

Sister Ritamary Pyzick, OSF

Sister Ritamary Pyzick has a special place in her heart for the elderly. She has a lot of different responsibilities as Pastoral Minister at St. Raphael's in Garden City, Michigan, but the work she does for seniors gives her great satisfaction.

She grew up in Wells, a small farming town in southern Minnesota where everybody knew most everybody else. She went to St. Casimir's School and was taught by the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania. She remembers how nice they were to everybody and was touched by it. Since she had always wanted to be a school teacher and was impressed by the Sisters who taught her, it was natural to combine the two. She became a Sylvania Franciscan and spent the first 28 years of her ministry teaching in Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota. In 1981, she went to St. Raphael's. She had heard great things about the parish from other Sisters who taught there and said it has lived up to the star billing.

"This is a special parish to be part of," said Sister Ritamary. "The people are wonderful and the parents are so supportive. My early years teaching sixth grade were great, but my second career as a Pastoral Minister has been even more rewarding."

Sister Ritamary spends a good part of her days visiting the homebound and the sick in nursing homes and hospitals. She brings Communion and shares news of the parish. She also manages a Senior Friend Program. Each classroom in the school has a senior friend to whom they send cards and gifts throughout the school year.

Because she knows so many families, she conducts a funeral home service for funerals that take place in the parish. "Death is a time when the families need hope and encouragement," said Sister Ritamary. "I work with them to find scripture readings that relate to the personal life of the person who died."

In addition to those responsibilities, she conducts classes for infant baptism and Scripture and Communion services for the parish during the week. She also works for the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal with the annulment process at the parish level and is in charge of the altar server program.

Sister Ritamary's days are busier than ever, but you can see in the smile in her eyes and hear in the bounce in her voice that she thoroughly enjoys living the Franciscan life of "joyful servanthood."



*Sister Ritamary Pyzick (right)
with Fran Arsenaault*

*If you have men who
will exclude any of God's
creatures from the shelter
of compassion and pity, you
will have men who will
deal likewise with their
fellow men.*

— Francis of Assisi
