

# OUR THOUSAND YEAR-OLD PAST

THE PRISON SERVICE IN SERVICE OF JUSTICE



## Reliquary of St. Adrian

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(on the cover)

For the memory of martyrdom of St. Adrian: the silver box adorned as a sarcophagus was made for the earthly remains of the Roman soldier. On the shorter side of the reliquary, the Christian confession of Adrian, on the other short side, the flight of his wife, Natalia, with the hand of Adrian is depicted. The long sides depict the torture of St. Adrian and his fellow martyrs and the later death of the saint.

The Latin text found at the bottom:

MARTIRIS EXIMINI SACRUM  
QUI MARTIR FACTUS SPREVIT EUM  
[JA]CET HIC ADRIAN

EXCEPTIONAL HOLY MARTYRS  
ARE THOSE WHO DEPRIVED THE MARTYR  
OF HIS LIFE, HERE LIES ADRIAN

**OUR THOUSAND YEAR-OLD PAST  
THE PRISON SERVICE IN SERVICE OF JUSTICE**

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# OUR THOUSAND YEAR-OLD PAST

## THE PRISON SERVICE IN SERVICE OF JUSTICE



*Major General Dr. Tamás Tóth,  
Director General of the Hungarian  
Prison Service*

Our publication conjures up the highlights of Hungarian prison service history by presenting its written, built and other tangible sources. By presenting some highpoints related to the research of St. Adrian – the patron saint of the prison service – we point to the necessity of the continuity of the prison service and its capabilities of renewal as well as the fulfilment of social demands.

The Hungarian Prison Service puts great emphasis on the preservation of intellectual heritage and artefacts of legislation and application of law with a significant role since our king St. Stephen, the transfer of our traditions and the strengthening of organizational identity and culture.

In this publication we recall the past, introduce the present and the selection of elements and symbols of the future. In view of this renewal did the Hungarian Prison Service choose its motto and created its new look and design.

This short introduction will not and cannot strive for the presentation of the history, area of expertise, thousand year old challenges and successes of the prison service. Our publication wishes to salute the performance of our ancestors and point to our current tasks.

Thank you for your interest in the role of the Hungarian Prison Service which has stood in service of justice for a thousand years.





*The Triptych of  
St. Adrian*



## THE MARTYRDOM AND VENERATION OF ST. ADRIAN

Act XLIII of 1996 on the service of uniformed professionals of law enforcement agencies declares that the day of the Prison Service is the 8th of September, the feast day of St. Adrian.

St. Adrian was an army officer in Nicomedia under Emperor Galerius (293-311) and his co-regent, Maximianus (286-305). As a head officer of Emperor Maximianus, St. Adrian converted during the persecution of Christians and was martyred for his faith. In Hungary, the first records connected to St. Adrian are dated around 850, when the Slavic Prince Pribina has built a basilica dedicated to him in Mosaburg (later: Zalavár). In Hungary St. Adrian is venerated as one of the earliest saints to have a church dedicated to them.

Historical sources prove that St. Adrian, born in Anatolia has served under the rule of Emperor Maximianus in Nicomedia. In the 3rd-4th century A.D. Christians were persecuted with prison sentences and cruel tortures for their faith. The prison guards who felt empathy with their prisoners and ultimately shared their faith were incarcerated as well.

Seeing the perseverance of St. Adrian and his fellow inmates the emperor became so furious that he had an anvil brought in on which the foot of tortured Christians were crushed and their leg severed. St. Adrian had his own hand cut off as well, thus demonstrating the power of his faith.

