

Excommunicated Bishop Who Advocates for Married Priests Still Identifies Catholic

Excommunicated Zambian Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, who advocates for married priests within the Roman Catholic Church, said he has not split from Rome though many of the priests he ordained no longer see themselves as part of the church.

“We are not a breakaway church,” said Milingo, who married Maria Sung, a Korean acupuncturist, in 2001. “Within the Catholic Church married priests existed for a thousand years.”

Milingo’s most recent statement may be part of an effort to reinstate his pension, which was revoked after he was excommunicated by the Vatican in 2006 after he consecrated four married priests as bishops.

In March, Milingo retired from ministry, appointing Archbishop Peter Paul Brennan of the African Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Catholic Diocese of the Americas as his movement’s head.

“He considers himself a Roman Catholic and will remain so all his life,” said Brennan. “He remains a Roman Catholic archbishop. He offers Mass daily and prays five rosaries—one is for the Holy Father—and he prays the Divine Office every day.”

Milingo’s quest to reunite with Rome may be quixotic. The Catholic Church has cut all ties to him.

Milingo’s movement wants the church to apologize for allegedly selling married priests’ wives and children as slaves after Pope Gregory VII made celibacy a requirement in the 11th

century.

But the married priests movement in Africa is fractured; many priests have moved on and no longer see themselves as part of the Catholic Church.

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