Searching for His love

Aaron Foshee to be ordained a priest

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

There are men who walk a straight and narrow path to destiny, and then there are men whose heavenly journey is built one brick at a time through a winding road of the unexpected. For Aaron Foshee, his search for God’s love reached a pinnacle Saturday when he joined his life with Christ as a priest in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Deacon Aaron was 13 years old when he joined the Catholic Church after years of searching through various religions for the answer his family craved. On Saturday morning, 15 years later, he was ordained a priest along with fellow deacons Lance Warren and Daniel Grover.

“Everything that has happened in my life has happened for a reason and it has prepared me for this moment, and for the moments – God willing – to come.”

Foshee’s family joined the Church in 2000 after his older brother mentioned he was taking RCIA classes while in college. His parents, Lynda and Wayne Walton, joined RCIA at Saint John in Edmond to learn what the Church was teaching Caleb, mainly to refute it. With the help of Father Louis Vander Ley, they quickly realized they had found their faith home.

“She ended up seeing ‘Wow, this is what I’ve been looking for this entire time.’ These answers. She gave me the option of going through the RCIA process, and I did,” he said. “Looking back, it shows you why God has you go through certain things. We had to go through these steps to get to the Catholic Church.”

It was during this time that Foshee began to put together his love of the Church and his most clear desire of wanting to be a teacher.

“‘I appreciated being given the tools to understand the world around me, and I wanted to do that for other people,’” he said.

After focusing on other areas of interest through high school and into college, he got a part-time job as a cantor at Saint Joseph Old Cathedral in downtown Oklahoma City. It was there that the seed planted many years earlier began to grow.

He was hired as the full-time cantor at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help where he more clearly heard his call to the priesthood.

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Emmaus Days Retreat

Emmaus Days is a retreat for young men in high school who want to learn about the call to the priesthood and explore their relationship with God. The three-day retreat is held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp and is sponsored by the Vocations Office. There is no cost. The retreat will be Tuesday, July 29, through Thursday, July 31. Contact the Vocations Office at (405) 721-9351 or vocations@archokc.org, or complete online registration at http://archokc.org/vocations/home.

Vatican commission approves martyrdom in the Cause of Oklahoma’s Servant of God Father Stanley Rother

A special Theological Commission at the Congregation of the Causes of Saints in Rome voted Tuesday to formally recognize Oklahoma’s Servant of God Father Stanley Rother a martyr. The determination of martyrdom is a critical step in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City’s Cause to have Father Rother beatified, the final stage before canonization as a saint.

“Father Rother laid down his life for Christ and for the people of his parish in Guatemala, whom he dearly loved. It is very encouraging to move one step closer to a formal recognition by the Church of Father Rother’s heroic life and death as a martyr for the Gospel,” said the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

For more information on Father Rother’s life of service, go online to www.archokc.org/cause-for-beatification-of-father-stanley-rother/home.
Environment encyclical takes bold stance on controversial issues

In contrast to the “exemplary” support of international negotiations on climate change, the Pope has said he has not yet managed to adopt a clear position on the potential role of geoengineering solutions to fight climate change. In a new encyclical on the environment, Pope Francis did not batonize to wage against controversial, toxicology-making statements on global warming, pollution, and biotic extinction and global inequality’s impact on natural resources.

“A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system,” the Pope said in this new encyclical “Laudato Si’,” meaning “Praise be to you.” He cited “a constant rise in the sea level” and an apparent increase in extreme weather events.

“Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes in lifestyle, production, consumption, and in our very relationship with the environment. The procedures of industrial growth no longer make sense. The idea of uncontrolled and unbridled growth, as a solution to our problems, is false and it is causing the destruction of our home. It is the tragic and heart-rending contradiction between our endless growth of production and our在其 ability to continue to produce food and water for all peoples to live.”

The Pope lamented that “frequently no measure is taken, no industrial waste and byproducts.” The Pope wrote, “There can be no ecology without the protection of nature. When the human person becomes a consumer of nature, all of nature’s laws are violated.”

The Pope also wrote that the economic system is not sustainable in the long term, and that a “throw away culture” is at the root of many environmental problems.

