

Father Patrick Ritter SDS



Birth: April 19, 1948

Profession: August 22, 1967

Ordination: September 25, 1976

Death: August 24, 2010

Buried in Sacramento, California

Father James Patrick Ritter (who went by his middle name) was born in Sacramento, California, on April 19, 1948. Sadly, Patrick's mother died when he was just ten years old. After attending elementary school in his hometown, he began studying at St. Pius X Seminary in Galt, where he became acquainted with the Salvatorian community. He entered the Society's Novitiate in Colfax, Iowa, in 1966, and made his first profession of vows there on August 22, 1967. College studies were taken at Mount St. Paul College in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and Dominican College in Racine. During his Apostolic Year, he returned to St. Pius X Seminary in California to teach music and drama. His later seminary studies were at Washington Theological Union and Catholic University in Washington, DC, and the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, California. He was ordained a priest at St. Pius X Seminary in Galt on September 25, 1976. In his first assignments as a priest, Fr. Pat ministered as Associate Pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Pleasanton, California, and then at St. Monica's in Moraga. In ministry, he discovered internal talents and gifts which enabled him to be a good listener, and people began to seek him out to discuss their issues and problems. Fr. Pat wanted to further these skills by studying psychology. He earned a Master's Degree and then a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. While engaged in studies, Fr. Pat was the director of scholastics in the Formation House in Oakland. Fr. Pat opened his practice in psychology in the office complex of the newly-established Divine Savior Parish in Orangevale. In addition to his counseling practice, he also helped in the parish. For over a decade, he was well-known and admired among the parishioners there. But severe health issues began to plague Fr. Pat in the late 1990's. A combination of a chemical imbalance which brought about emotional and memory issues, and the onset of Parkinson's disease would prompt a move to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where his needs could be better managed. He lived in two smaller community houses before finally moving to the Salvatorian retirement community at Alexian Village. In the last few years of his life, Fr. Pat also dealt with bouts of lung and colon cancer. Throughout it all, he inspired others as he struggled to be as hope-filled and positive as he could. He died peacefully in hospice care at Alexian Village on August 24, 2010, at the age of 62. In addition to his private practice and his ministry, Fr. Pat also served in many capacities within the Salvatorian community: as a delegate at numerous Provincial Chapters; as Coordinator for the Northern California Area; and as an interviewer for and member of the Society's Formation Commission.

