



Anthony Pagotto:
A Seminarian's Story



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Anthony Pagotto: A Seminarian's Story

Ed. note: This article was posted on the website of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in December 2003. Tony, who graduated from the seminary in May, was just elected as pastor of St. James Lutheran Church, Zenith.

Tony Pagotto, a member of Hope Lutheran Church, Cherryville, Pa., says his years in seminary "have been the most formative of my life." The combination of academics and fieldwork experience "have changed the way I look at the world. I see things from an entirely new perspective now. I've just grown a lot."

Pagotto is 30 now. He came to seminary right after graduating from East Stroudsburg State University. He'll complete his studies this academic year at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, earning a Master of Divinity degree. During his seminary career, Tony has preached and taught the eighth grade confirmation class and the adult forum at Christ Lutheran Church in Allentown, PA. He's coordinated the student evaluation of a young professor at the seminary. And most recently he's undertaken chaplaincy responsibilities at Cathedral Village, a retirement community in Roxborough, PA.

What strikes you about Tony is his sense of call to ordained ministry. Tony says, "In each year of seminary, I have grown spiritually and mentally in ways I never imagined." Tony credits "the people in congregations who have solidified my calling."

Tony especially found his internship in North Dakota to be significant in his preparation for ordained ministry. "I thought parts of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod were rural, but I discovered that Tioga County in Pennsylvania is a major metropolitan area compared to parts of North Dakota," he says. In the isolation of that intern congregation, Tony was struck by the deep faith of the people. "They taught me what living the baptized life is all about."

Now, with much of his fieldwork experience at seminary behind him, Tony



is reflecting on how to integrate the leadership skills he has been honing with the practical life in ministry that lies ahead – considering how best to conduct pre-marital counseling, for example. Soon he'll be heading into the real world of parish ministry.

Tony will be ready. The seminary and the congregations in which he has learned have seen to this. So, too, has the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, which provided loans and grants for which Tony is grateful.

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