

**Br. Roger Blondeel**

Br. Roger was born on March 24, 1932 in Tielt, Belgium, diocese of Bruges. After finishing high school at the age of 18, he immigrated to Canada and his family settled in the Chatham area. Having the intention of becoming a Capuchin Roger was delighted to hear that the Flemish Capuchins were also in Canada. He entered Novitiate on September 15, 1951 in St. Boniface, Manitoba. He would profess simple vows on September 17, 1952 at Sacred Heart Friary Manitoba and solemn vows on September 14, 1955 at Capuchin College Washington, D.C. U.S.A. Before ordination he received a Teacher's Certification in the Province of Manitoba and for a short time taught at St. Francis Seminary, Blenheim, Ontario. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 7, 1963 at St. Philip Neri Church by Bishop Philip E. Pocock, Coadjutor Archbishop of Toronto.

Br. Roger's ministry would take him to different small parishes both in Ontario and Manitoba. Roger was extremely gifted in languages, speaking fluently in English, French and Flemish and understanding German and Spanish. In August of 1967, he was given an obedience to live for a year with the Venetian Capuchins in Padua, Italy to learn the language and traditions and customs of the country. He was then appointed as associated pastor at St. Philip Neri to minister to the Italian immigrants. Roger suffered bouts of anxieties and dealt with it by spending time in his room with paint and palate in hand. He had a great love for pets, cats, dogs and even a monkey.

All this and being a chain smoker of cigarettes made it impossible for anyone to move in his room after he left for another ministry, without first a complete cleaning, redecorating and repainting of the room. Roger also enjoyed and taught karate and he would enjoy telling far-fetch stories to shock and amuse others. His final appointment was in 1991 as Pastor of Our Lady of the Angels Parish in Amaranth, Manitoba and the Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Sandy Bay a native Indian reserve.

He was then transferred to St. Philip Neri Parish in Toronto because of poor health. After a brief encounter with cancer, Sister Death came to call Roger to his eternal rest on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1997. His funeral Mass was on Monday August 25<sup>th</sup> 1997 at St. Philip Neri Parish and then again at St. Mary's Church, Blenheim on Tuesday August 26<sup>th</sup> 1997. Internment took place in the Capuchin part of Evergreen Cemetery in Blenheim On.