“The Pope’s encyclical acknowledges the failure of global environmental summits to reach a consensus on the need for action,” the Vatican said.

The Pope’s encyclical also underscores the necessity of a new ecological ethos, which includes a recognition of the interdependence of all life on Earth, and a call to action for individuals, communities, and governments to take responsibility for the care of the planet.

In his new encyclical “Laudato Si’,” the Pope wrote, “There can be no sustainability without a human economy.”

The Pope’s encyclical is the first papal document to address the ecological crisis facing humanity, and it is expected to have a significant impact on global environmental policies and initiatives.

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Finding a path to God’s Kingdom

In the past year, my family has driven to my sister-in-law’s house in Fayetteville, Ark., multiple times. Usually, we stop to see my mother and father-in-law in Tulsa on the way. From Tulsa to Fayetteville, we’ve taken state highways offering a glimpse of the wooded mountains and meandered our way slowly through trees and lakes. We have re-adjusted our route after making a wrong turn. Each time, we have hurriedly arrived at our destination and a warm welcome.

The freedom to travel different paths in the same destination is the same freedom with which God gives us to live our lives. We can choose which path we want to take on the way to our destination, which is (hopefully) heaven. We can even make a wrong turn, but still end up at the right place, sometimes by completely re-routing our path. While there are wrong paths, there are also many right ones that can lead us to our ultimate destination.

Our aim in life is to know, love, and serve God. Many paths lead us away from God — these are sinful paths. But, more than one path leads us closer to God, allowing us to live and serve him differently. Writing Sinclaire Pecher puts it this way: “God’s will is not a checklist of do’s and don’ts, but a living, powerful force that somehow, inconceivably, finds its way into our path, seeding lives, nourishing us like the rain and making us grow and bear fruit.”

This broad understanding of God’s will opens us to the freedom that God gives us, but He also gives us guides in scripture, the laws of the saints and reality. God’s words given to us in scripture, unlike the ways that God guides his people, while the lives of the saints show us the constant invitation by God to grow closer to Him. God gives us reality, from our natural, human limits to our familial, social, economic, and employment situations. These circumstances, because they are given, also serve as signs. Another guide is to recall the ultimate purpose of our earthly lives: to know, love and serve God. In the face of a decision, we should ask ourselves, “Would this help me serve God, div- erly or by helping me to develop natural virtue?” These questions can serve us with decisions big and small, from “What job should I take?” to “How should I spend my evening?”

God gives us opportunities for both joy and sacrifice in whatever path we choose. This should free us to act, to make a decision, for, as writer Father Julian Carron says, “Not choosing is also a choice,” which leads to stagnation. The guides God gives us lead us away from stagnation into a fuller life with Him.

Annamaria Scapandara Bidlick
For the Sooner Catholic

This help me grow in love of Him, and understand his love for me? Would this help me serve God, di-

The Catholic Difference

A few weeks ago, after having visited to approve so-called “same- sex marriage,” a correspondent sent me an e-mail quoting Cardi-

German Cardinal Walter Kasper, pictured in a Feb. 21 file photo, is a proponent of changing church law to allow divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to receive Communion. CNS photo/Paul Haring.

mothers, majorities also can get the fundamentals of justice wrong: as many Germans did in the early 1950s, when the outcome of voting for the Nazi Party was clear to anyone who had read Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” or listened to his radio talks, as many French citizens did in the early 20th century, when the representatives they democratically elected dismantled Catholic schools, exiled members of religious orders and religious freedom, free speech and freedom of assembly and a just state, as serving the acting of civil society. That is why John Paul II in-

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For that comment, taken at face

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nities. As quoted, that comment would also suggest — to raise a delicate point — a curious myopia on Car-

dinal Kasper’s part about his own national experience.

For the first word that came to mind on reading Kasper’s remark was “Weimar.” As in the Weimar Republic, which succeeded the Ho-

benstein monarchy after World War I and was in turn succeeded by Hitler’s Third Reich — after a democratic election put Hitler and his Nazi Party in power, and after a democratically elected German parliament passed the notorious “Enabling Act” (Enabling Act), which effectively granted Hitler dictatorial powers.

