



New Zealand's shaming secret of physical and sexual abuse by religious and lay staff and the ongoing battles with the Catholic Church to accept responsibility for their wrong-doings revealed in a new biography about one woman's harrowing childhood.

In June 2009 Penguin Group NZ will publish Ann Thompson's biography *Say Sorry*. Her name will not likely be familiar to most New Zealanders but her story is one that all will be shocked to read about. *Say Sorry* is a moving insight into Ann's horrific upbringing including on-going abuse — physical, sexual and mental — and bullying at two orphanages in Christchurch, and her on-going battles with the authorities within the Catholic Church to accept responsibility for the past abuse of children in its care.

Conceived out of wedlock in 1941, Ann was just two months old when she was placed in the care of St Joseph's Catholic Orphanage for Girls in Christchurch. From the beginning, she was taught her mother was sinful and that she would be too unless the devil was beaten from her soul. In both St Joseph's and later Nazareth House she was physically and sexually abused by religious and lay staff and was forced to work long hours on the orphanage farm, in the laundries and later in the kitchens.

In 1997, when Ann watched a television documentary exposing the decades of abuse by the Good Shepherd nuns at the orphanage, she realised hers wasn't the only lost childhood.

*Say Sorry* documents the abuse inflicted on Ann and its ongoing consequences. It is also the story of her battle to get authorities within the Catholic Church to accept responsibility for the past institutionalised abuse of children and young people in its care; to acknowledge culpability and admit — unconditionally — that there was wrongdoing.

*Say Sorry* contains an epilogue written by Father Thomas Doyle, JCD, CADC; A Canon lawyer who has previously been on the payroll of the Vatican Embassy in Washington DC. Since the 1980s Father Doyle has plied his legal expertise to the plight of clergy-abuse victims and subsequently, he has devoted his life to testifying as an expert witness in cases through the US and beyond and has supported Ann with her plight with the authorities of the Catholic Church for a number of years.

Whilst unbelievable that such acts of cruelty happened in New Zealand, *Say Sorry* also portrays Ann's great strength of spirit and determination. Ann Thompson, a mother of four, now lives in Whangarei with her husband Brian.

***"I have written this book because I believe those of us who have been abused by the nuns and priests need to tell our stories so the abuse of children will never happen again. This crime and our shame will never go away until we stand together as one and say to the Catholic Church, 'No more abuse; no more lies; tell the world the truth.'"***  
— Ann Thompson



***Ann Thompson is available for select interviews***

**Say Sorry by Ann Thompson with Fiona Craig**

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