

Emmanuel Milingo: The Courageous Man Whom Even Pope John Paul 'Feared'

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As the 87-year-old Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo fast approaches the evenings of his life, much talk appears to be centered on the legacy he will leave behind.

Archbishop Milingo is the former Catholic priest who had a serious tussle with the Vatican after he decided to marry in 2001 despite the prohibition on marriage for ordained priests.

He is currently retired from public life and resides in Lusaka.

Milingo was born on June 13, 1930 in Mnutwa to Yakobe Milingo and Tomaida Lumbiwe. He was educated in St Mary's Presbyterial School in Chipata and attended the Kasina Seminary and Kachebere Seminary.

He was ordained a priest in 1958. He was the parish priest in Chipata from 1963 to 1966 and founded the Zambia Helpers' Society during this time. Pope Paul VI consecrated him as bishop of the Archdiocese of Lusaka in 1969. He served there from 1969 to 1983.

Investigation of healing ministry

In the 1970s, Archbishop Milingo conducted public religious services of healing and 'exorcism' which attracted huge crowds. European clergy in Lusaka criticized him for using elements of traditional African religion in his healing sessions.

Summoned to Rome for an investigation, he had the support of the charismatic movement in the Roman Catholic Church. As a consequence he was heard by Pope John Paul II and was given permission to continue his healing sessions in Italy where he became a celebrity and had the support of large groups of young people.

But it has been alleged that the reason Pope John Paul gave Archbishop Milingo permission was because the now deceased Pope somehow 'dreaded' the Zambian priest -- who beginning from that stage was being referred to as the 'Great African Spirit.'

Because Pope John Paul wanted to observe Archbishop Milingo and was also afraid of what he would do if left unsupervised, he banned him from returning to Zambia. He was made to stay at the Vatican.

So in 1983, forbidden by Pope John Paul II to return to Zambia, Archbishop Milingo resigned as Archbishop of Lusaka.

Criticism of the church

In 1992, Archbishop Milingo endorsed the book *On the Eucharist, a Divine Appeal*, a collection of

messages said to have been given by Jesus Christ in an apparition and written from September 8, 1987, to 1991 by Sr. Anna Ali, DOJS. These messages were a traditional call to conversion and eucharistic devotion, as well as expressing sadness over the current state of the Catholic priesthood. Although he did not hold office as a diocesan bishop at the time, his name appears on the book's purported imprimatur with the date March 17, 1992.

In the late 1990s, Milingo became well known in traditionalist and sedevacantist circles for a speech he gave at the Our Lady of Fatima 2000 International Conference on World Peace, organized by Canadian priest Nicholas Gruner and held November 18–23, 1996, in which he charged that high-ranking members of the Catholic church hierarchy were "followers of Satan" or otherwise enabled evil:

Marriage

In May 2001, Archbishop Milingo said that the Roman Catholic Church should provide priests dispensation from the obligation of celibacy and should readmit married priests to the priestly ministry. To "set an example", at the age of 71, he and Maria Sung, a 43-year-old Korean acupuncturist, married in a blessing ceremony in New York City, presided over by Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja HanMoon.

In July 2001, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (who later in 2005 became Pope), then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, officially warned Archbishop Milingo to separate from Moon and from contacts with the Unification Church.

Archbishop Milingo protested the order, saying, "How can I now leave my wife? ... For 43 years as a celibate priest ... I only knew God as a male. Now, through my union with Maria, I have come to see the other side of God's heart, which is female."

In August 2001, Archbishop Milingo met with Pope John Paul II, who appealed to him: "In the name of Jesus Christ, return to the Catholic Church." Archbishop Milingo agreed to separate from Sung and went into seclusion. Sung went on a hunger strike and appeared outside of St. Peter's Basilica to protest their separation.

In interviews on Italian television in 2002, Archbishop Milingo said that he had spent a year in penitential prayer and meditation in Argentina, at a Capuchin monastery. In November 2003, he made a trip to Africa over the objections of the Catholic bishops here. In 2004 and 2005, he kept a low profile and media accounts suggested that he was living in or near Rome without any official assignment at the Vatican.

Organization for married priests

On July 12, 2006, Archbishop Milingo announced at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. his "plans to embark on an independent charismatic ministry to reconcile married priests with the Catholic Faith" as an advocate of the removal of the rule of celibacy for Latin Rite priests in the Catholic Church; the group is called Married Priests Now!.

In August 2006 Archbishop Milingo rejoined his wife, Maria Sung, and they live together as a married couple in Lusaka.

In January 2010 it was reported that 20 priests in Uganda had formed a break-away Catholic sect which accepts married priests. This was said to be inspired by Archbishop Milingo and to have around 12,000 members.

First consecration of bishops

On September 24, 2006, Archbishop Milingo consecrated four married men as bishops, each of whom were already ordained in the Old Catholic line of succession and serving as a bishop in their respective Independent Catholic churches.

Reduction to lay state

In December 2007, in Brazil, Archbishop Milingo conferred episcopal ordination on Harold J. Norwood.

Two days after the consecration of the four Americans as bishops, on September 26, 2006, the Holy See's press office announced in a statement that both Archbishop Milingo and the four men involved in the episcopal consecration had automatically incurred excommunication in accordance with canon 1382 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

In October 2007, Archbishop Milingo's Vatican passport was revoked, ending his status as a person with diplomatic protection from the Vatican City State.

On December 17, 2009, the Vatican Press Office in a statement announced that Archbishop Milingo had been reduced to the lay state. The statement explained the effect of the action as "loss of the rights and duties attached to the clerical state, except for the obligation of celibacy; prohibition of the exercise of any ministry, except as provided for by Canon 976 of the Code of Canon Law in those cases involving danger of death; loss of all offices and functions and of all delegated power, as well as prohibition of the use of clerical attire. Consequently, the participation of the faithful in any future celebrations organized by Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo is to be considered unlawful."

Even after his reduction to a lay state, Archbishop Milingo continued ordaining and consecrating dozens of bishops around the world.

Milingo retired from ministry in 2013. Later that year, he stated that he still considered himself a Roman Catholic.

Legacy

When Archbishop Milingo is recalled by Lord, he will probably be remembered by all who knew him as a gallant, brave and courageous son of Africa who always tried to stand up for what is right.

You see, the Catholic Pope is a very powerful man. He is someone not even a republican President can stand up to. But a mere senior priest like Archbishop Milingo -- in his hey days -- was able to stand up to the Pope and speak his mind on issues affecting the church.

Today, the Catholic Church is struggling with cases of priests not only sodomizing children but also engaging in homosexual acts and adulterous affairs with married women. This, according to a recent report, is because of Catholic Church celibacy rules.

But the issue of priests not being allowed to marry is something which Archbishop Milingo vehemently preached against. If the Catholic Church heeded advice from individuals like Milingo, maybe some of these cases embarrassing the church could have been no more.

Archbishop Milingo will also be remembered for his efforts to promote unity not only within the Catholic Church but also the entire body of Christ.

The Charismatic movement in the Catholic Church is very popular today -- thanks to the efforts of Archbishop Milingo.

[Merged reports by The Church Newspaper Zambia/ Wikipedia/ Catholic News Services/ French Online]