Saint John Paul II, whose teaching about the free and virtuous society in “Centesimus Annus” remains the pinnacle of Catholic social teaching on the democratic experiment, constructed his social magisterium beneath the shadow that “Weimar” had cast across the history and future of democracy.

That is why Saint John Paul II taught that “democracy” can never be reduced to mere “majority rule.” Majorities can get the technical-

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Event: The Pastoral Music and Fine Arts grant awards to 23 churches for church and arts-related projects. Epiphany Church, located at 1865 NW 4th Street, Oklahoma City, is one of the recipients. The grant was awarded to celebrate the church's sesquicentennial, which was established in 1865. The grant will be used to upgrade the church's sound system and to assist in the promotion and celebration of the arts within the community.

The Grant: The grant amount was not specified in the image. However, it is stated that the grant will be used to assist in the promotion and celebration of the arts within the community.

The Grant Committee: The grant was reviewed and awarded by the grants committee of the Catholic Diocese of Oklahoma City.

The Recipients: The names of the recipients were not specified in the image. However, it is stated that the grant was awarded to 23 churches for church and arts-related projects.

The Purpose: The purpose of the grant was to assist in the promotion and celebration of the arts within the community. The grant was awarded to 23 churches for church and arts-related projects.

The Celebration: The celebration of the church's sesquicentennial was being celebrated.

The Church: Epiphany Church, located at 1865 NW 4th Street, Oklahoma City, was among the recipients of the grant. The church was established in 1865.

The Church's History: The church was founded in 1865, and it has a rich history. The church has been in operation for 150 years, and it has undergone several renovations and expansions.

The Grant's Impact: The grant will have a positive impact on the community by promoting and celebrating the arts. The grant will also assist in the promotion and celebration of the arts within the community.

Conclusion: The image mentions the awarding of a grant to Epiphany Church for its sesquicentennial celebration. The grant is being awarded to 23 churches for church and arts-related projects. The purpose of the grant is to assist in the promotion and celebration of the arts within the community. The church has a rich history, and it has been in operation for 150 years. The grant will have a positive impact on the community by promoting and celebrating the arts.
Retiring priests reflect on decades of ministry

By Tina Korbe Dzurisin, J.E. Helm

Effiefect July 1, three priests from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will be retiring, although they each plan to stay active in ministry.

The priests are Father Joe Ross, Blessed Sacrament Lawton; Father Charles Murphy, Saint Mary, Guthrie; and Father Dominic Hoang, Saint Andrew Dung-Lac, Oklahoma City.

Rev. Joseph R. Ross

After nearly 46 years of active ministry as a priest in eight parishes, the Rev. Joe Ross plans to spend his retirement reading, praying and finding new ways to serve.

“I never experienced a community that wasn’t full of rich treasures,” Father Ross said. “Lawton has certainly been a great example of that; it’s a wonderful, diverse parish.”

The thought of the priesthood came naturally to Father Ross because of the example of two of his uncles, Rev. James Ross and Rev. Bill Ross. As a young boy, Father Ross observed his uncles’ lives and came away with the impression that they had it easy. One of his uncles took him to the movies in Walters, and the theater owner let his uncle in for free.

“My view of the priesthood was you worked one day a week and get into the movies for free,” he said. “My uncle could go to the refrigerator and make himself a root beer float anytime he wanted.”

As a freshman in college, majoring in math, Father Ross began to think seriously about his vocation. Struck by the example of several classmates who had a strong desire to contribute to the wider community, he asked himself how he could do the same.

“That brought me back to considering being a priest,” Father Ross said. “It was a need to get closer to the Lord,” he said.

Thinking back on 24 years as a priest, Father Hoang plans to spend even more time praying and translating several “good books” into Vietnamese.

For young men and women entering religious life, he suggested that they listen to people. Be humble.

“It’s important to share with others.”

**Rev. Dominic Hung Hoang**

For the past 18 years, Father Dominic Hoang has been the beloved faith leader of Saint Andrew Dung-Lac Catholic Church in Oklahoma City.

He joined the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in 1990 after being forced to withdraw from seminary in Saigon and leave Vietnam as a refugee in June 1977. He finished his education and formation in the United States.

