

## FATHER CHRYSANTHUS O.F.M. Cap.

1 September 1905 - 4 May 1972



It is our sad duty to have to record the recent death of Father Chrysanthus. At the age of 66, Father Chrysanthus died at his "home", the monastery of the Capuchin Order at Oosterhout, Netherlands. He had been ill for several months and had undergone an operation, which unfortunately did not eliminate the cause of his illness. Most of his colleagues remained unaware of what he had to go through. With his modest and self-effacing personality he persevered in the task he had set himself, up to the very end. His gentle manner and quiet politeness, which made him such an attentive listener, will be greatly missed by all.

Born in 1905 at Mill, in the province of Noord-Brabant, he was sent to the minor seminary of his order and was ordained in 1924, after having finished

his studies in philosophy and theology at the major seminary. For forty years he served his order by teaching biology at the minor seminary. The moment of retirement was nearing quickly, and he was full of plans for the long days ahead, when he could devote all his time to spiders.

His career as an arachnologist began as a scientific lecturer to the general public, both through the spoken and the written word. It revealed his remarkable capabilities as a teacher. His main interests at that time were the faunistic research of the Netherlands and behaviour of spiders in general. He did not shrink from specific problems, and demonstrated, for instance, that *Meta mengei* Blackwall and *Meta segmentata* (Clerck) were different species and not varieties.

In 1957 he shifted his attention to the spider-fauna of New Guinea. A large collection of spiders from that region came into his possession, sent to him by a colleague and priest who lived as a missionary in Merauke and Mindiptana, both in West New Guinea. The study of such a relatively unknown fauna posed many problems, due to inadequate descriptions, lost original material and possible synonymies. He devoted his attention to all these problems, visiting important museums (Frankfurt, Genoa, London and Paris) in order to attain his goal. His first series of publications on the *Spiders from South New Guinea* (1958-1968) contains descriptions and illustrations of all species met with, common and rare. The result is an important contribution to the fauna of the Oriental region, covering all families occurring there.

When the larger museums became aware of his progress, they were eager to offer him their own New Guinea collections which often, through lack of specialists, had remained untouched for considerable periods. A new series of *Further notes on the spiders of New Guinea* was well underway.

His list of publications (soon to be published in *Entomologische Berichten*, a journal of the Dutch Entomological Society of which he was a member) consists of a hundred papers. They clearly show the evolutionary trend in his work, from general topics to specialised taxonomic subjects. That this series was interrupted so suddenly must be regretted deeply.

P.J.v.H.