

WORLD & NATION

Archbishop Milingo bids wife farewell

By John Norton
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Zambian Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo met the Korean woman he married in May and told her he was leaving her to reconcile with the Catholic Church, a decision she said she accepted.

During the three-hour meeting Aug. 29 in a Rome hotel, the archbishop gave 43-year-old Maria Sung a letter, telling her, "My commitment in the life of the church, through celibacy, does not permit me to be married."

"The church's call to me to return to my first commitment is right," he said in the letter, which the Vatican released.

Sung, who had been on a hunger strike for 16 days to press her demand to meet the archbishop, said she would respect the decision "because of the great love I have for him."

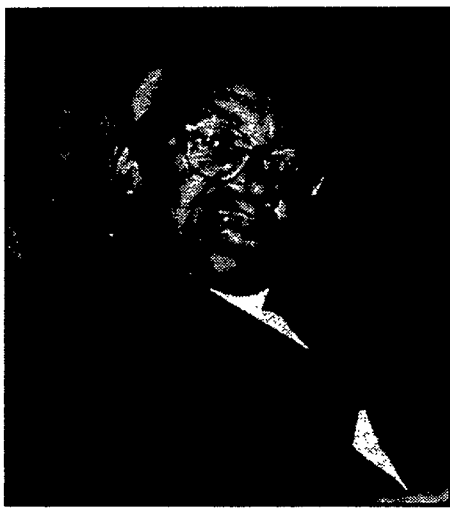
"I will do my best to sustain Archbishop Milingo in his mission and in his life until the end," she told reporters from a first-floor hotel window after the meeting.

"I have promised myself that I will live the rest of my days alone" in the hope of "meeting him again in the afterlife," she added.

Sung married Archbishop Milingo, a 71-year-old former Vatican official, in a May 27 New York hotel ceremony performed by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

In an Aug. 24 Italian television interview, Archbishop Milingo said he later realized he had made a "serious error," though he still loved Sung "as a sister."

The archbishop profusely apologized for marrying Sung in an Aug. 25 letter to Pope John Paul II, telling the pontiff he was pained by "the great sorrow I have caused you personally, the scandal given



Reuters/CNS

Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo leaves a hotel in Rome after meeting with Maria Sung Aug. 29.

to the whole Catholic Church, without forgetting my three religious communities." The Vatican released the letter Sept. 1.

After a surprise reconciliatory meeting with Pope John Paul in early August, the archbishop has been out of public view for what the Vatican called a period of prayer and reflection.

In the letter he gave Sung during their farewell meeting, Archbishop Milingo told her he was sympathetic to her plight.

"I am with you in all your suffering. I pray for you every day, and not just I, but there are many others who are with you," he wrote. "The blessing of God will accompany you for your entire life."

Sung told reporters the archbishop did not specifically apologize for leaving her but "expressed love to me as a brother to a sister." She said he also gave her a rosary.

The Rev. Phillip Schanker, a senior offi-

cial in Rev. Moon's movement who has served as Sung's spokesman, said the pair met alone for about half an hour, with the door to the room left open.

About two hours into the meeting, when the archbishop gave her his farewell letter, Sung broke down in tears, Rev. Schanker said.

"He was never cold to Maria," the U.S. minister said, adding that the pair embraced and kissed. "It was clearly not a brush-off."

While the pair met, their entourages — about five on each side — mingled in another room in what Rev. Schanker called a "wonderful" discussion about, among other things, the meaning of celibacy.

"We all learned a lot of important things. Everyone present was crying," he said.

During the meeting, Vatican security personnel and Italian police prevented journalists from entering the hotel, which is in a neighborhood near the Vatican.

Archbishop Milingo left the building escorted by plainclothes Vatican guards and got into a car without responding to reporters' shouted questions. His destination was unclear, but he has said his period of secluded prayer will last at least 30 days.

Rev. Schanker said he accepted the archbishop's decision to sever ties with Rev. Moon's organization but was "very concerned about his future."

He said his Family Federation for World Peace and Unification felt very close to Pope John Paul, particularly because of the pontiff's stance in defense of human life.

"This pope is a hero to us, and the last thing we want to do is offend," he said.

Before Sung flew to New York Sept. 1, Rev. Schanker visited the Vatican to return a pectoral cross, liturgical vestments and chalice that Archbishop Milingo had left with her weeks earlier before meeting the pope.

Priest charged in fraud

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican said it has no connection to alleged wrongdoing by an Italian priest arrested in the United States on charges related to a \$200-million insurance-fraud case.

Msgr. Emilio Colagiovanni, 81, was arrested in Cleveland Aug. 30 as he prepared to celebrate a memorial Mass for his sister. He was charged with fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering and was released on a \$500,000 bond after appearing in a federal court in Connecticut the following day.

He remained under house arrest pending a Sept. 19 hearing.

Msgr. Colagiovanni was suspected of aiding international financier Martin Frankel, who prosecutors say bilked insurance companies of more than \$200 million. After an international search, Frankel was arrested in 1999 and is awaiting trial.

Msgr. Colagiovanni has said that he got involved with Frankel in 1998 when the financier was posing as a Catholic charity fundraiser under the false name of David Rowe. At the time, Msgr. Colagiovanni was president of the Monitor Ecclesiasticus Foundation in Rome, which publishes a journal of canon law and which, like hundreds of other church institutions, has a Vatican bank account.

When Frankel asked about running financial operations through the Vatican bank account, Msgr. Colagiovanni said he told him that was impossible. But the priest did agree to sign a letter saying Frankel's St. Francis of Assisi Foundation received funding from the Holy See — even though he knew that was not true.



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