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Food for Thought

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The church is tired in affluent Europe and in America. Our culture has grown old ... the bureaucracy of our churches is growing out of proportion, our liturgies and our vestments are pompous. Yet maybe these things express what we've become today?

Where are the individuals with the generosity of the Good Samaritan? Who have the faith of the Roman centurion? Or the enthusiasm of John the Baptist? Or the daring of Paul? Who are the faithful like Mary Magdalene?

The Church must recognize her own errors and must pursue a radical path of change beginning with the Pope and the bishops. The pedophilia scandals oblige us to undertake this path of conversion.

Who are the sacraments for? The sacraments are not an instrument to discipline people but to help them on their journey of life and during their weaker moments ... I think of all those who are divorced and remarried, all the enlarged families. They are in need of special protection.

A woman is abandoned by her husband but finds a new partner who takes care of her and her three children. This second love story is a successful one. If this family is discriminated against, then not only the mother but also her children will be excluded. If parents feel outside the Church or don't feel its support, the Church will lose the next generation.

The question whether or not divorced people can receive Communion should be turned on its head: how can the Church help bring the strength of the sacraments to those who have complex family situations?

The church is 200 years behind the times. How come it doesn't rouse itself? Are we afraid? Fearful instead of courageous? But faith is the foundation of the Church. Faith, trust, courage.

Cardinal Carlo Martini b.1927-d.2012



In the 20th century, the Catholic population of sub-Saharan Africa has grown from less than 2-million to nearly 140-million — a growth of 7,000% — and the continent produces priests at a higher rate than any other part of the world ... Many experts have predicted an “African moment” in the global church in the 21st century. One foretaste of that “African moment” has been the rapid growth in African priests serving outside the continent, especially in Europe and North America.

John Allen, *National Catholic Reporter*

