

At age 75, I've got to be among the oldest volunteers at the Schervier Health Care Center, in Riverdale, Bronx, NY. October 28, 2005, was my starting day on the fifth floor by choice, where I quickly bonded with its residents, "God's Special People" my sisters and brothers in dementia, or with Alzheimer's Disease.

Like Moses, who veiled his face because of the blinding light following conversation with God on Mt. Sinai, "God's Special People" on the fifth floor also have veiled faces and minds. But their veiling is not from God's light - its source is, instead, God's darkness recognized in suffering!

M. Slavin is a clinical social worker and family therapist, who lives and works in Riverdale. Speaking of her 80 year old father she said, "He taught me that, at any moment in life a man (woman) can pick up his (her) marbles and begin a new game!" For many elderly, this is indeed possible, but not for those in Dementia or with Alzheimer's. Their lot is a hard one! Those who do God's work in service to them can also find it hard at times, but an attitude of gratitude for their ability

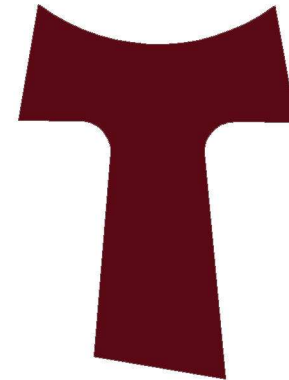
to be helpful can overcome any hardship. As I work among them, I sense the Presence of God in Passion (The Cross of Jesus is everywhere), but, looking deeper into their eyes, I see the Resurrected Christ in all His Glory! Fortunately, those of us who work on the fifth floor by volunteering make true the words of Jesus, "I was in prison and you visited me!" Yes, they are truly God's prisoners, living images of the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola, "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty - take my memory, my understanding, my entire will.... Just let me love You and it is enough for me!"

Not only do I sense the Presence of God in my "Special People" by just being "there", but as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, I am also privileged to bring the Real Presence of Jesus to them in Holy Communion, making more complete our shared image of Suffering Servants with the Lord. And suffer we do! How wonderful it is to see the Eucharistic Jesus confined, as it were, to the "nursing home" of the Tabernacle, made mobile in the "wheelchair" of the Ciborium and

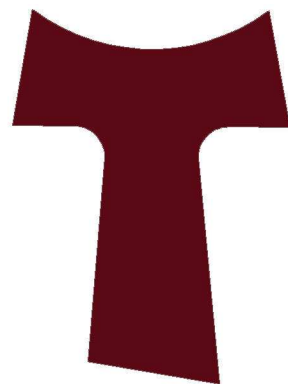
brought to "God's Special People" through my Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministry!

Jesus has said, "Whatever you do for the least of my people, you do unto Me!" Service does enflesh Jesus - it makes Him tangible - touchable!" Oh sweet mystery of love at last I've found you!"

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*Let them
esteem work
both as a gift
and as sharing
in the creation,
redemption,
and service of
the human
community.
Article 16*



*Elderly
Volunteer for
the Elderly*