



Thornleigh Salesian College,  
Sharples Park,  
Bolton, BL1 6PQ.

November, 1976.

My dear Confreres,

It is my sad duty to announce to you the sudden death of

**FATHER GERARD CROSSLEY S.D.B.**

which occurred at Morecambe, Lancashire, on the morning of the 29th October, 1976. A few days previously he had gone to Morecambe for a few days rest. On the Friday morning he was awake about 8 a.m., but about a quarter of an hour later he was found apparently dead in his bed. The local parish priest was immediately called and the last sacraments administered. On arrival at the hospital Father Crossley was declared dead from a heart attack.

Father Crossley was born in Heywood, Lancashire, on the 7th March, 1916, and when he was thirteen in 1929 he went to Thornleigh Salesian College. Two years later he went to the aspirantate at Shrigley. From there in 1933 he went to Cowley to make his novitiate, and was professed there in 1934. He continued at Cowley as a student of philosophy and at the same time helped to edit the 'Help of Christians' magazine. In 1936 he began his triennium at Shrigley where he taught and continued to edit the 'Help of Christians' magazine. In 1939 he went to the Crocetta to do his theological studies, but the war intervened and he returned to England in 1940 and completed his studies at Blaisdon. He was ordained at Womersley, Surrey, on the 18th September, 1943. For two years subsequent to ordination he was stationed at Battersea as manager of the Salesian Press and Editor of the 'Help of Christians' magazine. In 1945 he was sent to his alma mater, Thornleigh Salesian College and he stayed there till his death thirty one years later. During that time he was a devoted and inspiring teacher till increasingly poor health especially after a heart attack reduced his activities very considerably. He suffered much pain in the last years of his life, and this was something of a trial to him because it prevented him doing work he loved and did so well.

Father Crossley was a dedicated priest and an eloquent preacher and writer. He was a man of many talents being deeply versed in English Literature and Natural History and possessed of a remarkable general knowledge; his was an enquiring mind. All this he used to the advantage of others, especially his pupils. He was sympathetic to the modern world and understood the needs of people especially the young in whom, like a true Salesian, he was genuinely interested. This explains, at least in part, his gift for friendship; one warmed to him very quickly. He will be missed by the many friends he made both inside and outside the Salesian Society.

After his death on the 29th October, his body was brought to the Thornleigh College chapel for the dirge on Tuesday the 2nd November, and many confreres and friends were present. For the Requiem and Committal the following day some 40 priests, Salesian and diocesan, concelebrated with the Father Higgins, the Provincial. Father Crossley's aged mother was present together with many relatives and friends. The large congregation was evident proof of the affection and esteem in which he was held. After the Mass Father Crossley was buried in the Salesian plot in Wardley cemetery, and again many came to pay their last respects.

May God our Father through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians quickly grant him the reward of those who die in the Lord, and let us who are his brothers in the Salesian Society remember him at the altar. Please remember also in your prayers this Salesian House, its community and boys.

Yours fraternally in Jesus Christ,

Rudolph Perla, S.D.B. (Rector)

**For the Necrology.** Father Gerard Crossley, S.D.B., born Heywood, Lancashire, 7th March, 1916. Died in Morecambe, Lancashire, 29th October, 1976, aged 60 years, in the 42nd year of his religious profession and the 33rd year of his priesthood.