



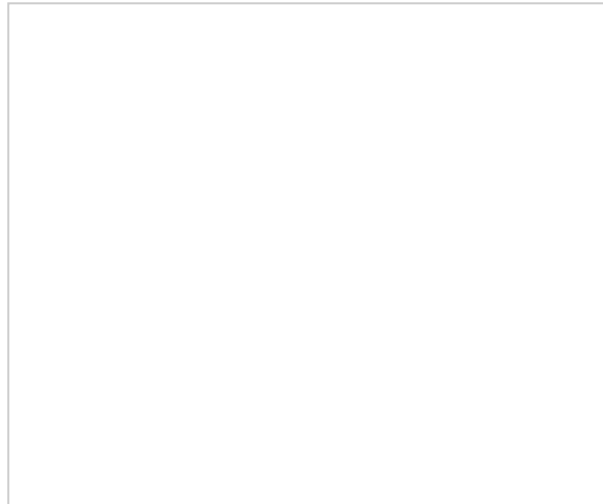
Girls attend class at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston in this undated photo. More than 100 girls lived at the orphanage and went to school there at any one time.



Girls from St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston sing in a choir in this undated photo. Some women have said the choir was one of the few bright spots during their years at the orphanage.

"They liked to pound you on the lower neck but upper back," said 84-year-old Jacqueline Nicolas, remembering the day one of the nuns falsely accused her of writing on her new grade school desk in the 1940s. "She kept hitting me and hitting me and hitting me (with her fist). I said, 'No I didn't write on that!' And she kept hitting me."

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Julie Fortin Jipson, center, is pictured with her brothers and a sister in Canada when she was about 5 or 6 years old. She and her sister were later placed in St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston so her single father could work. She was 7 at the time and would live at St. Joseph's until she was 14.





Suzette Loubier takes her first communion at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston in the early 1950s. "There's no movie that's more scary than what we experienced. Right under everybody's noses. With a big crucifix around their necks," she said of abuse at the orphanage.

"They were bare bottom and the nun would just keep hitting them until their butts were red as a beet. You could hear them screaming."



Suzette Loubier, age 8.

Loubier was 4 years old when her parents placed her in St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston for a year and a half in the early 1950s so they could work.

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A nun attends to children at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston. Many of the women of St. Joseph's remember girls getting beaten every morning for wetting their beds.

"I saw my mother last night. She's 96 . . . and she said it's about time this story was told," said a 69-year-old woman who asked to remain anonymous.



Girls from St. Joseph's Orphanage pose outside in this undated photo. St. Joseph's housed over 100 girls at a time, from toddlers through teenagers, but many weren't actually orphans.





Denise Godwin lived at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston for three years, from ages 7 to 9. At the orphanage, she lost her name and was instead called by a number: zero plus 12, or "zero plus douze" in French.

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Denise Godwin lived at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston for three years. from ages 7 to 9. She grew up

...she was committed to St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston for three years, from ages 7 to 11. She grew up and went on to have four children of her own. "I wasn't a loving mom. How could I give what I didn't have?" she said.



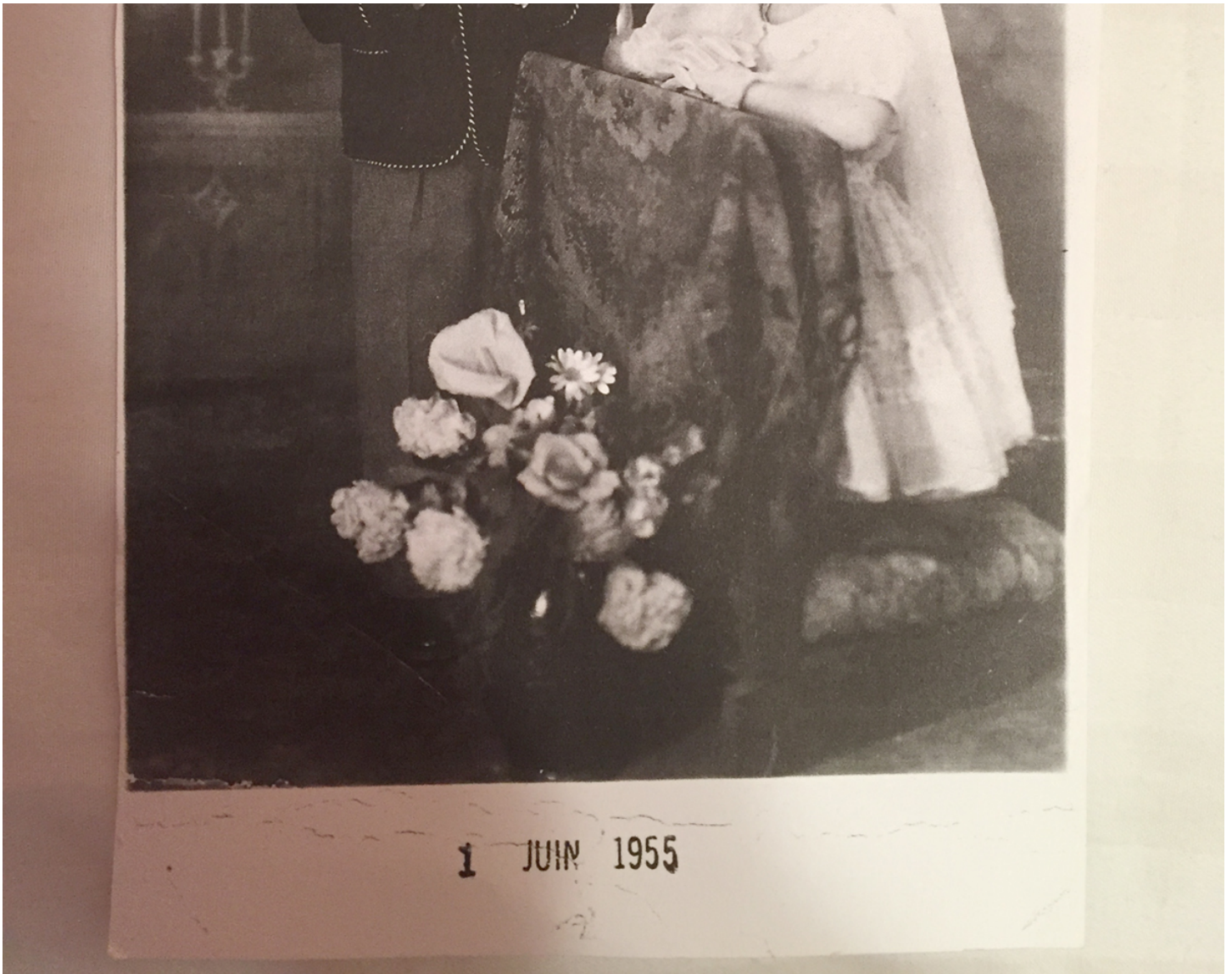
Girls from St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston sing in a choir in this undated photo. Some women have said the choir was one of the few bright spots during their years at the orphanage.

