

To:

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My life in St, Joseph's home Sebastopol Ballarat Victoria by Alan Coleman I was Four years old when I first arrived at the Orphanage in 1936, it is run by the sister of Mercy and a mothers superior and the Parish Priest. I was a ward of the State under the care the Victorian Welfare dept, and was taken by them. I was taken to the nursery, it was filled with other young wards, I don't remembers very much about early life, all I knew was that it was very noisy screaming and other distractions we use to play out on the balcony and there was a great big Rocker, I fell out of this rocker and sustained injuries to my head I have the Scar to remember them I stayed until I was 6 years old, then I went downstairs with other children who were between six years up to thirteen years, that when I found out I was in for a very hard time it was run like a prison, every child had his own number I was number ninety six and all clothes were marked with your number even when we went for meals the classes were run by bully boys one to every eight to ten children the bally boys were a law unto themselves and were responsible only to the sisters they could punish you or recommend you to be punished by the nuns, the punishment consisted of up to twelve or more strokes with a long cane with pins in the end if you were real bad you were taken upstairs, stripped naked four bully boys would hold you and you would be flogged with a very thick strap on your back backside, legs, and if you twisted over on your stomach and genitals, up to a hundred lashes, it was very traumatic and painful, I know because I was punished that way for being bad also it was done by sister Blandin a who was sadistic and puritanical, she was the worst offender she should have been jailed I hated these punishment period because you could hear kids screaming all the times as you grew older you were given chores to do scrubbing passages, polishing bedrooms and the church they were done every Saturday and Sunday and holidays you never got paid and the bully boys would stand over you to make sure you were working we used to polish the church on our hands and knees until we had no skin on our knees, some of the bully boys were also very cruel they controlled our recreation and when it rained and you could not play out side we would go to the big hale and they would make us fight our best mate if you refused one of the bully boys would get in and give you a good hiding even when we went yo bed the bully boys would make life hell, if they thought you were not asleep we usually went to bed at six o'clock till six o'clock in the morning in the winter we were always cold and some of us used to get chilblains on our hand, feet, toes, and ears, you still had to do your chores, meals, were very for and never any seconds we were always hungry if you were caught stealing food you were punished severely or made to stand in a dark passageway up to six or seven hours it was very traumatic, after meals the older boys would wash up and clean the kitchen, when I was in grade three the nuns told us we were getting some boys from Nazareth house in Melbourne, one of the kids was named Alan Coleman, the nuns said we had to work out who was going to change his name, so the other guys changed his name to Joseph Coleman, he was the same age as me but I don't know if we were related I never ever asked, because he was everything that I wasn't he didn't play sports I was very good at school he was very dumb, and we did not get on very well together, I felt sorry for him one thing I

detested was Saturday that was the day for our weekly bath, there were three baths only, for a hundred, kids and the water was never changed, so that the older kids had to have a cold bath also you had to wait until one of the had finished, and we had to wear these canvas towels around our waist so they could not see your privates also we used the same three towels to dry ourselves, it was very cold during the winter after we were finished the bully boys would empty the dirty water out and fill them with clean hot water and wallow in them for as long as they liked. As I got older I was starting to look after the younger kids I was year seven, there was also a man power shortage we were sent to the laundry to fold sheets and Blankets and I was putting the sheets through the mangle when one got stuck I pushed with both hands and they went through the mangle I screamed out my hands went through up to the wrists they were badly burnt and crushed I spent about six weeks in Ballarat Base Hospital I never had any visitors the Whole time but the nurses were fabulous most of them had American Boyfriends and they would bring me Lollies and fruit I did not realise there were good people in this world I regretted going back to the orphanage but they came and saw me in the orphanage and they brought other American to visit us not long after that I got very sick and I could not get out of bed I had high temperature and I was in and out of consciousness the nuns reckoned I was malingering I stayed there for a couple of days so they got a doctor to come and see me he immediately berated the nuns and he told them to call an ambulance to take me to the hospital I was diagnosed with Rheumatic fever I spent six Months in hospital and enjoyed every minute of it but soon it was time to go back I had made a lot of friends in the hospital and they came out to see me I was not allowed to play foot ball or any Sports for twelve month but I went back earlier and it has never affected me anyway things had not got any better there was never any love or compassion shown but I moved into eighth grade sister Blandin a taught that class and because I was the smartest kid sometimes she'd would say tom me when you grow up Coleman you are going to end up like your Father on the Gallows now I never knew my dad or mum and I had never had a visit from the Welfare they had not bothered about us anyways I wasn't the only one who she castigated everyone copped her spiteful insults anyway she had a School pet and we were asked who would win the highest marks sister Blandin a didn't want me to win and even told me so the top two would be going to St, Pats College Christian Brothers any way we sat for our exam and the results come back sister Blandin a read the result none of us knew them any way she read the result out I had come first the pet had come third so he had missed out on going to the College later on the other Student who were going to the college told me about the Brothers how they loved the orphans because they could do what they liked with us and the nuns would not believe us when I heard the dreadful news I went to sister Blandin a. I was not interested in going to the College she seemed very pleased so her pet went in my place. A few days later I was informed my self and Joseph Coleman that we were going over to Nazareth House in Geraldton West Australia other orphans had been sent over to do kitchen chores working twelve hours a day seven days a week that night we were sent downstairs to sleep with the older Boys who worked around the place they done the gardening and worked on the farm they were between thirteen up to nineteen years old they went down there because they were unable to participate in School they greeted us with gusto telling us they were going to educate us about the fact of life they told us that we had to sleep with them so they could show us what to do most of them were already masturbating so Joseph and my self took off and went to were the college boys lived they told us that we could stop with them they told us that sort of conduct was practised by most of the managers and the older boys I will