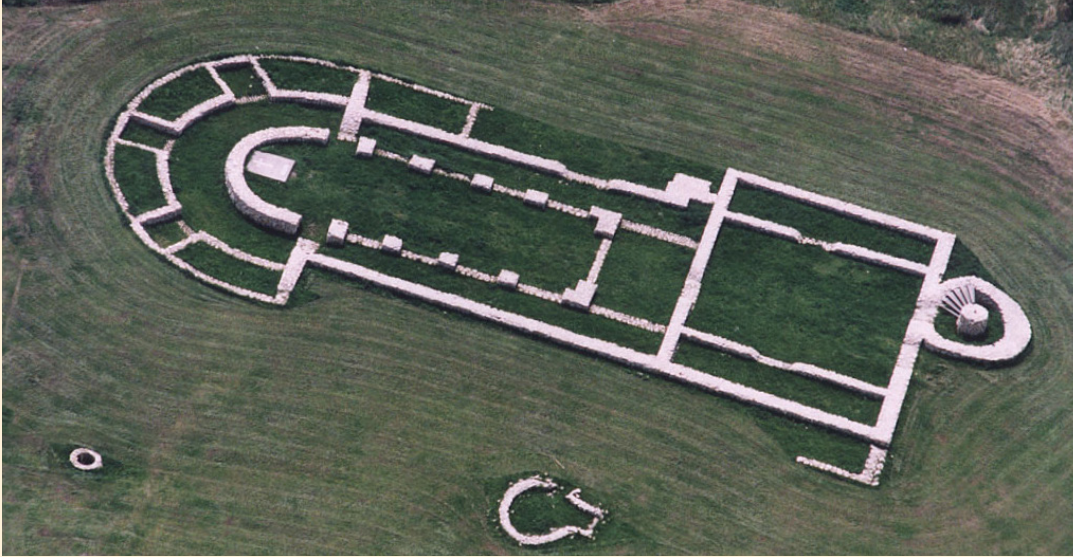


*The Depiction of the  
Martyrdom of St. Adrian  
(1482)*

According to the order of the emperor, the bodies of the martyred had to be burned at the stake, but a miracle happened and the fire has gone out in the rain. Natalia, the wife of Adrian has fled with the concealed right arm of the saint. The relic was later transported to Constantinople and after that to Rome by the Christians.

Comparing the results of archaeological and archival research it can be established that the veneration of St. Adrian in Hungary formed in the 9th century. The Slavic Prince Pribina has started to built his power centre in Zalavár, he created an administrative and religious centre, called Mosaburg in Latin. The most significant site of veneration was Zalavár (Mosaburg), where they started to build a basilica in 850 which was consecrated by the Archbishop of Salzburg. According to research, the church was destroyed in the 10th century, but a new one was raised in 1019 nearby using the stones of the old one. King St. Stephen strengthened the Christian religion in his decrees and has ordered the building of churches. The religious centre of Zala again became Zalavár, thus the new church inherited the name and patronage of St. Adrian. During the Ottoman danger – like so many other structures similar to this – was converted into a fortress. The fortress successfully repelled the Ottoman attacks but Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I ordered it destroyed in 1702. The ruins and remains of the building are now covered in forest and the archaeological exploration of the area could enrich our historical knowledge with new information and artefacts.





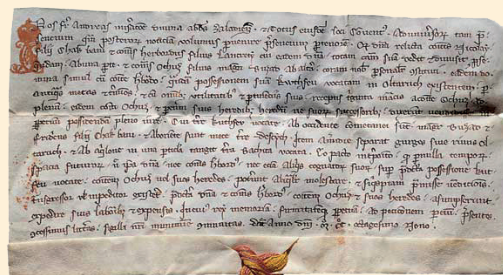
## The Ruins of St. Adrian Basilica

The base of the Caroling-age, ambulatory, ring crypt basilica was laid down in the 850s. In the 870s we already have written sources about a consecrated church. The church was 50 metre long and 25 metre wide. Around the sanctuary ran a semi-circular subterranean corridor that could be accessed from the side-naves and from which three chapels opened.



## The Zalavár Historical Memorial Park

In the nearby Zalavár Historical Memorial Park the excavated base of the St. Adrian Basilica can be seen. The ruins of the monastery and the fortress built later were excavated in between 1999 and 2001.



## The Charter of the Zalavár Convent with Seal

We must value the uniqueness and historical significance of the St. Adrian depiction on the seal of the document created in the middle of the 13th century in light of the fact that due to the Tartar conquest a great number of ecclesiastical historical documents have perished.



## Wax Seal Depicting St. Adrian

In the middle of the 45 mm natural-coloured wax seal is St. Adrian, the patron saint of the Zala Abbey. The standing soldier wearing a knee-long tunic holds a spear in his raised hand and a shield in his left. The inscription around the central figure depicting St. Adrian is the following:

S(AN)C(TV)S AD(RI)AN(VS)

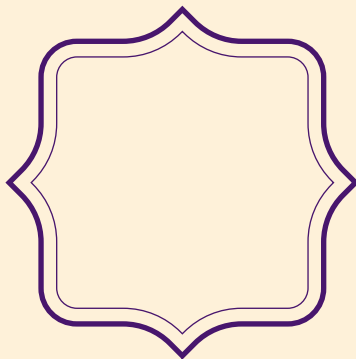
the circular inscription between the rows of pearls:

+ S(I)GILLVM) CONVENTVS S(ANCTI)  
ADRIANI DE ZALA

+ Charter of the ZALA CONVENT – with a –  
ST. ADRIAN-SEAL

## Statue of St. Adrian

St. Adrian is depicted as a military officer, a young warrior in Roman uniform and armour. The employees of the Hungarian Prison Service pay their respects at the icon of self-sacrifice, loyalty and service every year on the 8th of September.







