

Henry Tom put first things first

One of the late Henry Tom's most interesting characteristics was that, for a man of words, he was a man of few words. As Dean Smith cited (CR, Feb. 10) Henry wrote the book on pastoral planning, a process through which faith communities strive to align their actions with their beliefs. That is how Henry lived. Those of us who attended the liturgy to celebrate Henry's life witnessed the connection.

Henry would have been pleased with that liturgy. He respected words as he respected those who spoke them. I knew that from my experiences with Henry. I was privileged to be part of the team that prepared "To Be Church and To Be Church Together," the ministry formation program. Henry was one of our advisers.

Monsignor Richard Bozelli described Henry as a thinker. More than a few times, Henry would sit quietly as I rambled on. One time I was describing, in one long sentence, what would happen over the 15 weeks of To Be Church, the program I was designing. Henry sat patiently and finally, without raising his voice asked, "Joe. What are you going to do in the first hour of the first session?"