



Jubilarian Profile: Patrick Tuttle Marks 25 Years as a Friar

WENDY HEALY / JULY 9, 2014 / [FRIAR NEWS](#)

*This is the seventh in a series of profiles about friars commemorating major anniversaries of profession this year. The previous issue of HNP Today featured **Thomas Conway, OFM**.*

GREENVILLE, S.C. — As a teenager, **Patrick Tuttle, OFM**, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church, was motivated to consider religious life by his stepmother, Julia.

While growing up in Hartford, Conn., his stepmom was his confirmation teacher. “After I made my confirmation, she asked if I would help her teach,” said Patrick. “I got to be the youth minister with three of my peers when the youth minister moved out of town. I never stopped helping in whatever opportunities were present to share faith.”

That sums up the vocation story of Patrick, who this summer is commemorating his 25th anniversary as a friar. He has spent most of his Franciscan life in the South, serving at two parishes and at several college campuses.

His current assignment at St. Anthony of Padua Parish involves ministering to an African-American community with a rich history of spirituality that dates from the 1930s.

Engaging Community Members

“The best part of being at St. Anthony’s is seeing how eager and hungry people are to engage their faith in their everyday life,” he said. “I only need to present ministerial options and people are all over them. The growth in the community and the young population make for an exciting and challenging environment to feed and nurture.”

After attending Manchester, Conn., Community College and Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Patrick completed his undergraduate degree at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. He also obtained a degree in pastoral counseling from St. Joseph College in Hartford. He studied philosophy at St. John’s and Fordham universities, both in New York City, in preparation for earning his master of divinity degree at Washington Theological Union.

Patrick professed first vows in Brookline, Mass., in 1989 and, in 1993, he professed his solemn vows as a Franciscan. He was ordained at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City in 1994.

His first assignment was in the campus ministry program of Siena College, where he served two years. In 1996, Patrick was assigned to Immaculate Conception Parish in Durham and to nearby Duke University, as part of its campus ministry and hospital chaplaincy programs. The move south was an adjustment for this New Englander, but he adapted well and spent the next seven years ministering mainly to the Mexican community that worshipped at Immaculate Conception and building a new church. He then went back north to serve from 2003 to 2005 as campus minister at St. Bonaventure University in Western New York, where he also worked on special projects.

He returned to the South in 2005, when he requested an assignment with **David Hyman, OFM**, whose work he admired. Patrick was assigned with him at Greenville's St. Anthony of Padua Parish. He succeeded David as pastor in 2007.

Ministering to Students, Law Enforcement

In addition to tending to the parish, Patrick is the Catholic chaplain to both Furman University in Greenville and the city's police department. He serves the police as both an emergency and regular chaplain.

He considers a special part of his ministry serving as a missionary to the black Catholic community, which, he said, "is declining throughout the South due to low birth rates and the appeal of non-denominational and entertainment churches. This community has my heart and I'm trying to strengthen it." Under his leadership, the black community at St. Anthony's has grown by 100 members.

"It is a challenge to hold up the Eucharist, the lives of the saints, our blacks as a Catholic community as a response to the call of Christ to be one," he said. "The mission/social justice work and corporal works of mercy must continually be held up against the consumer disposition all around us."

Patrick said he engages the black community by offering educational opportunities, along with family gatherings, reunions and parish picnics so members can interact. Liturgical music also reflects the gospel tradition, he added.

"I have a special interest in helping the black Catholic community give the wider Church its gift." He also has a passion for eradicating the predatory loan business, which Patrick said is "detrimental to families experiencing hard times." Interest rates are almost 300 percent, he said, and when families can't come up with the payments, loan-makers take their cars and houses, ruin their credit, and leave them in worse financial predicaments than before they took the loan.

As a campus chaplain, he enjoys working with students. "I am fascinated by college students who give their lives to the mission here. We are welcoming five more to live in the friary all summer for the sixth year in a row. I enjoy sharing life and ministry with **David Phan, OFM**, who is such a hard worker and a fun presence in the house."

He also appreciates interacting with the children who attend St. Anthony's active elementary school, which recently opened a new building, in large part due to Patrick's fundraising efforts.

"I am so thankful to be a member of Holy Name Province, where I stand in ministry on the shoulders of giants like David Hyman, **Paul Williams, OFM**, and the late **Francis Gorman, OFM** and **Peter Sheridan, OFM**, who were here before me tilling the soil in heroic labor. I enjoy the support and encouragement from friars who write to share their excitement at the success in the mission field here. I was so grateful to have friar brothers to whom to send **Casey Cole, OFM**, of Furman University, for formation with our Province. What a joy for us."

True to his enthusiastic nature, Patrick said he enjoys doing yard work, and his hobbies include building things out of wood. He also enjoys seeing his brother and four sisters, and visiting his parents, who attend the Province's St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church in Hartford.

After 25 years, he said he feels as invigorated as when he joined the Order.

"What people don't know about me is that I am not burning out. Some say I work too hard, but it's a complete misunderstanding. I love what I do. I have so many dreams for the work of the people toward the Kingdom of God," he said.

— *Wendy Healy is a Connecticut-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to HNP Today.*