

Transcript of Remarks by Cushing on Former Mrs. Kennedy

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BOSTON, Oct. 23—Following is the transcript of Richard Cardinal Cushing's remarks concerning the former Mrs. John F. Kennedy in a talk to the Caritas Guild in Boston yesterday:

Months ago I knew full well that Jacqueline Kennedy was going to marry Aristotle Onassis.

I know what she has been going through for many, many months. I have been contacted by many of those who are identified in high places with the Administration of the late President Kennedy, and I have been contacted by others intimately related and associated with the Kennedy family to stop all this from taking place—namely, that Jack's widow, God rest him, would marry Aristotle Onassis.

Well, I would have no part.

Finally, she was able to come to me, and she came to me a week ago. She came secretly and unknown and unannounced, save the fact that she had contacted me. I told her the next day I had to go to South Dakota, but I would be happy to see her.

Spoke Two Hours

She came to see me. Only one person was with her, a Secret Service man, and he came from South Boston. And I saw his picture in the paper yesterday over on the island in Greece at the wedding ceremony. And alone with myself, she spoke to me about two hours. And I let her talk because



Richard Cardinal Cushing
Camera Press-Pix

I knew she had confidence in me. And I encouraged and helped her in every possible way. I had a letter from her that would be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars if I allowed any of the national secular magazines to publish it, but I burned the letter.

That letter was thanking me for understanding her. Now, what has been the result? Number one, my lips are sealed. I cannot tell anything about the private, very private, conversation I had with her. I turn on the radio, and all

I hear are people knocking her head off, as it were, criticizing her and so forth, and they are so far from the truth that no one would believe me if I ever got on a radio program and revealed what I know.

A Turning Point

All I know that I am able to tell you is this: caritas, charity.

My love for her, her love for me, really was the turning point in her life, even though no matter what I said to her she was already committed to this marriage months ago, and I knew it. Her husband, as of the present time, has been down at Hyannis Port time and again in the past months, just to get acquainted with the children, so that they would understand the whole picture.

The point I want to make is this. Why do people pour letters in to me? In today's mail, about that high, condemning her, condemning me and condemning the church, and the church has nothing to do with it. I never would condemn anybody.

And this idea of saying she's excommunicated, she's a public sinner, what a lot of nonsense. Only God knows who is a sinner, who is not.

There are so many ramifications with regard to anything that might be considered as sinful that only God Almighty could really interpret them and manifest His infinite love for the sin-

ner, while at the same time despising the sin.

But I just cannot understand it. In the mail, and on the radio, all I have heard, even when I was out in South Dakota doing a was pestered by everyone.

And all the media of communications wanted to know something about this and something about that pertaining to this wedding. None of them knew that she had been with me only a few days before, namely last Tuesday, for about two hours.

The Word Charity

Now, my idea in mentioning this is rooted in the word charity. We all have our faults, we all have our failings.

Few people understood Jacqueline Kennedy. I married her. I baptized her children, two of them. She lost two more. I carried the lifeless body of Patrick Bouvier Kennedy in a little casket from a cemetery in Brookline in an automobile all the way to Newport so that the little lifeless form could be buried alongside of Jack Kennedy.

So I have had very close relationships with Jacqueline Kennedy, but it seems that all of them have been in times of sorrow. All of them have been in crises in her life.

Why can't she marry whomever she wants to marry, and why should I be condemned and why should she be condemned? I have

my faults, undoubtedly she has hers.

That's not the point. The point is that if we ever are going to get anywhere in uniting this nation we have to use all our effort to charity, in love, in mutual respect and esteem for one another.

The Cardinal then said that he hoped to receive permission to retire when he became eligible at the age of 75, two years from now, and he gave his reasons.

World Is Changing

Things are changing. The whole world is changing. Priests are changing, nuns are changing. People think the church is changing.

Well, I hope all these changes are for the better. But my problem is this: I am not prepared to meet these changes.

I am not a scholar. I am not a theologian. I am not a doctor of divinity. I'm simply a humble man trying to practice, charity, not merely from the point of helping this cause or that cause, from the viewpoint of helping individuals, like my friend Jacqueline Kennedy.

She even told me that she was like a man drowning and grabbing a straw until she met me some years ago, and from that time on she always knew that she had somebody to go to when she felt abandoned by many, many others.

My life has been that of caritas, that of love, love for all people.