



FATHER PAUL CSIK, S.D.B.

December, 1970

Dear Confreres,

Father Paul Csik went to his reward on June 20th. That morning he concelebrated as usual at the community Mass, he worked on the grounds until lunch time and ate a hearty and cordial meal. At 1:00 P.M. he told one of the workers to go for another load of gravel: "I'll see you at 2:00 P.M." he told him. A few minutes later, one of the visitors at the Shrine came rushing in: "Father Csik fell behind the outdoor altar; please hurry." We found Father Csik's body lying on the grass, but his beautiful soul had already flown to her Creator. Father had died as he had lived, working happily for Jesus and Mary. His doctor, a very personal friend, had warned him several times: "unless you slow down, your heart may play a dirty trick on you." A few days before he was warned about high blood pressure. Father Csik, however, felt that it was his duty to continue to work: "This must be done and I can do it." Always cheerful, usually humming, he devoted ten to twelve hours every day to manual work.

Father Paul Csik was born in Hungary. After high school and two years of law school, he was drafted into the Austrian-Hungarian Army to fight in World War I, serving in the ski-troops. The war over, he came to the United States, volunteered his services to the C Y O of New York and came to the Salesians in 1925. Two years later he took his vows. Father Csik was ordained in New York on September 24, 1932.

In 1933 the Archbishop of Louisiana entrusted to the Salesians an institution of boys at Hope Haven. Many of these boys, coming from broken families, were rather difficult to handle. However, they found in Father Csik a kind friend an understanding father, a capable educator. His unfailing smile, his sense of fair play usually won over even the most difficult boys. Father Csik spent many years at Marrero, first as Prefect and then as Director. He always referred to those years as the best of his life.

In 1967 Father Csik was sent as Prefect to the Marian Shrine, in West Haverstraw. There he was an example of work and prayer to the very last moment of his life. No job was too menial for Father Csik, because the priestliness that breathed from him gave it a new dignity. His confreres knew him as a man of humble prayer and generous, unquestioning service. In him we see the ideal Salesian as described to us by Don Bosco: "He loved humility, hard work and temperance." (M. B. Vol. XVII, p. 301)

One of his cherished dreams was the erection of a Lourdes Grotto. A few days before his death he again expressed this desire: "When are we going to build the grotto?" With his help from heaven we hope to be able to build the grotto in the near future as a memorial to our good Father Csik.

Father Csik and Brother Di Bella, a Salesian Brother who died on the same day as the good Father, were honored at a funeral Mass at the Shrine concelebrated by Bishop Peter Carretto, Salesian Missionary of Thailand, and sixty other priests. Father Patrick Corcoran gave the homily. The double burial was held that afternoon in the burial grounds at the Salesian Junior Seminary, Goshen, N. Y., in the presence of Father Provincial, all the members of the Provincial Chapter and many relatives and friends.

Father Csik is with us no more, but his memory shall live with us for many years. We miss his cheerful presence, his constant smile, his pleasant humming and his hard work, but we do feel that from heaven he shall continue to work with us and help us to follow his example.

May the good Lord send us many other confreres of the stamina of our good Father Csik.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Father Joseph M. Stella
Director

Data for necrology: **Father Paul Csik**, born in Nyiders (Egar), Hungary on February 3, 1898, died in West Haverstraw, New York, on June 20, 1970 at 72 years of age for 44 of profession and 38 of priesthood.