



Mary Mother of God Mission Society

Reviving the Catholic Church in Eastern Russia

Dear Benefactors,

February 15, 2008

Thank you and God bless you for your contribution! We and the poor that we serve are grateful to you for your sacrifices. People often ask us what it is like to live in Russia. And I always answer that it is very difficult for an American to live in Russia! So we also have to sacrifice a lot, but we know that God is pleased with that, since sacrifice is a sign of love!

Meanwhile, what is on my mind while our programs are continuing? We need rapid development in our Women's Support Centers now that the Russian government is supporting family values and wants to increase the birthrate! These are the very areas where the Church can have an influence. Both government agencies and Orthodox Church agencies are ready to work with us, knowing that we were the leaders in this pro-life, pro-family work. We are also hoping to establish a battered women's shelter. And we need to do more in the area of working with students and evangelization in general! And hopefully the Blessed Virgin will obtain for us a new stage of growth for our parish now that the interior of the church is done!

The sad news is that Fr Daniel's father, Roger Maurer Sr., died on February 4. He had been ailing for quite some time. I know Fr Dan would appreciate your prayers. Fr Dan was not able to attend the funeral which was in Florida, but he is planning to be in Michigan to say mass for his dad and bless the grave this summer during the family reunion in Michigan. He visited his dad just before Christmas. Fr Dan wrote an obituary, and I thought you'd be interested, so I've added it below.

God bless you, and thanks for all that you do for us and for the missions! I hope you enjoy Sunrise #80 which will probably come to about the same time as this letter. Happy Lenten Season!

Yours truly,

V Rev Myron Effing, C.J.D.

Roger John Maurer, Sr. May 1, 1925 – Feb 4, 2008 by Rev. Daniel Maurer. C.J.D.

Born in 1925, my dad was the oldest of 14 children of two of the most special people I have ever met, truly the salt of the earth, John and Germaine Hebert Maurer. They were a struggling farm family in central Southern Michigan during the Great Depression. Dad badly damaged his knee in a high school football accident, so he knew that he could not make his living doing heavy farm work. But coming from these humble beginnings he knew there was no way that he could afford to go to college, yet he also knew that he had great ability and drive.

Shortly after his injury the U.S. Government announced the G.I. Bill of Rights, which provided scholarship money for all surviving war veterans to receive a higher education. He was technically exempt from serving in World War II because of his injury and the importance of farm work for the war effort, but out of patriotism and the possibility of receiving a higher education, he enlisted in the Marine Corps during the war. During this time his knee was re-injured on an obstacle course in training but even that did not stop him. He was sent on combat missions in the South Pacific, mostly, he explained, flushing out straggling Japanese soldiers on Guam. On these missions he was assigned to carry a 90-pound flame thrower. He survived the war with no combat injuries, and enrolled at Michigan State College as an agricultural economics major. Working a full time factory job during all his time in college, he graduated in 2 3/4 years rather than the usual 4 years.

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In 1948 while a student at MSU he married Mom. They had met much earlier as members of the Catholic parish of St. Cyril in the village of Nashville, MI. Upon graduation he accepted a job in Hart, Michigan as the head of the local branch office of the National Farm Loan Association, which later changed its name to the Federal Land Bank Association. It was in Hart that his three sons were born in 1950 and 1951. A few years later, in 1954, Dad was transferred to St. Joseph, Michigan as the head of a bigger branch office, and the family bought a house in the neighboring town of Benton Harbor, where we were raised. It was in Benton Harbor in 1959 that they received into their home their foster daughter Carol, known as Candi.

As a farm loan officer my dad broke every company record for money lent and successfully repaid. If I remember right, the company only needed to foreclose on one of the loans he made in all his 12 years working there because he had such a good sense of how much the land could produce and how diligently the owners might try to pay back the loan. The story is told that when he would go out to a farm to appraise the need for a loan, if the wife or any kids old enough to work were still in bed past 9:00 A.M. they would get no loan from him!

Not satisfied with his career prospects in the Federal Land Bank Association, and having been introduced to the stock market by selling mutual funds part time, Dad made a risky career move in 1961 when he joined the only stock brokerage firm in southwestern Lower Michigan, Wm. C. Roney and Co. of the New York Stock Exchange, in Benton Harbor. It soon became apparent that the risk was well worthwhile. He broke every sales record in the entire history of the tri-state firm (Michigan, Indiana, Illinois). He developed his own mathematical formula for telling if a company's stock was likely to increase or decrease in value, and he used it effectively along with his friendly personality and his boundless energy until his retirement in 1995 at the age of 70. During those years he made a lot of money for a lot of people, and he always did it honestly and conscientiously. Growing up, occasionally we boys would hear bits of the stories of how he lost this or that customer (never named) because he refused to do something dishonest or illegal that the customer insisted he do. He was the best example to us of how to be an honest and responsible man.

My dad was always serious about his Catholic Faith and very respectful of the teachings of the Church and of the clergy and religious. He and Mom attended Mass every Sunday, taught us to pray, sacrificed to send us to Catholic schools, went on yearly spiritual retreats, and showed us how to put our Faith into practice, keeping the 2 Great Commandments, the 10 commandments and the 5 commandments of the Church. I always felt that Dad supported wholeheartedly my vocation to the religious life and priesthood.

Dad most loved to spend time with his family. Even though he was a successful businessman his family was by far his greatest priority. His daily work ended at 4:30 P.M. and he was always home with us by 4:42. And he loved to play games of sports (especially baseball and in later years golf) and cards (especially duplicate bridge at which he achieved the rank of life master). He taught us how to play all the sports and games he knew. (Even though I did not take to sports as well as my two brothers, these skills came in very handy later in boarding high school and afterward.) He coached our baseball teams in the neighborhood little league program. He became our Cub Scout and Boy Scout leader. He always helped us with our school homework and volunteered for many after-school activities. He was active in other community service projects that would give us a good example, such as Junior Achievement and the YMCA Uncles program for disadvantaged children.

Dad loved to go "back home to the farm" as a family to visit his parents, brothers and sisters, nephews, nieces and cousins (literally by the dozens). Some of my earliest memories are making that 2-hour drive from Benton Harbor to Nashville, which we did about once a month, I'd say. Or sometimes we would meet the family half way, in Kalamazoo for Visiting Sunday with his sisters (my aunts) in the convent. When I went away to high school seminary he and Mom always came to visit me on Visiting Sundays. When we three brothers were all students at MSU at the same time he bought season tickets to the home games every year and he and mom would visit us there and then attend the games. In everything about his family and his extended family, Dad, helped by Mom's constant cooperation, always did more than his share to get together, to invite family over to our house, to plan reunions, and to make sure that others could attend. He kept this up all his life, almost right up until the end. In late July 2007, just three months before his final illness, my brother Roger and my mom brought him by plane from Fort Lauderdale to Detroit and then drove him to the Maurer Family Reunion where over 150 of his close relatives gathered for three days. (How many people can say that they have over 150 close relatives!) He was a major initiator in holding these bi-annual, multiple-day reunions. There, surrounded by members of his family (his wife, all of his sons, all 12 of his living brothers and sisters, most of their spouses and many of their children), one could see how much he loved being with them and how much they loved being with him.

My dad had so much to give, and he was always very generous in giving it – faith, solid upbringing, love of family, enormous energy, sharp intelligence, good sense and practical knowledge in so many fields, financial success, the love of the game, neighborliness and community service. Everyone who met him liked and respected him intuitively. We are very blessed to have known him, and I am very proud to be his son.