

WORLD & NATION

'Ex' Kennedy, priest see differently on annulment

BOSTON (CNS) — Sheila Rauch Kennedy has provoked wide controversy in Boston with *Shattered Faith*, a book detailing her fight to prevent the Catholic Church from annulling her marriage with U.S. Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II.

The two were married in 1979 and divorced civilly in 1991. In 1993 Joseph Kennedy, who is the son of former U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, petitioned the Boston archdiocesan tribunal to declare the marriage null.

Sheila Kennedy contested the petition, and when the archdiocesan court granted a declaration of nullity last fall, she appealed the decision to the Roman Rota, the church's central court of appeals for marriage cases. The appeal is pending.

Sheila Kennedy, who is Episcopalian, argued that although their marriage was broken, for the 12 years that it lasted it was a true, valid marriage.

"To me," she wrote, "were the church to declare my children the offspring of a marriage that had never existed, it would be abdicating its sacred and historical role to protect and promote their moral well-being."

She added that "if I were to agree to an annulment, I would be lying before God."

She alleged in the book that when she received notice of her ex-husband's annulment petition, he told her on the phone that he also knew it was a true marriage and the annulment process was "just Catholic gobbledygook. ... That's the way the church is."

In late February, five weeks before the book came out, *The Pilot*, Boston archdiocesan weekly newspaper, began a 10-part series, "How Can a Marriage Be De-

clared Null?"

The entire series, by Father Michael Smith Foster, archdiocesan associate judicial vicar, was also posted electronically on the archdiocesan World Wide Web page. Although it makes no mention of the Kennedy case, it explains in detail the church's beliefs about marriage and its laws and procedures for determining whether a marriage was valid.

In an April 11 editorial *The Pilot* said, "The church has made and will make no public comment on this marriage. Confidentiality, as stated in canon law, forbids it, whether the case involves a Kennedy or your sister."

It said the Kennedy name alone "is enough to drive some people to paroxysms of either delight or loathing" and the alleged remark by Joseph Kennedy about Catholic gobbledygook "did not endear him in the matter of his marriage."

But the paper reminded readers that "every Catholic — good, bad or lukewarm — has the right to ask the church to examine his or her marriage in the matter of sacramental validity. Non-Catholics, married to Catholics, enjoy this same right — there are no exceptions to this law."

According to *Shattered Faith*, the archdiocesan tribunal declared the marriage null on the basis of a judgment that at the time they married, Joseph Kennedy lacked the discretion necessary to undertake a marital commitment.

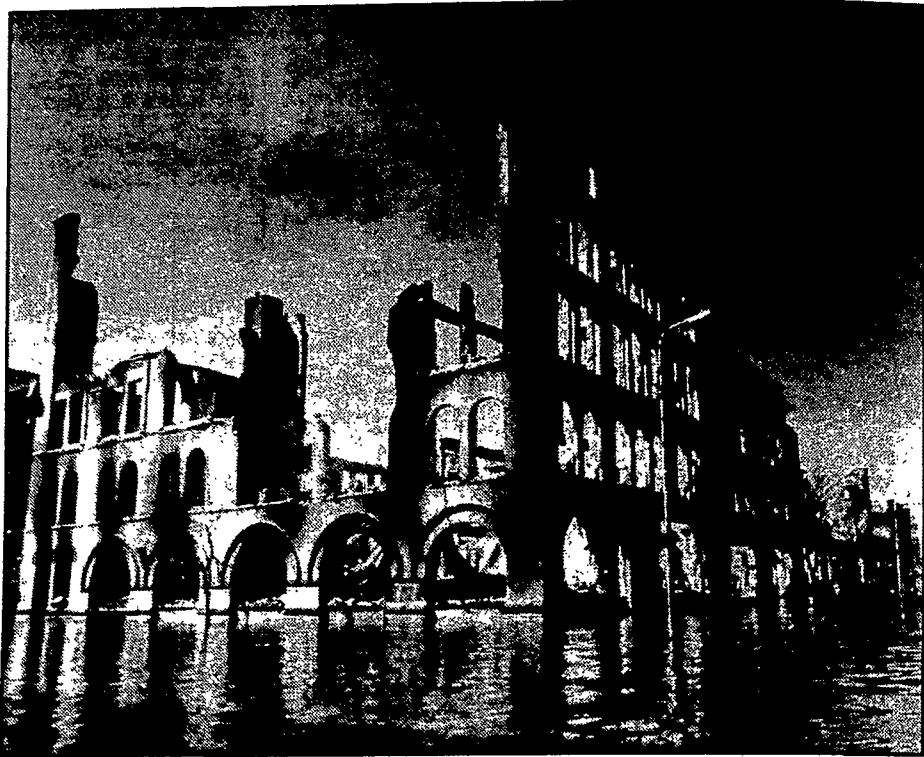
The book also describes the experiences with annulment procedures of several other women Sheila Kennedy met as a result of her case.

