

The conservative half of the African soul finds its voice

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Though this is perhaps a terrible over-generalization, Catholics in the United States and Europe sometimes fall into the trap of listening to only half of what the African church has to say. When African Catholic leaders condemn poverty, war, and racial injustice, Western liberals cheer; when those same Africans decry abortion and homosexuality, conservatives feel validated.

The hard truth for both left and right, however, is that African Catholics often don't fit into Western ideological categories. They can be ferociously traditional on matters such as sexual ethics, and yet remarkably progressive in areas such as economic policy and ecology.

If a label is needed for all that, one might call it a consistent ethic of life, Africa-style.

So far during the Oct. 4-25 Synod for Bishops, much of the talk has been congenial to the Western left — protesting the injustice of trading relationships and exploitation of natural resources by multi-national corporations, lamenting the continent's wars, praising ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, and calling for various sorts of internal church reforms.

Yesterday and today, however, the other half of the African soul found its voice.

Read the full story here: [A consistent ethic of life, Africa-style](#) [1]

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