say in all fairness that while I was upstairs we had no idea this types of thing happened we kept this from the nuns because we were taught never to put anyone in. a few days later we would be going to the west we were fitted out with new clothes and taken to the Ballarat, Station we were travelling on the trans continental train to the West we were to be met at every stop by a Brother or Priest I really enjoyed the trip over because the train was full of army soldiers going back to Perth to be demobbed it was 1945, they really looked after us we arrived in Geraldton it took six days we were picked up at the Station by the manager of the boys working he was about nineteen years old. We travelled in a horse and sulky, when we arrived we met the other boys whom we already knew and started working immediately we worked in the Kitchen, and took the meals to the old people who live there we worked up till 8'oclock at night we got only pocket money to go to the movies the home had female girls up to sixteen years they were orphans from England the boys went to Tar din Christian Brother's after we finished work I realised these boys were the same as the older boys they practised sex together the worst offender was the manager every time I took meals to his cottage he would ask me to engage in masturbation, I refused so he started to give me a hard time any way I protected Joseph we'd become pretty close the other boys I just warned them was not interested. The nun in the kitchen was really very bossy and was always berating us saying we were lazy no good for nothing she did not know that I hated working with her I use to go down to the coke shed and fill the empty coke bin. I met a girl about fifteen she use to come down and talk to me we talked about England where she come from and we talked about the war the bombing and air raids, she was attractive but e was very shy e was only thirteen any way she also worked in the kitchen we both hated the cooking sister she also abused her one day she come down to the shed and we were sitting down talking and she burst in and reckoned we had been misbehaving any way we were on retreat at the time a Dominican Priest was staying at the home I had to report to him next day I went over there at three o'clock and ha was sitting on the couch in his office it was also had a bedroom and parlour any way he asked me to sit down and I noticed he was masturbating he had his penes in his hand and he asked me to touch it and I refused any way he was so excited he pilled out a large handkerchief and wiped it he told me not to say anything and then he asked me about my relationship with the girl I told him nothing had occurred any way I went back to work and the sister had told the manager that I was being sent out to work on a farm for Jack Cream, he was a pig of a man and his wife was cruel and she used to give me a hard time I washed the dishes helped with the washing milked the cows fed the horses I worked in the laundry they had three sons two had been in the Army they also gave me orders but only my self and Jack and his wife worked I ate on my own it was a terrible life half of my money went straight back to the orphanage I worked there for two and half years until I was sixteen then as soon as I lift they gave me fifty pounds so in other words I was only a slave the welfare Dept, had never given their permission to treat me as they did. Any way I must tell you that I suffered terribly throughout my life I was a person without love I had plenty of relationships with woman but they all left me because of my coldness and attitude's another thing's I would make up lies telling people my mum and dad had been killed in accident because I was always looking for sympathy and I live in my own. I joined the Army for six years I served in Korea for twelve months and was discharge in 1957; I wandered around the Country working to get money because I had a drinking problem it got me into a lot of trouble. I never married I live with woman but it never lasted it just got worse I worked until I was fifty eight then I went and lived in Philippines I met a lady over there she is now my wife we had a

child he is 10 years old but I still cannot give love to my son I just have not it, I have a good wife I was sixty two when we were married I have never bothered going back to the orphanage I will never forgive them for the way I was treated also when I joined the army I had to get the nun at St, Joseph homes to prove my ages as I never had a Birth certificate, I found out I was a years younger. Years later I went overseas and I needed a Passport I went to my local minister and he sent me a passport it belong to Joseph Coleman he died in Ballarat in 1970's I still don't have a birth certificate.

(FOR PUBLICATION) THANK YOU FOR READING MY LIFE STORY?

Alan Coleman