



Split: A Child, a Priest, and the Catholic Church

Mary Dispenza

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At age seven, Mary Dispenza was raped by her parish priest. The event split the child's sense of self, then vanished from memory. Carrying an unaccountable feeling of shame, Mary clung to Church liturgy and dogma for support and entered the convent, where for 15 years she lived as a nun, separate from the world. Decades later, when a memory of the pedophile priest resurfaced, Mary's will to survive and her quest to understand the unforgivable, led the former nun to join forty-five other men and women abused by priests, in the largest-ever successful lawsuit against the Catholic Church.

As scandals involving sexual abuse continue to roil the Catholic Church and survivors of abuse fight to make the Church atone for its sins, each abused person must find a way to mend the schism inside. *SPLIT*, the story of Mary's journey to wholeness, takes the reader from horrifying scenes of child abuse, inside the fascinating world of the novitiate, through the delicate and frightening process of accepting homosexuality, and culminates in epic courtroom battles.

Readers seeking to understand how this terrible injustice happens, and how so much has been kept secret for so long will find some answers in this honest memoir. Mary Dispenza, now an activist for ending the epidemic of abuse, speaks passionately about one 'SPLIT' we desperately need - the one that separates the Church from its mantle of secrecy.

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