“He must not isolate himself,” Father Hoang said from his study at Saint Andrew Dung-Lac. “He must not isolate himself.

He concedes he will miss the social aspect of religious life, the day to day interaction with parishioners and staff members. “I will miss the people.”

“Thinking back on 24 years as a priest,” Father Hoang observed with joyful satisfaction, “it’s been good. It has been awesome!”

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**Rev. Charles Robert Murphy**

Born: Oct. 17, 1942, Ada

Ordination: June 1, 1969, The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Formation: Benedictine Heights College, Tulsa; Central State University, Edmond; Saint Meinrad School of Theology, Ind.; Sacred Heart School of Theology, Wisc.

Assignments: Associate Pastor, Saint Patrick, OKC; Pastor, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chandler; Saint Michael, Moign, Saint Andrew Dung-Lac, OKC.

**Rev. Joseph R. Ross**

Born: Jan. 4, 1945, Stillwater

Ordination: Dec. 27, 1969, Chickasha

Formation: Saint Edward’s University, Austin; Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, OKC; Immaculate Conception Seminary, Mt.; Gregorian University, Rome, University of Notre Dame, Ind.

Assignments: Associate Pastor, Saint Francis of Assisi, OKC; Associate Pastor, Saint Thomas More and Saint Joseph, Norman; Associate Pastor, Sacred Heart, OKC; Associate Pastor, Saint Charles Borromen, OKC; Associate Pastor, Saint John the Baptist, Edmond; Associate Pastor, Christ the King, OKC; Pastor, Saint Thomas More, Norman; Pastor, Christ the King, OKC; Pastor, Blessed Sacrament, Lawton.

**Archbishop Charles J. Scelsi**

announced the hands of Fr. Murphy and Fr. Hoang at their ordinations.
On the library bookshelf: Saint Joan of Arc

By J.S. Helm
For the Sooner Catholic

Few women in history have attracted so much attention and inspired so many creative works as Saint Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, canonized in 1920. Mark Twain, at 76 years old.

Saints and Pope Paul

The great Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is Monday, June 29. Saint Peter was chosen by Our Lord to lead His Church (Matthew 16:18-19). A statue of Joan of Arc is seen in the courtyard of the headquarters of France’s National Catholic publi- cal party in Nancy. CNS photo/Charles Platius, EPA

Twain’s biogra-phy is one of several books on Saint Joan of Arc available at the Catholic Pastoral Center. A much more scholarly work is Sven Stolpe’s, “Joan of Arc,” a translation of the French text of the 1916-1920 edition. Even Saint Margaret has “wild delight in the pursuit of cool water.”

A much more scholarly work is Stolpe’s “The Maid of Orleans: The Life and Mysticism of Joan of Arc.” The book is a translation from Swedish. In his preface, Stolpe states straightforwardly that his book “is based on old and modern literature, but not on the study of archivists.”

While Twain’s book does not give an impression of Saint Joan’s words, he does provide an excellent job of presenting and analyzing facts. He dis- cussed the Hundred Years War between France and England that led to the political division and turmoil of Joan’s life. He explains why the three saints who appeared to Joan are especially significant. He pointed out how Joan was so effective for God’s mission because of the mysticism of her visions and voices. He also describes the trial and death of Joan. He explains how Saint Joan’s life is a lesson on how to gain spiritual freedom in life.

Joan’s body was taken from the stake and buried in the yard of the Cloaca Nuova, where she is now interred. She is the patron saint of prisoners and of all people who are unjustly imprisoned. This is a great reason to remember Joan of Arc.

Saints Peter and Paul

The great Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is Monday, June 29. Saint Peter was chosen by Our Lord to lead His Church (Matthew 16:18-19). Peter, a simple fisherman, obeyed Our Lord’s instructions to make disciples and baptize them. He preached the Gospel in Judea, was cast into prison and miraculously delivered from per- sonal danger, and he points out the legal and illegal errors of the Church. Stolpe concludes by telling of the Trial of Reformation, congratulating in 1455 by Pope Calixtus III, a trial which completely exonerated Joan and declared her a martyr.