*The Building of the  
Veszprém Castle Jail*

## IN THE NAME OF THE LAW, WITH THE FORCE OF THE LAW

The penal justice system has available written sources dating back to the founding of the Hungarian state, since the prison service exists since the existence of legislation. Already St. Stephen enshrined in law that whoever breaks his decrees should be incarcerated. King St. Ladislaus uses a more concrete language, as the words jail and prison can be found in his laws (incarcerem).

According to written sources we may talk about incarceration since the 11th century. In the Middle-Ages, the prison cells of castles and fortresses were used as jailhouses. Due to legislation passed in later ages, the need for the building and maintenance of such institutions grew.

In the 15th-16th centuries the punishment “permanent prison” is already known and used. A sentence like this was passed to the noblemen and priests participating in the Dózsa peasant revolt. King Sigismund and Vladislaus used the punishment on perjurers and forgers and priests active in places of authentication.

It was yet commonplace in the 16th-17th centuries that the municipalities designated the fortresses and castles in their jurisdiction as prisons. The usage of these buildings as such continued until the 19th century, one point of interest might be that the Veszprém Jail (Veszprém County Remand Prison) operated in the Veszprém Castle until 2003.





The inner design and functional units of the building of the Veszprém Castle Prison, showing robust strength, is in conformity with the original form of the building of the castle. The interior was used as a prison while keeping the original architectural forms.

The first penitentiary institution in Hungary was built on the private initiative of Count Ferenc Esterházy, the head chancellor of Queen Maria Theresa, who financially supported the construction himself. The Szempc Jail was opened on 4 September, 1772 and it operated as a prison, work house and juvenile institution.

In the penitentiary situation in Hungary the real change only began at the beginning of the 19th century. In the Reform Era those Hungarian jurists who created and reformed the legislation that would become the basis of the penitentiary legal framework were inspired by responsible thinking and the will to act for the destiny and future of the nation.

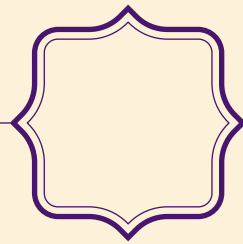
An outstanding figure of the prison reforms was Ferenc Deák, to whom the suggested piece of European-level penitentiary legislation, created between 1841-1843 can be linked. The suggested legislation was based on getting to know the English, German and French prison systems, and politicians like Bertalan Szemere and József Eötvös participated in the legislative debate. The proposed piece of penitentiary legislation was passed by both houses of the parliament but was rejected by the king.



*The Spiral Staircase of the Veszprém Castle Jail that was in use for centuries*



*Ferenc Deák*



## STRONGER THAN ROCK, MORE LASTING THAN IRON

The Csemegi Penal Code introduced with Act V of 1878 which was the first Hungarian law containing comprehensive penal legislation that determined the Hungarian penal law mentality for decades.

The Csemegi Penal Code opened a new chapter in Hungarian penal justice, paved new ways after which new decisions and new tasks were determined for the new prison system applied to the new penal sanctions.

In parallel with passing legislation, a national development of historic proportions happened regarding the construction of prisons. Today we may get to know buildings, architectural styles creating functional coherence when examining old prison and justice buildings.

The best architects, designers, sculptors and artists took part in designing the buildings, delivering outstanding performance in Hungarian architecture.