'Oh my god, those were not nightmares. It really happened.'



Suzette Lubier spent a year and a half at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston. "I'm 71 and I've been dragging this along with me my whole lifetime and no one to talk about it with. No one could possibly understand the misery and the pain," she said.





Julie Fortin Jipson, right, is pictured with her brother. She and a sister were later placed in St. Joseph's Orphanage so her single father could work. She would live there for seven years.

Soeurs de la Charité de Saint-Hyacinthe

April 15, 2016

Ms Julie Jipson

Greene, ME 04236

Dear Julie & Women of St. Joseph,

You have been on my mind since our meeting at St. Philip's Church on February 2nd. I want to thank you for your initiative in inviting myself and Sister Jacqueline to meet with you, to share the experiences of your days spent at St. Joseph's Orphanage. We were both deeply touched by your courage and strength and your willingness to bring up yet again, those painful memories of your childhood.

As difficult as it was for us to hear all you suffered at the hands of some of our sisters, and realizing that there would have been so much more you could have shared, know that we did hear you, not only with our ears, but also with our hearts. We were both profoundly disturbed and hurt by all you shared. We had certainly heard things throughout the years, but we could never have imagined some of the things you revealed to us.

I am so sorry for all you suffered; for a childhood robbed of happy carefree days and comforting affection; for the consequences you have suffered and carried well into adulthood, affecting and coloring your entire lives. In the name of all the Sisters of Charity, I want to express our deepest apology for all you have suffered and continue to suffer all these years since leaving the orphanage. To say we are sorry seems like so little in the face of your tremendous pain, but know that our hearts have been profoundly touched by your pain. Because of your courage and strength, you have brought us to a new truth that will forever change us as a Community. We must and do accept this truth about our past, our hurtful acts and our neglectful silence. It is a dark side of our history that you have helped us to see and accept and that we now must and will fully integrate into our history. No longer will we present ourselves solely as having accomplished great things, but also as having gravely failed in some instances in our mission to care for the most vulnerable. Thank you for bringing us to this truth, for your initiative in speaking out so that never again will these things happen. I hope that the awareness of the good you have done, will help you all in your healing process.

Page one of Sister Diane Beaudon's letter to the women of St. Joseph's Orphanage.

As we move forward from this meeting with you, let me share with you the steps you have helped us take. Firstly, I want to reiterate our commitment of financial support to any of you who feel the need for some counseling around the issues related to your stay at St. Joseph's Orphanage. Know that we are committed to helping you find healing and peace, if at all possible.

Secondly, you have spurred us on to make sure this does not ever happen again in any of our sponsored institutions involving children. We are active today only in Haiti where our sisters operate about twenty nursery, elementary and high schools, as well as three Centers of young girls. I am aware of a process begun a few years ago among our sisters there to deal with the issue of child abuse. A couple of months ago, the person responsible for our

schools on our leadership team, , brought together all the directors and teachers of our schools for a three day workshop, where this topic was brought up and a commitment was made to protect our children from all kinds of abuse.

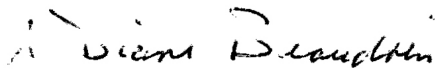
Because of your initiative to make us aware of what you all have suffered, I commit myself to personally supervising this process closely and seeing to it that this initiative on their part is followed up, that policies are written and that they are enforced in all our schools and centers for children. I will also see to it that all our sisters in Haiti are made aware of this dark side of our past and that they all receive the proper training and help needed to care for the children entrusted to them.

I hope these actions on our part will assure you that you have been heard and that your initiative will bear much fruit, protecting countless children in the future from suffering what you all suffered.

In closing, let me again offer you my deepest apology for all you have been through all these year; we are truly sorry and are committed to never letting this happen again. We are grateful for your courage and willingness to share with us your pain. I'm sure it was not easy. May it bring you some peace and healing to know that you have been instrumental in raising our awareness and leading us to change.

Be assured of our prayer for each of you

With all our sincerity and gratitude



Sr. Diane Beaudoin, General Superior
Sisters of Charity of Saint-Hyacinthe



Girls from the St. Joseph's Orphanage in Lewiston gather outside in this undated photo. Women from the orphanage say they were abused as children by the nuns who ran the institution.



Faded writing on the front of the Marcotte Home in Lewiston proclaims a section of the building for St. Joseph's Orphanage.

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