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Un primer vistazo a ‘Laudato Si’

No hay duda de que “Laudato Si”, encíclica del Papa Francisco “Sobre El Cuidado de la Casa Común” será un documento ampliamente anticipado en recientes generaciones. Muchas organizaciones de los medios de comunicación, comentaristas sociales y religiosos, y candidatos políticos prepararon puntos para reflexionar sobre el documento incluso antes de leer lo que realmente dijo el papa. Habiendo finalizado el tiempo que dedicó a este texto, me gustaría compartir algunas de mis propias reacciones y los comentarios que también debe ser presentada para nuestras hijas y nietos.

...muchas afirmaciones interesantes clave de la dignidad de la vida humana que quizás no esperabas en una encíclica sobre la ecología y el desarrollo.

El Papa escribe: “No hay excusas, sino una acción auténtica”. El Papa Francisco “Sobre El Cuidado de la Casa Común” (‘Laudato Si’) es un documento ampliamente anticipado en recientes generaciones. Muchas organizaciones de los medios de comunicación, comentaristas sociales y religiosos, y candidatos políticos prepararon puntos para reflexionar sobre el documento incluso antes de leer lo que realmente dijo el papa. Habiendo finalizado el tiempo que dedicó a este texto, me gustaría compartir algunas de mis propias reacciones y los comentarios que también debe ser presentada para nuestras hijas y nietos.

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When Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting hosted the Spring Radiothon, May 5-6, listeners heard from John Pepe and Dave Vaschera of EWTN. In support of OCBN, John Slavin, Dave and volunteers turned their challenge to our listeners: Pledge $500 or more and be honored with the name of one of our Apostles for this generosity. Thirty pledges came in! Recognized as Apostles are: Demetrius with Young Aguilas; St. Thomas; Cora Arleo as St. Jude; Rick Banta as St. Paul; Elisabeth Baxter as St. Philip; Margrete Fehmer as St. Mathias; Peter Hodges as St. James the Greater; David James as St. Peter; Francesca Leopra as St. Bartholomew; Gary Menas as St. Andrew; Stephen and Bar St. Reel as the Lesser; Morris Shepherd as St. Simon the Zealot; Stephanie as St. Matthew; and Ambrose Ziegengas as St. John. Those leaders along with the business sponsors who provided incentives for hourly drawings ensured the highest total to date for an OCBN Radiothon. Thank you, dear supporters.

PROGRAMCHANGES have occurred as of Monday, July 13. 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., “Father Knows Best” began airing June 15, replacing “Mother Angelica Live.” At 11 a.m. daily, “Father Ricardo’s Christmas” is being replaced with “Take 3 with Jerry and Debbie.” “Outside the Walls” is a new program originating in Tulsa that will be broadcast on Saturdays at 10 a.m.

OCBN board members and volunteers are turning their attention to the goal of providing programming for all parts of the state. OCBN has construction permits from the FCC to build new radio stations, including two in Oklahoma City. That process is underway.

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. All guests are invited to 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

The Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.


10 Bings at St. Joseph, Norman. Light dinner served at 6:15 p.m. Games begin at 7 p.m. with a second session at 8:30. $5 buys a 10-game packet, including free blackjack games.

11 Substance addiction ministry will provide education about addiction and refer those in need. In training for team members will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 northwest Expressway, OKC. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

11 The Oblates of St. Benedict of Mt. St. Scholastica meet once a month at a Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 northwest Expressway, OKC. Oblates meet from Noon to 2 p.m. with newcomers meeting from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Contact Judy Martin at (405) 635-5665 or jmartin@msjohnbと言うโดย fabio

11 St. Kateri Tekakwitha Dance from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. at St. Greg- ory’s Abbey, 1900 W. Macleh- stour St., Shawnee.

12 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, serving grades PK – 6, will host a summer open house from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., 925 S. Boule- vard, Edmond (405) 340- 0691: www.stelizabethann- seton.org

12 Charismatic Healing Mass, 5:30 p.m., Immaculate Con- ception, 3901 S.W. 29, OKC. (405) 648-4900.

ST. JOSEPH’S ORPHANAGE REUNION – The third annual reunion of former residents and staff members of St. Joseph’s Orphanage in Bethany and St. Joseph’s Children’s Home in Oklahoma City will be held Saturday, Aug. 15, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Trinity Gardens, Garrey Room, 3935 N.W. 19th St., Oklahoma City. All guests are invited to 5 p.m. mass next at St. Joseph Church. Admission is free, but to ensure enough refreshments for all, please RSVP by Aug. 7 to Jesus Mem at jmem@stjosepharchdiocese- ok.org or (405) 526-2308.