*Károly Csemegi*

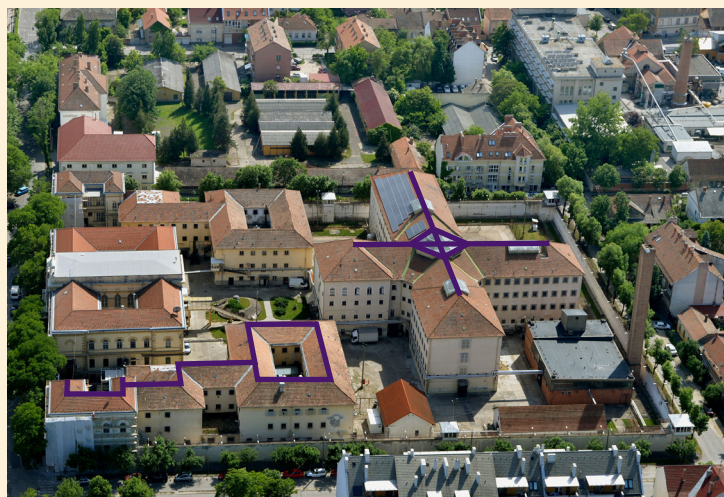




*Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison*

When designing and creating new type of buildings, apart from separating functional units, expectations were raised for the new edifices to be monumental and fitting with regard to the architectural style of cities and city centres.

In the history of the prison service, this architectural heritage, the heritage of Gyula Wagner, Sándor Aigner, Ferenc Jablonszky, István Kiss is deserving of care and attention the same way as the intellectual heritage of our legislators.



*The Buildings of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison, which include the characteristic shape of the star and the stylised key*

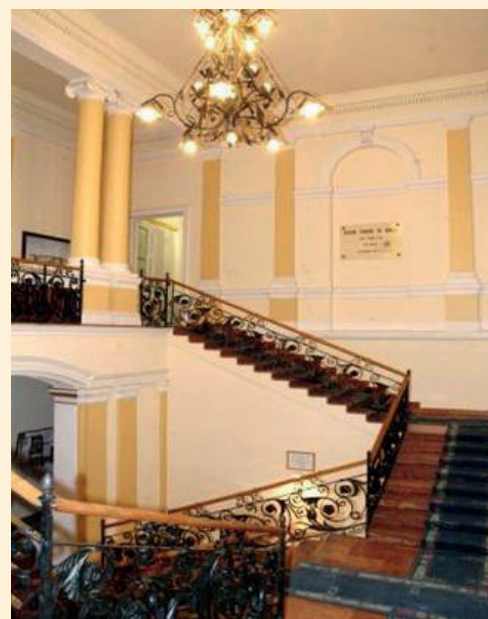
Regarding the design of the county and city justice buildings – like the main building of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison – special attention was paid to the architectural design and its representativeness, apart from the needs of those, who commissioned the building.

Among the requirements was the decorated front gate and that the buildings had to be at least three-storey high.

The entry halls of the buildings were huge and could be arrived at through the main gate. To the hall belonged a main staircase, with double side-stairs. An imposing example of this is the staircase of the main building of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison designed by Gyula Wagner.



*The Building of the Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison*



*The Staircase of the Main Building of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison*





## The Chapel of the Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison

The prison-building program started in Hungary in the 1850s, during the 30–35 years of which not only new prisons were built, but spaces for religious use were created in penitentiary institutions as well.

In Vác, during the prison-building program a Neo-Gothic prison chapel was built, in which Zopf style elements can be discovered as well. Ten stairs led up to the altar, bells rang in the belfry of the church and an organ provided church music.

The sanctuary is polygonal, the two side-naves ornamented wooden gallery and iron railings are to be found. On the remaining frescoes painted angels are depicted and a through-vaulted crypt is situated under the chapel.

## Balassagyarmat Strict and Medium Regime Prison

The Balassagyarmat Strict and Medium Regime Prison was built between 1842 and 1845. The prison is a classicist style historic building that is situated in the U-shaped yard of the former county house and forms a unified architectural composition with it.

According to original plans, apart from the 168 prison cells that open from the ring corridors, two workrooms and a chapel was also built. The chapel of the Balassagyarmat Strict and Medium Regime Prison was consecrated in the 1850s.





The building of the oldest Hungarian penitentiary institution still in use was built by King Louis the Great as the monastery of the Hungarian-founded Pauline Order. The church belonging to the prison was consecrated in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mother.

The building of the empty monastery was rented to the state for 40 years in 1858 and the government made it into the State and National Female Prison. The building today is still in the service of the Hungarian Prison Service.



*The buildings of Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison contains a monastery as well, built in the 14th century*



## DEVICTUS VINCIT, WINNING BY BEING CONQUERED

The penitentiary institutions became memorial sites of national remembrance, and made such by the sacrifices of heroes, confessors and martyrs of the 20th century. Their names and deeds are preserved by history.