She said those experiences show that the annulment process is not so much an instrument of reconciliation, as church officials claim, but rather, for many, a source of bitterness and alienation.

The Pilot said editorially that in declaring a marriage null "the church does not deny the original affection and love which marked its beginning. It does not erase the civil marriage nor declare the children illegitimate."



SHEILA RAUCH KENNEDY



CNS photo

Fargo fights floods

The burned-out shell of a building stands in flood waters in Grand Forks, N.D. Fargo Bishop James S. Sullivan visited evacuated residents of Grand Forks, N.D., April 20 at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, where they are being sheltered.

Bishops can decide on cremains

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Holy See has said each U.S. bishop can decide whether to allow a person's cremated remains at Catholic funeral Masses in his diocese.

The bishops had asked for that permission at their general meeting last June.

Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, notified the bishops of the Vatican decision April 18. He asked them not to implement it until needed adaptations in liturgical texts and rites are cleared through Rome.

In anticipation of the indult, the bishops last November approved adaptations in the funeral Mass when cremated remains are present.

If confirmed, they are to be published as an appendix to the Order of Christian Funerals.

Bishop Pilla said the adaptations will be sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for confirmation.

One textual change proposed is the substitution of "earthly remains" for "body" in the prayer said while sprinkling the remains with holy water.

An alternative form of dismissal at the end of the liturgy is also proposed.

During the liturgy the cremated remains would not be covered by a cloth, as a casket would be, but they would be in "a worthy vessel," on a table or stand situated where the casket would usually be.

Church law once prohibited cremation for Catholics. In 1963 the Holy Office, forerunner of the Vatican's doctrinal congregation, issued a ruling allowing cremation under certain circumstances.

The new Code of Canon Law in 1983 said the church "earnestly recommends" the custom of bodily interment but does not prohibit cremation unless it is done for reasons "contrary to Christian teaching."

Since 1969 the Catholic funeral ritual has made provision for the committal of cremated remains. But it has not made similar provision for the presence of cremated remains, instead of the body, at the funeral liturgy.

St. Ann's Home Connection



The best of both worlds.

Home Connection offers older adults and persons with disabilities the best of both worlds. It enables them the opportunity to live at home while spending the day at St. Ann's.

Our services include:

- Personal care and bathing
- Hot meals and nutritional counseling
- Physical, occupational and speech therapies
- Skilled nursing and health monitoring
- Social work counseling and case management
- Podiatry and dental hygiene
- Religious & educational activities
- Social activities & field trips
- Transportation
- Individual & group exercise programs

We will also arrange special services like medical transportation, mental health referrals, lab & diagnostic tests, and appointments to St. Ann's beauty salon/barber shop, and visits to the P"Ann"try store.



If you would like more information call
St. Ann's Home Connection,
at 342-1700, ext. 440.

St. Ann's Home Connection

This coupon entitles you to one FREE day including lunch (An \$84 value)

342-1700 ext. 440



limit one coupon per family

introductory offer ✂

REVEREND MOTHER... For the Class of '97!



Phyl Contestable of "Nonsense" fame will deliver Reverend Mother to your door (or someone else's).

She'll roast your graduate like never before!
It will be memorable, that's for sure!

Special Events • Birthdays • Anniversaries
Bar Mitzvah's • Etc.

Call 716-442-4363

Ask for "Reverend Mother"