



Born December 22, 1912 in Vencselló, Fr. Damian Stephen Szödényi graduated from the Cistercian school in Budapest, Hungary in 1931. He entered the Abbey of Zirc the same year. Fr. Damian went to the Royal University of Budapest where he received a Ph.D. in Hungarian Literature. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1938 and taught in the Budapest Cistercian school from 1939 to 1947. For a short time during WWII (1941-42) Fr. Damian served as military chaplain.

In the fall of 1947, as the Communist take-over became imminent, Fr. Damian left Hungary and came to the United States. After a brief stay in the monastery in Spring Bank he completed post-graduate studies in History and Psychology and taught in various high schools and universities. He was one of the first to come to Dallas in 1954, where he was active in different parishes and schools. In 1956 he was among the founding faculty members of the University of Dallas. Two years later, in 1958, as one of the first monks in the Cistercian monastery Our Lady of Dallas, Fr. Damian was chosen as sub-prior, a position he served for 10 years.

He became the first Headmaster when the Cistercian Preparatory School opened in the fall of 1962. After seven years in that capacity, Fr. Damian began a long career as an art teacher and artist, continuing to create sculptures and paintings of religious art for three decades. Fr. Damian developed a special figurative style through which both a profound experience of the sacred and a deeply felt humanistic vision of life found unique expression.

On December 13, 1998 he had a stroke, which led to his peaceful death on December 26th.

FR. DAMIEN

- 1912-1998
- Born: Dec. 22 1912
- Entered Zirc in 1931
- Ordained: 1938
- Moved to Dallas: 1954
- Died: Dec. 26, 1998

