special place, and all would scurry to sit on the mat. I was obliged to play my part in the charade. At the end of year Concert, to which Miss Bastow, the supervisor was always invited and which invitation she always accepted, the children would present all they had learnt. Miss Bastow believed I was studying to become a teacher, and she would exhort me to take good notice of Mother Luigia's methods and excellent results. The deception worked.

Robin R. Henderson

21.03.2004

9. SUBMISSION... CONT. -

Forced to contravene Australian Immigration laws for financial gain for the institution

As the only Australian "vows-member" of the Congregation in Thornbury, Melbourne in 1969, I was ordered to sign immigration papers as Sponsor for a Phillipine girl- Nini, who was, supposedly, coming to Australia- "For the purpose of religious studies". Nini was the daughter of benefactors of the Congregation in the Phillipines and these required favours in exchange for their patronage. Nini lived at the Convent in separate quarters, went to The Conservatorium of Music to do a Masters Degree and ultimately married an Australian Citizen.

(f) – whether statutory or administrative barriers adversely affect those wishing to persue claims against perpetrators of abuse....

- Victims of every form of abuse can experience fear, shame, confusion and the violation of their person, intelligence, good judgement and freedom. They can feel guilty and blame themselves. Children and adolescents can suffer distortions in the process of determining their identity as persons and responsible human beings. They may find it difficult to trust those in positions of authority or pastoral care or, if they have been substantially influenced by religion, to trust in God- since "all authority", they are told, "comes directly from God and represents God and/or *is* God". People they confide in can refuse to believe them, reinforcing their sense of guilt and shame and inadequacy and making them doubt their own minds. Others can respond by minimising and/or denying their pain.

Many victims go through long periods of silence, denial and repression. Often the hurt is so deep seated they do not remember anything at all for many, many years – in my case 30 years.

Through many sessions of psychotherapy, years of drug therapy and even some hypnosis combined with drug therapy and still I could not get at the truth of the facts concerning the abuse I had suffered...even today, as I write this, there is more to surface.

Now that I want redress, statutory and administrative limitations bar my way to Civil and Criminal action. Due to the length of time that has passed "Burden of Proof" is a problem...and the culprits are still living and working in the same capacities doing the same things to others! I have also encountered **jurisdictional limitations**, since the Congregation of the Pastorelle Sisters is governed from Italy and I spent 7 years in Italy. The costs of procedures for seeking redress for the abuses suffered in Italy are far beyond me. Redress has become an essential requirement for healing.

Robin R. Henderson
21.03.2004

10. SUBMISSION... CONT. -

Afterthoughts - 1(g)- (i) and 1(a)- (ii)

1(a)(i)- serious breach of any relevant statutory obligation...

1(g)(ii)- any systemic factors....

(if I have understood these points)

Three Pastorelle Sisters immigrated to Australia disembarking at Port Melbourne on 14th November 1955. Another three had joined them by 1959-60.

- By April 1959 at the time my Mother placed me as a boarder at that establishment, the Congregation Pastorelle Sisters comprising of six Italian migrant nuns running the establishment -“Pastorelle Sisters’ Hostel for Girls”, had been living and working in Australia for approximately 4 years.

Questions

- On what Visas were these nuns living & working in Australia at the time of my abduction?
- Had these nuns applied for resident status by 1959? Had they obtained it?
- Are there any special concessions regarding Visas to migrant religious who want to live and work in Australia?
- What was their status in 1959-60?
- Whatever the status was of these Nuns, as migrants to the country, would that status have allowed them or impeded them in any way in assuming the care of a minor Australian citizen and British Subject even with her parent’s consent and
- What, if any bearing would my abduction have had on their status and residency in Australia had it come to be known sooner?

Signature:-.....*Robin R. Henderson*.....

Date :-.....*21-03-2004*.....

Attachments -

Document -“To The Senate Inquiry - Abducted by Nuns, My Story”.

Name :- Robin Ruth Henderson