

July 07

Br. Sophronius Ruisendaal

He was born in Bussum, Holland on February 8th 1912, eldest of eight and named Johannes. His family was very religious saying the rosary daily and faithful in attending Mass. Already while still in grade school he started working as a toy maker. After three years he went to a glass company and then painted houses. He entered the Capuchin Franciscans on January 23rd 1932 and made his perpetual profession January 16th 1937. He recalled that the Superior who invested him said these words: "Johannes Henricus Ruisendaal, from now on you are dead to the world. Your name is Br. Sophronius."

In Holland he did a variety of work as dishwasher, painter, caretaker, painter and cook in Langeweg, Udenhout, Nijmegen, Enschede, Helmond and Tilburg from 1937 to 1949. He came to Canada on August 6th 1949. Brother "Sophie" served in Manitoba in St. Boniface and Toutes Aides and in Ontario at Blenheim, Erieau, Princeton, Orangeville and Toronto. Again his ministry was varied, cook, caretaker, painter, and even as fisherman and farmer in Toutes Aides. He was also a Eucharistic Minister and Photographer Archivist for the Canadian province and over the years he became an accomplished photographer immortalizing every birthday event of the friars. He was a dedicated member of the Knights of Columbus and attended countless State and Squires Conventions taking innumerable photographs. The walls of his room were covered with plaques and awards given to him by various Councils and Circles. He enjoyed singing loudly and the Cursillo program he attended had him singing in Spanish with a Dutch accent.

His long life is best remembered by his brothers as being a life of prayer and fidelity. He loved to be part of what was happening with the friars and faithfully attended chapters, retreats and workshops. After a failed hip surgery Br. was forced to get around with two canes or by scooter. One time while wishing to photograph a St. Anthony procession, he lost control of his scooter and ended up going into the glass door of St. Philip Neri parish. He was often seen with two cameras around his neck. From Manitoba in the west, to Newfoundland in the east which he visited, and of course Holland, his homeland, he would get in touch with God through the people he met and the beauty of nature.



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He was the first for prayer in the chapel or church, He could often be seen sitting in his wheelchair in chapel silently praying the rosary for his fellow friars and the people he knew in need of prayer. His was a call to respect life, from the stages of the unborn to that of his dying days. As a Capuchin brother his humility and pride served his vocation well, even after 67 years in the vowed life.

He died on July 7th 2000. Mass was held at St. Philip Neri Church, Toronto on Monday July 10th 2000 at 10 a.m. and then St Mary's Church, Blenheim on Monday at 3:30 p.m. The 4th Degree Grand Knights stood sword in hand at attention while his brothers carried him to Evergreen Cemetery, Blenheim, Ontario where he is buried surrounded by many of his Capuchin brothers.

