



Born on March 31, 1911 in Tápiószele, Hungary as Joseph Fehér, he entered the monastery of Zirc at the age of 20. He took his first vows on August 30, 1932. Fr. Thomas was ordained to the priesthood in 1938. The same year he received his teaching credentials, specializing in history and geography from the Royal University of Budapest. He began his teaching career in 1938 at the Cistercian school of Pécs, then transferred to Székesfehérvár (where he taught from 1940-48).

When the persecution of the church by the Communist regime began, Fr. Thomas was one of the early targets. On drummed-up charges of "anti-democratic propaganda" he was arrested, tried and sentenced for three months. Upon his release from prison, at the advice of his abbot, he left Hungary in 1948 and asked for asylum in Austria. He arrived in the United States in '49 and joined the Cistercian community of Spring Bank in Wisconsin.

In 1954 he came to Texas and taught in various Catholic Schools in Ft. Worth and Dallas. As the monastery opened in 1958, Fr. Thomas was the first novice master. From 1962 until his retirement due to ill health in 1976, he taught geography in the Cistercian Preparatory School. He served as chaplain for the Hungarian Catholics of the Metroplex.

His deep faith and authentic spiritual life gave wonderful example to all who knew him. On Feb. 5, 1980, while recovering from surgery for an aneurism, Fr. Thomas suffered a heart attack and passed away.

FR. THOMAS

- 1911-1980
- Born: March 31, 1911
- Entered Zirc in 1931
- Ordained: 1938
- Moved to Texas: 1954
- Died: Feb. 5, 1980