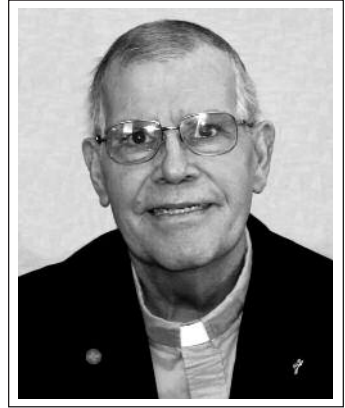# Fr. David Maher, SCJ
1941-2008

Fr. David Maher, SCJ, spent the majority of his 40 years of ordained ministry in Congo. French was more natural to him than his native English, and even Swahili was a language that he spoke with ease. Congo was very much "home" to him.

Fr. David Maher, SCJ

Fr. Dave professed his first vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1960 and was ordained in 1967. Soon after, he made his hopes known – he told Fr. Michael Noonan, SCJ, then provincial superior, that he wanted to go to the missions. Specifically, he wanted to serve in Congo.

"The provincial superior of Congo was visiting the United States when I was in the seminary," said Fr. David. "He was looking for volunteers." A classmate said that if Fr. Dave volunteered for the Congo he'd volunteer for Indonesia. And so they did and Fr. Dave ministered in Congo until December, 2007. It was then that he returned to the United States because of illness. That illness was diagnosed as Leukemia.

In talking about his assignments in Congo, Fr. Dave spoke of the the country's people and their commitment to the Church. He talked about standing room-only Masses at some locations. "The pews would be filled a half-hour before Mass, 15 minutes later all of the floor space was taken by those standing," he said. And those who arrived a few minutes before the start of Mass? "They often had to stand outside."

As difficult as it was to accept a terminal illness, equally so to Fr. Dave was accepting the fact that he would not be returning to Congo. Simply put, Congo was home for Fr. Dave.

During his 38 years in Congo Fr. Dave served at five missions, and from 1988 – 1994, he was provincial superior of the province.

A member of the Villa Maria community in Wisconsin, Fr. Dave died of a heart attack on September 19, 2008.

September 19, 2008