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Sixtus Debreczeni

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Sixtus Debreczeni (* 10 Oct 1917 – † 21 Feb 1954)

1. Name variants: Imre, Emery (birth name)

2. Places: Székesfehérvár, Zirc, Paris, Bologna, Előszállás, Nagykarácsony, Eger

3. Biography: Shortly after graduating from the Cistercian school in Székesfehérvár, S. entered the Abbey of Zirc. As a monk, he studied abroad, earning a doctorate in romance languages at the Sorbonne and University of Bologna. After his ordination in 1942, S. served first as an assistant pastor in the village of Előszállás, then as pastor in Nagykarácsony. There, for his open criticism of the government, he was systematically slandered by local officials and severely beaten by a gang after Sunday mass in 1947 (the affair recieved brief attention in parliament in Budapest). In 1948, Abbot Wendel Endrédy reassigned him to the Cistercian parish in Eger. The parish spiritually flourished under him and numerous lay organizations took root. In Nov 1951, the local government prohibited him from functioning as a priest or from leaving the city. He moved to a barely heated chamber and began to work as a gardener. He continued to help the poor and elderly, offered language tutoring, and provided private catechesis. He was soon placed under surveillance and recieved multiple threats. Twice in late autumn of 1953, drivers in vans tried unsuccessfully to run him down on the street. On 21 Feb 1954, he was hit and killed by a car belonging to the secret police. The judge ruled it an accident.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: He was buried in the crypt of Cistercian church of Székesfehérvár.

b. Liturgical commemoration: –

c. Patronage: Venerated in Zirc and Eger and by alumni of Hungarian Cistercian schools.

d. Attributes: Eyeglasses, the habit of Zirc.

5. Fontes: His letters and sermons are in the abbey archives of Zirc. Additional documents are in the state archives of the secret police and probably the diocesan archives of Székesfehérvár and Eger.

6. Literature: Several articles exist in Hungarian, especially in the periodical Egri Fehér / Fekete (magazine of alumni of Cistercian Secondary School of Eger).

7. Illustrations: Photos available in the abbey archives of Zirc.

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