

## **Welcome!**

Two Adrian Dominicans, Sr. Renee Richie and Sr. Maurine Barzantni, have joined us in ministry. They are now living in Ft. St. James and working with Fr. Frank Salmon at Our Lady of the Snows Parish.

Both of these sisters have worked among many different cultures and feel blessed by the diversity and beauty of the people with whom they have ministered.

Sr. Renee Richie was born in Detroit, Michigan. Her father was a Canadian citizen and her mother a United States citizen. Renee was the first of their children to be born in the United States. She entered the Dominican Community after having been educated by Adrian sisters in Detroit. Her first years as a religious were spent in teaching in Illinois schools. She served twice as administrator in elementary schools.

Sr. Maurine Barzantni was born in Chicago. She entered the Adrian Dominican Congregation after graduating from Siena Heights University. Her first twenty years as a religious were spent teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Chicago.

These two sisters began working together in the 1970's as pastoral assistants among the Afro-American communities of Chicago. There they worked with neighborhood associations and gained skills in community organizing. In 1990 they were called to the Dominican Republic where Sr. Maurine stayed for twenty years and Sr. Renee for ten years as pastoral assistants and community organizers. Their education and community organizing backgrounds served them well since the impoverished community in which they lived clamored for basic services. Together with their leadership the community was able to achieve these goals and today boasts of having basic services of electricity and potable water, access to health services as well as a well known comprehensive educational center with an enrollment of 1,500 students. When native leaders were ready to administer this work Sr. Maurine returned to the United States.

In a short while both of them were invited to take on a three year commitment to accompany young girls in an orphanage in Meru, Kenya. The ministry there was of a gentler less goal-oriented nature than that in the Dominican Republic. What the girls needed were grandmothers to make institutional life less rigid and unfriendly. When the community's commitment ended, they returned to the motherhouse in Adrian.

After a few months they were more than ready to move on to another place and be open to wherever their presence would be beneficial. So, when Fr. Frank Salmon indicated the need for the presence of religious women in Fort St. James, they responded with enthusiasm.

They have just participated in the aboriginal retreat with Sr. Priscilla Salomon. Both have indicated that this was deeply enriching experience. They are very happy to begin another phase of ministry.