

'Very special' nun counsels the sick and their families

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

"It just flowed gently out of what I've done before. The spirit propelled me into this new kind of ministry."

This is how Sister Marie Gatzka describes her work as a chaplain in the pastoral care department at Providence Hospital.

A former teacher and high school principal, Sister Marie has worked and lived in Southfield for seven years.

"Chaplaincies in hospitals for women are a growing ministry," she says. "I like it very much; it's very much needed."

Sister Marie's work is with the patients who come into the Southfield hospital and also with the families of patients.

"Sometimes the families need our counsel more than the patient. We are

present, we listen, we ask them questions, we reflect and pray with them or we offer scripture," she explains.

"Sometimes it's difficult but those times are balanced by the joyful times."

thoughtful, introspective, and loving, Sister Marie has a great deal to give to those she counsels.

That she does her work well is witnessed by a recent honor bestowed upon her.

SISTER MARIE was recently chosen "very special person" by the Philosophy of Service Sub-Committee at Providence.

It's a new award and is given once each quarter," she says. "I'm the third one to be chosen."

In a larger sense, the slender nun

Please turn to Page 14



DEBORAH BOOKER/staff photographer

Sister Marie often helps the priest with Catholic Mass or in distributing communion in the hospital chapel.



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