

# Italian priest denies Communion to Archbishop Milingo

ROME - At the start of a visit to Italy, excommunicated Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo was denied Communion when he attended a Mass at a local parish church near Naples.

The former Zambian archbishop and his wife, Maria Sung, attended an early evening Mass at a local church in Pompeii Jan. 10, one day after his arrival in Italy from South Korea.

When the archbishop approached the celebrant - Father Francesco Soprano - he refused the Eucharist to the archbishop, who then reportedly blessed the celebrant and lightly touched his head, according to Italian media reports.

Archbishop Milingo, who was married in a Unification church ceremony in 2001, was excommunicated by the Vatican in 2006 for illicitly ordaining married men.

While he is excommunicated, the archbishop cannot receive the Eucharist or any sacrament of the church.

The 77-year-old former archbishop of Lusaka was to be in Italy Jan. 9-27 to promote a new book, meet with supporters of his U.S.-based Married Priests Now! movement, and attend to various medical visits.

The movement he founded in July 2006 advocates that the Roman Catholic Church allow married priests in active ministry. Under church law, Latin-rite Catholic priests must remain unmarried and are bound to celibacy.

Archbishop Milingo was to lead a press conference in Rome in mid-January to unveil "Confessions of an Excommunicated," his book-length interview with Italian journalist Raffaella Rosa.

In the book, published in Italian, the archbishop is said to explain the reasons he decided to support opening the priesthood to married men and what made him

choose to go back to his wife after returning to the Vatican just a few months after his marriage in 2001.

In response to reporters' questions upon his arrival in Rome Jan. 9, the archbishop said he was in Rome also to work on another new book and a DVD "that talks about my life." He said he had doctors' appointments to check on a knee that was operated on a few years ago and an eye exam for a possible cataract removal.