

By Jason Hanna and [Emanuella Grinberg](#), CNN

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Story highlights

Pope Francis will deliver a final blessing at Law's funeral, the Vatican said.

Some sex abuse survivors have urged against a "celebratory focus" on Law

(CNN) — Alexa MacPherson says very little about Cardinal Bernard Law's death gives her peace of mind -- including the Catholic Church's plans for a full cardinal's funeral at St. Peter's Basilica.

The Boston-area native says she is a survivor of sexual abuse by a priest. Law, 86, [died Wednesday](#), 15 years after he resigned as Boston's archbishop amid allegations that he covered up for pedophile priests like the one accused of abusing MacPherson.

"With his passing, I say I hope the gates of hell are open wide to welcome him," MacPherson said Wednesday.

Survivors including MacPherson are outraged over the Catholic Church's plans for a full cardinal's funeral for Law in Vatican City on Thursday, saying he deserves no such dignity.



Law remained a Cardinal after resigning as archbishop of Boston amid the scandal. The funeral mass he is receiving is what any cardinal in Rome would receive, his successor, Cardinal Sean O'Malley said. However, O'Malley surmised that today, such a title or honor would not be accorded to a clergyman accused of the same misdeeds.

"I think that it's unfortunate that he's had such a high-profile place in the life of the church, but I think going forward that kind of decision would not be made," O'Malley said in a news conference Wednesday. "But unfortunately we're living with the consequences of that."

Related Article: Cardinal Bernard Law, symbol of church sex abuse scandal, dead at 86

'Where's the party?'

Robert Costello is another Boston-area native who says that Law covered for the cleric who abused him. Instead of being given a Vatican funeral, Law should just "disappear," he said.

"Chop him up and put weights on every piece of body part that he has and drop him in oceans around the world," said Costello, 56.

TIMELINE: A look at the Catholic Church's sex abuse scandals

MacPherson and Costello vented to reporters Wednesday in the Boston office of attorney Mitchell Garabedian, who represents many who accuse priests of sex abuse.

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Phil Saviano, who also says a priest sexually abused him, told reporters Wednesday that he's relieved Law is gone. Law had been in a position to do good and expose abusers, but instead chose to stand up for the priests, he said.



From left to right, Robert Costello, attorney Mitchell Garabedian, Phil Saviano and Alexa MacPherson speak at Garabedian's Boston office about the death of Cardinal Bernard Law on Wednesday.

But relief is not the same as healing, he said.

"I had been hoping that the passing of Cardinal Law would remove a target of great anger and animosity and consternation that survivors have felt about him," he told reporters at Garabedian's office. "(But) it's not a source of healing. It's not a removal of the pain for survivors.

"If anything, it's sort of like opening it all up again."

MacPherson, like Costello, said she doesn't feel like the Vatican should give Law the funeral that he's getting.

"I think it should be very quiet and not celebrated," she said. "There's nothing to celebrate (with) somebody who allowed children to be victimized and to have a lifetime of irreparable damage."

Survivors' group urges against pomp

Widespread child abuse by the Catholic clergy in the Boston Archdiocese was uncovered by [The Boston Globe's Spotlight investigative reporting team](#), which won a Pulitzer Prize for its efforts. A big-screen dramatization of the team's investigation in the 2015 movie, "Spotlight," won the 2016 Best Picture Academy Award, bringing the story to a much wider audience.

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amounted to a cushy second career that he didn't deserve.



Cardinal Bernard Law, seen here in November 2012 at the Vatican, died after a long illness, the Vatican said Wednesday.

The funeral plans appear to follow the Catholic Church's protocol for cardinals who die in Rome, even as a network of survivors of sex abuse by priests has publicly called on the Vatican to keep survivors in mind when planning the event.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the dean of the College of Cardinals, will celebrate the funeral Mass, scheduled for 3:30 p.m. Thursday, the Vatican said. Pope Francis then will give a "final commendation," or blessing, as he has previously for cardinals' funerals.

Before the funeral plans were announced, the [Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests](#) had urged against a "celebratory focus" on Law.

"We highly doubt there is a single victim of abuse who will ever receive the same attention, pomp and circumstance by Pope Francis," the network said in a news release after Law's death.

"Every single Catholic should ask Pope Francis and the Vatican why," the group's statement reads. "Why Law's life was so celebrated when Boston's clergy sex abuse survivors suffered so greatly? Why was Law promoted when Boston's Catholic children were sexually abused, ignored, and pushed aside time and time again?"

The survivors' network said the "celebratory focus on abuse enablers like Law must end," the group said. "It is time for the Vatican to refocus on change: protecting children and those who have been hurt."

'Would not happen' today

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"Cardinal Law served at a time when the church failed seriously in its responsibilities to provide pastoral care for her people, and with tragic outcomes failed to care for the children of our parish communities. I deeply regret that reality and its consequences," O'Malley said. "I recognize that Cardinal Law's passing brings forth a wide range of emotions on the part of many people. I am particularly cognizant of all who experienced the trauma of sexual abuse by clergy, whose lives were so seriously impacted by those crimes, and their families and loved ones."

Today, there's greater understanding and recognition of the pain survivors of sexual abuse endure, he said. In light of that evolution, he does not believe someone in Law's situation would receive such an appointment in Rome today.

"I think there's a much greater understanding and sensitivity to the situation. Being the archpriest of a basilica is sort of a sinecure but it's a very public role and, as I say, I can't imagine that happening today," he said. "There's been enough growth and consciousness of this problem in the Holy See that that would not happen."

CNN's Konstantin Toropin, Delia Gallagher, Hada Messia and Richard Allen Greene contributed to this report.



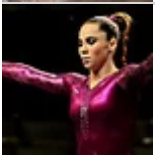
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