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BOSTON AP - Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was described as a "wonderful girl" and "a valiant woman of modern times" Friday by Richard Cardinal Cushing.

The Roman Catholic archbishop of Boston gave the description in a speech at the annual banquet of the Friends of the Don Orione Home.

Last month, following criticism of his defense of her marriage to Aristotle Onassis, Cardinal Cushing said he intended to resign his position and hoped to become a missionary to South America.

He had asked that carhity be shown to the widow of President John F. Kennedy, and asked why she should not be able to marry anyone she chose. He said later he should have added "but not in the Catholic church."

Onassis was married before and the Roman Catholic church does not recognize marriages between a member and a divorced person.

In referring to his earlier remarks, Cardinal Cushing said Friday, "I am still convinced that I was on the side of the angels.

"She is a wonderful girl," he said of Mrs. Onassis. "I assure you she is a valiant woman of modern times.

"Someone had to step up and say a kind word in her support . . . I stepped forward to say something that nobody else would say, and I was inundated from all over the country and all parts of the world."

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