

## **Breast Cancer: Coming Full Circle**

Sister Marlene Pinzka  
Patient

**Sister Marlene Pinzka, patient:** My cell phone rang and it was Dr. Zerbe and he said, "Can I talk to you?" He said, "You know, they found cancer."

I grew up in a small town in western Minnesota, and after college and a year of teaching in Minneapolis, I joined the Franciscan Community. So I'm a member of the Sisters of St. Francis. I've been a college professor for almost 30 years.

A lot of people say, you know, I teach mathematics, but I always said I teach students. When I joined the Franciscan Community, I had a physical and shortly before I came for my physical, I got a letter in the mail asking if I would be part of the molecular breast imaging study.

Being in a place where I can be part of the technology that found the cancer early and part of an institution that is constantly doing research to give me the best possible options for a cure and for the prevention of cancer in the future is a real gift.

I'm halfway through radiation, and that's been going very well. I can just be very, very fortunate that my breast cancer was found very early and is treatable.

All the way along, the care has been incredible, and sometimes it's the little things. In fact, I remember saying to them, "Do you have comment cards like restaurants do? Because," I said, "I'd give you all a perfect 10."

I mean, I think it's surprising to a lot of people that Mayo is nonprofit. Your money is really going for research. You don't have to worry about it being misused in any way. If they have the money to do the research, that's going to benefit not only people who come to Mayo but people throughout the world. I have nothing but praise for Mayo.