

Mt. Rev. William J. Manseau, SBM, D.Min.  
Married Priests Now! The Catholic Prelature of Sts. Peter and Paul  
12 Catherwood Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876-2620, USA  
Tel. 978-851-5547

April 27, 2014  
Divine Mercy Sunday

#### Apostles of Mercy:

A Reflection on the Married Priests Now! Prophetic Mission of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, Emeritus Archbishop of Lusaka, Zambia and the Canonizations of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II by Pope Francis

Emmanuel Milingo was consecrated as a bishop for service in the Roman Catholic Church on August 1, 1969 by Pope Paul VI, Giovanni Batista Montini at Kololo Terrace, Kampala, Uganda following his election as Archbishop of Lusaka where he served from 1969 to 1983 as one of Africa's youngest bishops. He experienced and developed a charismatic, Biblically based healing ministry and in 1976 he joined the Catholic charismatic renewal movement finding therein a link between his African heritage and his Catholic faith. The Second Vatican Council had revisited the question of charisms in the Church. As Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens stated: "In regard to charisms, the Council adopted an open and receptive attitude expressed in a balanced text indicating that, providing that necessary prudence be observed, charisms should be recognized and esteemed in the Church of today. Indeed we might add: they are more important than ever before." (**A New Pentecost?** Seabury Press, NY, 1975, p.30). Cardinal Suenens had been appointed by Pope Paul VI to oversee the world wide Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Following his ordination as a priest in 1958, with additional education in Rome and Dublin, he became a champion of enculturation, espoused by Vatican II and later Pope John Paul II, working for the development of an authentic African Christianity expressed through indigenous spiritual and cultural symbols. Following his consecration as Archbishop, thousands and thousands of people flocked to him for his healing ministry. He founded three religious communities to carry out this work. As the Dutch scholar Gerrie Ter Haar has noted:

"Healing has always been a major feature of the religious traditions of Africa, and Milingo has shown how, in most of sub-Saharan Africa, it is an intrinsic part of pastoral care in relation to conditions of sickness that go far beyond the physical connotations of the word. In the African context, a healer is in fact a pastor, and in that sense may be compared to a Christian missionary. In the Western Christian tradition, however, the concept of healing has been largely reduced to its physical meaning and subsequently separated from the pastoral duties of the Church. Through his healing ministry Milingo has brought the two of them together." (**Spirit of Africa**, Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, 1992, pp.4-5).

Dr. Philip Jenkins, a noted professor of history and religion at Pennsylvania State University, has written two books about the Christianity of the Global South (Africa and South America). At the 2006 Erasmus Lecture in New York City he spoke of the impact of Holy Scripture on the African Christian. In the question and answer session following his lecture, he was asked about the work of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo in Africa and his response was very informative and very positive. "He said that

Archbishop Milingo's message of healing and exorcism was exactly what the Africans needed then and now because of their belief in hereditary evil and sin. Archbishop Milingo's healing ministry of exorcisms was the correct and best spiritual medicine the Africans could have received. He said that Archbishop Milingo's books and writings are immensely important to African Christians and will be for many, many years to come." (**Priesthood Renewed**, HAS Publications, NY, NY 2006, pp. 5-6)

Emmanuel Milingo's charismatic ministry of healing and exorcism of evil spirits brought him into conflict with others in the hierarchy and in 1982 he was removed from his position in Zambia and stationed in Rome with the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People which works directly under the Vatican Secretariat of State. There he was able to continue his charismatic healing and exorcism ministry with the support of Pope John Paul II which soon again reached into the thousands. Gerrie Ter Haar writes:

"Among those who attend Milingo's healing sessions in Rome are the well-educated, business people and university professors, people with an assured place in the world, as well as the more simple people who, to judge from their appearance, are probably poor. His clientele includes men and women of all ages, although here as in Zambia there seems to be a preponderance of women. .. Many people who have sought Milingo's help in Italy believe that they have been healed with his help. In his healing prayers he does not concentrate only on evil spirits, but emphasizes the need to destroy evil in any form: evil may come in the form of hatred, slander, envy, jealousy and other vices or social ills which, in his view, disrupt harmony between people and therefore block the way to God. By liberating himself from such evil, Milingo believes, man will find that it also has a healing effect on his physical existence. (Ibid, pg. 253)."

