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Cushing-Vatican 300

VATICAN CITY AP - The Vatican press spokesman said Wednesday the Vatican would have no comment on Richard Cardinal Cushing's statement on Jacqueline Kennedy's marriage to Aristotle Onassis.

Asked by newsmen for the Vatican's reaction, Msgr. Fausto Vallainc said. "As far as I am concerned no declarations from here have been made on the Cardinal Cushing affair nor should it be expected that the Vatican will say anything about it."

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In a talk in Boston Tuesday, the cardinal, a close friend of the Kennedy family, appealed for an attitude of understanding. He criticized as "a lot of nonsense" any talk that President John F. Kennedy's widow had excommunicated herself by her marriage.

There has been speculation in Europe that the cardinal may have managed some agreement with the Vatican before the marriage to make her union with a divorced man acceptable in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church.

But canon law and marriage experts at the Vatican said Wednesday that they have heard of no such agreement.

Canon lawyers here explain that it is technically correct that she is not excommunicated but that she is legally regarded by the Church as a "public sinner" and the penalties are the same - barred from receiving the sacraments, such as confession, receiving communion and extreme unction.

The term excommunication is used less and less by the Church. It would still apply for a Roman Catholic who divorces and remarries.

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She may still attend Mass, however.

Canon law specialists said Mrs. Onassis is living in an "irregular situation," unless she rejects Onassis and receives absolution or an annulment of his first marriage is obtained and they remarry in a Catholic Church.

ES141ped Oct23