



# *Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action*

## **Making the Rounds for Christ**

Paul Christin is a man on a mission. For more than 25 years, he has made the rounds of hospitals, nursing homes and residences distributing hope, compassion and Holy Communion to countless ill, elderly and home-bound persons. Caring, outgoing and good-natured, he's a natural for the job.

Paul is a volunteer with the St. Margaret Mary Pastoral Care Ministry, a ministry that he experienced first-hand in 1987 when he had four-way bypass surgery and received communion from pastoral ministers at Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove.

He was so impressed with the care ministers—"they would hold my hand, they would pray with me"—that later that same year, following his recuperation, he joined the ministry at SMM.

Our parish, Paul explains, has more than 20 lay ministers of care who once a week bring Holy Communion to those parishioners who are unable to come to Mass and who request a home visit. Holy Communion is also distributed by SMM volunteers once a week at Edward Hospital and at area nursing homes. Coordination with other local parishes assures that pastoral care ministers visit hospitals and nursing homes throughout the week, bringing prayer, comfort, and calming as well as Holy Communion.

Paul adds, "We also will notify the parish pastor if someone requests the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. You can actually see the good it does for people."

The people he ministers to on a regular basis really look forward to his visits, he notes. He tells their stories with fondness and compassion—the woman he met following her brain surgery and continued to visit for 10 years until her death; the elderly man who would always ask when

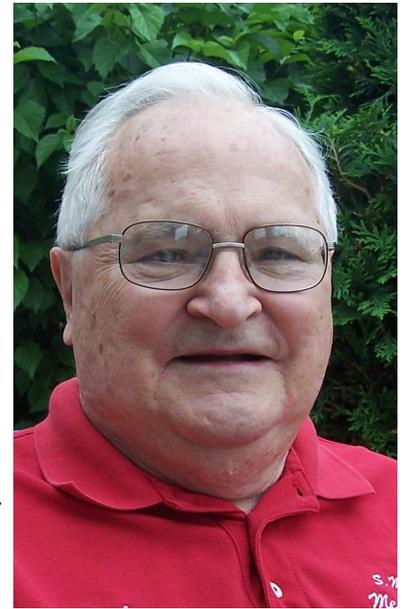
Paul phoned him, "Are you bringing Communion to me on Tuesday?"

"The recipients are very grateful for this singular care," Paul says. "The pastoral care minister may be the only visitor they get all week, especially in nursing homes. Every time you visit, it is a new experience, a new reward. And the patients never forget it," he adds.

Paul is a good story-teller and a good listener. He explains it differently: "I volunteer because the pay is so good and I find it so rewarding," he quips. "Didn't the nuns call it 'extra credit'?"

To prepare for this ministry, volunteers attend a series of four training sessions each on a different topic; the group meets three or four times a year, usually on a Saturday morning.

Until recently, Paul was coordinator of the pastoral care ministry for about 12 years, taking over from parishioner Theresa Baisden. Now 80, Paul has given over that responsibility to Deacon Fred Straub. Volunteers are always welcome and needed. Please contact Fred at 630 983-6661 or call the church office at 630 369-0777.



by Kathleen Macko

**Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.**