In 1989 he published "Against Satan" which was opposed by the Roman Curia official Cardinal S. Oddi. While it only served to increase the sales of the book, it did indicate a sense of the opposition which his work and theology inspired amongst some institutional authorities and Catholic clergy. Ter Haar notes: "Once again, such resistance is to be found most notably among those who reject the charismatic tendency in the Church, particularly where it adopts beliefs which are considered out of sympathy with current theology (ibid, pg. 251)" The biographical section of **Priesthood Renewed, The Personal Journey of a Married Priest**, Emmanuel Milingo states: "Appealing to Christ's original message to his disciples, Milingo consistently explained that he was only fulfilling the Lord's call to "heal the sick, cast out demons, and preach the Gospel." He lamented that it was his own beloved church that was preventing him from heeding this call. He became an outspoken critic of spiritual and moral corruption within the Vatican, claiming even the presence of Satan within the curia. He lamented the moral decline of the priesthood, charging that the church was tolerating violations of clerical celibacy and all manner of sexual sins among clerics, threatening the sanctity of the priesthood and the moral integrity of the Church. (HAS Publications, NY, NY, 2006, pg. 127). Emmanuel Milingo's supporters sought an audience with the Pope which was granted to him and a continuation of personal papal support which was documented by a 1989 front page photo in *Osservatore Romano* of the two.

Emmanuel Milingo's participation in the Charismatic Renewal brought him into contact with Christians across the spectrum of Christian beliefs who were involved in the movement. This coincided with the openness of Pope John Paul II to ecumenism among the Christian "separated brethren" and interfaith relations exemplified by the 1986 World Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi invitation by him to the heads of all the world's religions. One such person was the wife of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church who was attracted by Archbishop Milingo's healing ministry in Italy. This led to Emmanuel Milingo's participation and support of the interreligious work of the Rev. Moon and

eventually to his marriage to Maria Sung in 2001, a member of the Unification Church. Emmanuel Milingo had a few months before their marriage been treated by Ms. Sung, a Naples acupuncturist, for a paralysis and cured. This in turn led five years later in 2006 to the Rev. Moon's support of Archbishop Milingo's Married Priests Now! mission of outreach to the 150,000 Roman Catholic Priests who had married and had lost their own canonical missions as Roman Catholic priests as a result of their marriages and starting of their own families.

Archbishop Milingo met with Pope John Paul II in 2001 three months after his marriage with Maria Sung and agreed to return to his ministry in the Catholic Church. Maria Sung responded with public prayer and fasting in a bid to have a meeting with him in front of St. Peter's Basilica asserting that she would "never, ever leave him." On August 29, 2001 they bid good bye in a tear-full three hour farewell which attested to the depths of a real and loving relationship. He explained his unchanging love and loyalty to the church and the irresistible call of the Holy Father to return to the Catholic Church. He told her he would love her forever as a sister while she struggled to let go (Phillip Shanker, Unification News, October 2001). Long time Vatican observer John Allen would most certainly agree on the integrity of Maria Sung's response. (NCR HomePage, Vol.1, No.1, August 31, 2001).

Following that meeting with Maria, Archbishop Milingo spent one year in meditation and prayer at a Capuchin monastery in Argentina before returning to Italy in 2002 to resume his healing ministry under strict supervision from which he eventually fled four years later to reappear on July 12, 2006 in the United States with his wife Maria Sung as the founder of Married Priests Now! a Personal Prelature. The mission of the Prelature is to support priests who have married and advocate their restoration to the public ministry of the Catholic Church. Something had happened in the heart and soul of Emmanuel Milingo during those four years which solidified his resolve. He wrote on September 6, 2006 to Cardinal Giovanni Cheli, "Mine is a hard vocation. Just as I have not been understood, so do I not understand myself. Not because I don't want to, but the nature of things that I know do not permit me to be so lavish in sharing my spiritual experiences, 'Once beaten, twice shy.' This fact developed within me 'a go it alone attitude.' As to what I am undertaking this time, it is so clear to me that I cannot withdraw my efforts to help the married priests... A precept introduced as the luster of the Church and for many side reasons, celibacy has turned in the course of time into a killer of the priests' pastoral ministry, at the cost of depriving many Catholic communities of their daily spiritual food.