Pilgrimage to World Meeting of Families, papal visit & Mass – The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is leading a pilgrimage to Rome and visita to various shrines during the World Meeting of Families Confer- ence. Pope Francis will celebrate Mass on the 27th. Don’t miss this exciting opportunity to grow in faith with Catholics from around the world, and to explore ways to strengthen the Church in the $1,845 ( dbl. occ.) and includes air- fare, hotel, some meals, transportation to and from the conference, sight-seeing in historic Philadelphia, and visas for those not able to obtain a visa. Contact (800) 653-0017 or register online at www.archoc.org. Deadline to register is June 30.

Briefs

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Beginning Experience There is help for the heartache of separation, divorce and widow- hood at a Beginning Experience Weekend. The program helps with the natural grief process and offers an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain of loss into an opportunity, through God, for turning the pain...
Mass: An opportunity to enter into the Mystery of God!

First we gather, listen to the Lord: The Liturgy of the Word

By Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE
Director of Hispanic Ministry

Focus, focus, focus! This is my personal mantra when I go to Mass. I am so easily distracted. Dozens, if not hundreds, of ideas are constantly rushing through my mind. I need to make an extra effort to concentrate in the Great Mystery of God before me and set aside so many agenda items with which I am constantly bombarded. I need to focus, focus, focus and not forget what is going on before me. While on a rare occasion a small crisis might be pulling me away or demanding my attention, these occurrences are rare and not an everyday event.

Now … What exactly is going on at Mass? Actually, quite a lot! So much so, that I will reflect on the two main parts of the Mass in the next couple of columns. This one is dedicated to the Liturgy of the Word – the first part of the Celebration of the Eucharist, the first step into the Mystery of God.

As in every important conversation or dialogue, all parties involved have a time to speak and listen. The Mass is our sacred communal conversation with God, a greatest prayer, so in the Mass there also must be an opportunity for God and us to speak and listen.

The Introductory Rites help us focus on what is most important, the Mystery of God. The ministers and the priest approach the altar, which represents Christ, and kiss it as a sign of respect and appreciation for the Lord’s loving sacrifice for our salvation.

As in every conversation, we begin by greeting each other and, as in every formal prayer, we make the Sign of the Cross, invoking the Holy Trinity. God is the beginning, center and end of our celebration.

Then, recognizing that as disciples of Christ we don’t always live up to our baptismal calling, we pause to ask God and those around us for forgiveness. We need to approach this sacred conversation with humility and pure hearts.

Next the Gloria is sung to praise God, if it isn’t Advent or Lent, to adore God who is the primary purpose of our celebration. These introductory activities come to an end with the Opening Prayer that brings together our reasons for gathering before the presence of God in this special way.

The next step in our sacred conversation is when the community enters into silence, we hope, to listen to God who now will speak to us through His Real Presence in His Word! Yes! God speaks to each and every one of us in the Liturgy of the Word!

In February of last year, Pope Francis emphasized this idea of God speaking to us when he said, “(God) does this through his Word, which is recounted in the Gospels and in the Bible; he speaks through catechesis, through homilies. He not only speaks to us but he makes himself present in the midst of his people, in the midst of his Church. The Lord’s presence is there. The Lord draws close to his people; he is present with his people and shares his time with them.”

While this is important for everyone who participates in the Celebration of the Eucharist, I wish to emphasize this to those who for one reason or another cannot receive the Eucharist at Communion time.

The Lord speaks to each one of them and draws close to his people and is present with them. This is Communion time for those who cannot receive Communion. Through his Word the Lord is present and gives himself to us. All we have to do is to listen to him and feed on his Word. This is the first step in entering into the Mystery of God, the first step at Mass to enter into the Mystery of Christ’s love for each one of us.

Focus, focus, focus!