

Cardinal Bernard Law
Archdiocese of Boston
Boston, MA

March 5, 1994

Dear Cardinal Law:

Today is the first day of the rest of my life. I begin my recovery from 40 years of abuse. I'm very angry and because I can't write this letter to the man who caused this part of my anger, I'm writing to you as his authority. At the time the abuse took place you were not the Cardinal.

Let's start at the beginning. When I was about 12 years old I had already been molested by an Uncle for several years. My good Catholic parents (Who as you can see I'm also angry with.) chose to overlook. Today my mother says she knew and told my dad. No one stopped it. Then in the summer my dad, good man that he is, used to invite the priest from our, at the time, local parish to come to camp and spend the day. Remember I had a very low self-esteem, I thought I was dirt. I blamed myself for my Uncle molesting me. Well dad took 2 priest water skiing I was the spotter in charge of the ropes. You see I'm the oldest of six kids. Like I said good Catholic FAMILY.

Well on the way in from skiing one of the priest put his arm around me. I felt special until his hand moved down the strap of my bathing suit just to the top of my breast. I tried to move away but he held me there with his hand. Now in the mind of a 12 year old Catholic girl this man was like God himself. I was confused I had no where to turn. Again, I was all alone with someone who could do whatever he wanted and I couldn't tell. Who would believe me? Later in the day I was swimming out at a raft at camp all alone and along comes my friend the priest, this time he pulls me under the raft (It was held afloat by barrels, but under it were spaces where no barrels were.) he got behind me and began to rub his penis against my butt as he rubbed my breasts. Why was this man of God doing this to me? This happened each time my dad invited him to visit the camp. Not always in the same place but each time he rubbed his penis against me. He always seemed to find me alone somewhere.

I am angry because this should not have happened to me or any other child. I am a good person, I didn't want this to happen. I'm angry because I had to keep it a secret for so many years.

It doesn't matter if you believe me or not it only matters that it did happen and because of it I was angry with God, the Church, and all priest. I suppressed my anger for years. My life was effected by this experience in many ways. ALL BAD. Today I am facing the truth and dealing with the anger.

You can make the difference between this letter being in vain or making re restitution for the deeds of someone under your authority. I'm not looking for anything material from the Church. I'm not looking to sue or make this

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public knowledge. What I'm looking for is to stop what happened to me from happening to other children. We are taught the priest is like God. Please teach children that priest are human, they make mistakes, they can do wrong, they're not perfect. Teach this in Catholic School (I attended for 12 years) teach it at CCD classes. And please please teach parents that this is also true and to believe their children when they tell them they've been abused. Stop the secrets. Keeping secrets is what causes most harm. Children are not ready for this responsibility. Get angry with me help put a stop to this horrible crime. Set our children free.

I believe in right to life. I want to stop abortion but please this issue is the future of our world.

What happened to me as a child has effected me all my life. It has effected my children (I have a daughter who was molested by her father) I no longer belong to your church and it took almost 20 years for me to learn that it wasn't God's fault. It was the priests fault who did this to me.

And it will be your fault if you don't do something to protect our children. Knowledge is the key. Diana Russell's study of 930 San Francisco women in 1979 found that 38% of those questioned had been sexually victimized. David Finkelhor in 1979 questioned 796 Collegé students and found 19% of the females and 9% of the males had been sexually abused. p.37-38 The Right to Innocence by Beverly Engel, M.F.C.C.

Please help my recovery by helping other kids. Please read 2 books.
No Longer a Victim by Burton Stokes & Lynn Lucas
The Right to Innocence by Beverly Engel, M.F.C.C.

The name of the priest who did this to me was Father Michaud, he was stationed at St. Joseph's Parish in Haverhill, MA; at the time he was even made Pastor of that parish and loved by all.

I don't even know if you'll ever get this letter or if you'll ever read it, that I guess is in God's hands.

Thanks for letting me express my anger to you and for helping the healing process to begin.

Sincerely yours,

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