"Is it a small matter to see a mother who totally loses interest in a baby do an abominable action such as throwing it away into a garbage can? Have the priests who have married not been treated likewise? The Catholic Church had publicly declared 'To hell with you. We have not more interest in you.' Some of these priests have had only ecclesiastical qualifications to serve the Church, when they went into the world they had to start from scratch. The Catholic Church refused to even give them a testimonial for resettlement in the world. Thank God, since some have been in contact with us, they are once more able to pronounce the word 'Catholic.'" (**Priesthood Renewed**, pp. 114-115).

Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo held a press conference in Washington, DC to announce the establishment of the Married Priests Now! A Personal Prelature for married priests by him on the authority of the apostolic character received by him by consecration by His Holiness Pope Paul VI in 1969. His announcement included a call to married bishops and priests to return to the active practice of the priesthood in their families and life communities. In the responses he received worldwide from this announcement, he said that he saw the role of Married Priests Now! to be "a continuation of the work of the late Holy Father John Paul II. That is, he asked pardon to the whole world on behalf of the Catholic

Church for the crimes committed against humanity and the churches. We felt at home with every religious denomination, as he paved the way to brotherly love and unity. (Op Cit. Priesthood Renewed, pg. 74) This was because “separated brethren” worldwide were seeing this as an opportunity to heal old wounds inflicted by the Catholic Church and seeking to stand again in the apostolic lineage of St. Peter offered by the Married Priests Now! Prelature with its call for the restoration of the practice of the first thousand years of the Church’s history where the priesthood was rooted in married family life as it continues today in the Churches of the East.

Archbishop Milingo had introduced his announcement in Washington, DC with the statement that it had been 35 years since the 1971 International Catholic Synod of Bishops had received appeals from bishops to offer celibacy as an option to those who would bind themselves to it for their entire lives, but let those called to be ordained priests, yet married, fulfill their calling. This was not accepted and that day the Church was “harvesting straw instead of divine graces.” In a subsequent Open Letter to Pope Benedict XVI on October 23, 2006 he laid out a program of action to respond to the crisis stage need for Eucharist all over the world by the utilization of married priests and married men who have prepared themselves for ordination and who can also be called to the priesthood as the Eucharist is the essence of Catholicism. It is not only a benefit to the Church but to all of humanity. It is not only a matter of justice to the priesthood, but also a matter of the survival of the Church in the future noted the Married Priests Now! Statement of July 1, 2006.

The London Tablet reported on April 17, 2014 that Pope Francis had stated to an Austrian bishop serving in Brazil’s largest diocese that regional and national hierarchies should seek consensus on the priestly ordination of ‘viri probati’ (proven men) and present their petition to Rome and that three bishops in England and Wales have spoken out in support of that proposal. With this development it seems that the prophetic advocacy and supportive ministry of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo is bearing new fruit. The promise of the pontificates of Popes John XXIII, the pope of “a new Pentecost” and John Paul II, “the pope of the family” is being more realized in part as a result of the faith filled, charismatic, proleptic, and prophetic healing ministry of the good and holy man and priest, Emmanuel Milingo. It remains now for that to be recognized by the restoration to good standing of Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo and the recognition of his heroic service to God’s Church and its priests. In his prophetic marriage to Maria Sung he has modeled a respect for the equality and the conscience of one’s spouse by accepting that her faithful response to God in the Unification Church is hers alone as is his as a Roman Catholic. Together they model support for one’s spouse at great personal cost out of a spirit of compassionate love. There can be no greater foundation for the human family. That is one of their faith filled joint gifts to believers in the one God of us all. It is time to salute Emmanuel Milingo as an apostle of mercy, a true brother in the Lord.

-finis-