

Father Patrick Peyton

Patrick Peyton was born January 9, 1909 in County Mayo, Ireland. In 1928 he emigrated to the United States and settled in Pennsylvania with others in his family. After high school he pursued theological studies at Holy Cross Minor Seminary in Indiana and then Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C.

Peyton became ill with tuberculosis in 1938 and the prognosis was grim: he could undergo a risky surgery or simply pray. He chose the latter and within a year was on his way to recovery. Upon his ordination as a priest, Peyton was assigned to the Diocese of Albany, New York where he became involved in radio programming originating from Albany and Schenectady.

Convinced by the power of prayer, Peyton utilized some contacts he had developed in his area and made a cold call to Bing Crosby to enlist his help in getting a new prayer-focused radio program on the Mutual Broadcasting System. Peyton may have been as surprised as anyone when Crosby said “yes” to his proposal, despite the priest having limited experience with radio. On May 13, 1945 Father Peyton led a program featuring not only Bing Crosby but New York’s Archbishop Spellman and President Harry Truman.

Peyton’s initial production was a success and for the next two years he worked to get a regular feature on the airwaves. His hard work paid off on and through his Family Theater Productions, the radio series *Family Theater* debuted on February 13, 1947 over the Mutual network. It would, however, be another year before it was heard on all the major outlets at a common time. As a sustained program Father Peyton worked hard to keep program costs manageable and was always seeking donations to meet the show budget.

In the early 1950s Peyton’s Family Theater Productions expanded into television and attracted top talent just as his radio series had. While the *Family Theater* radio program ended in 1957 and continued in reruns into the 1960s, the production company continues to produce film and web content to this day. In addition to media Peyton undertook many rallies over the decades that attracted millions of followers.

Father Peyton’s health declined in the 1990s and he died on June 3, 1992. In 2017 Pope Francis declared him venerable, one of the steps toward sainthood.

This synopsis is based on information published in Karl Schadow’s *Family Theater: Every Home* (Radio Spirits *Family Theater* release #47252, 2015), courtesy Radio Spirits and the author, and the website fatherpeyton.org.