The history of the modern era and recent past belongs to the thousand-year-old past of the prison service with the preservation of history-changing events and persons in memory. This ambition is considered to be a responsibility by many penal institutions and so in many places in the country memorial sites were formed which is a worthy form of remembrance.

## The Memorial Room of Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty in the Sopronkőhida Strict and Medium Regime Prison

Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty and his fellow priests were arrested in 1945 and transported to the Sopronkőhida Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

In memory of his imprisonment and the life work of the cardinal the Joseph Mindszenty Memorial Room was created in the Sopronkőhida Strict and Medium Regime Prison, which was furnished with contemporary furniture and equipment.





*The Memorial Plaque of the Prisoner of War Camp on the Wall of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison*

In the name of national will and reconciliation as a noble gesture of the present a memorial plaque was placed on the wall of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison.

The memorial plaque entitled POW Camp and POW Fate is a memento of the years 1944–45. It stands in remembrance of those 3000 civilians and soldiers in the POW camp of the Red Army who were never able to leave the camp.



*Memorial Plaque of the Tököl Pride Point*

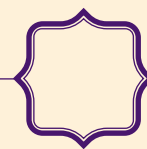
The Tököl National Prison remembered the events of 1956 with the creation of a “Pride Point”. The memorial exhibition presenting the heroes informs visitors of the countrywide and local events of the revolution and the internment camp created during the retaliation. The Pride Point, equipped with modern museum-pedagogical equipment is a favoured visiting place of nearby high school and university students and researchers.



*Prison Museum, Sátoraljaújhely Strict  
and Medium Regime Prison*

The Hungarian Prison Service pays special attention to the presentation of Europe-wide unique professional historical collections, raising awareness and taking care of law enforcement culture.

The Sátoraljaújhely Prison Museum serves and expands the national knowledge-base by digitalizing documents that can be found in its unique collection, thus presenting the historical and professional development of the prison service, serving professional connections and engagement.







# Büntetés- Végrehajtás

Az igazság védelmében

The new face of the organization represents the renewing and the devotion to tradition and value of the Hungarian Prison Service.

The central figure of the new coat of arms showing force is a lion with an extended paw.

The main characteristics of the lion demonstrating strength and power is bravery, force and self-esteem.

With his left paw resting on the shield serving the defence of society, the right paw on the law code represents the defence of justice and lawfulness.

The key refers to incarceration and the symbols together to the prison service.

The shield as a clandestine symbol refers to the legislative act of King Andrew II, the Golden Bull, on the seal of which the oldest depiction of this type can be found.

The Golden Bull is the royal edict with a golden hanging seal that was decreed on the 24th of April, 1222 at Székesfehérvár by our King Andrew II of the Turul Dynasty. With this he established for centuries to come the privileges and rights of the Hungarian nobility.

After the genesis of the historical Hungarian constitution, it defined legislation as a fundamental principle in centuries to come. Apart from this, it decreed articles regarding

the application of law and the cases of crime, punishment and consequences. King Andrew II decrees in Section 2 of Article V of the Golden Bull that “The royal judges are to pass sentence on stealers and thieves, but in the presence of the count [ispán] of the county.”

The goose feather and law code appearing on the new coat of arms refers to the institution of law and the science of penal law and its stability. The key refers to incarceration thus the place and method of the punishment.

The year 1878, beyond penal law represents the scientific approach to the prison service. It also remembers Act V of 1878, our first penal code.

A new element in the design is the English-language caption, which refers to our participation in professional and scientific endeavours in the case of international duties and complying with international expectations.

## Source of Pictures:

1. **Reliquary of St. Adrian** León, Spain, first half of the 12th century, Chicago, Art Institute Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham, Endowment, 1943.65
2. **The Triptych of St. Adrian** The triptych was ordered by a monk of the Sint-Janshospitaal in Bruges, Adriaan Reins. On the left wing of the triptych, behind the kneeling donor stands his patron saint, St. Adrian. Bruges, Sint-Janshospitaal, Memlingmuseum, inv. o.sj177.1
3. **The Depiction of Martyrdom of St. Adrian (1482)**  
[http://jelesnapok.oszk.hu/prod/unnep/szent\\_adorjan\\_es\\_tarsai](http://jelesnapok.oszk.hu/prod/unnep/szent_adorjan_es_tarsai) (Downloaded: 17 July 2017)
4. **The Ruins of the St. Adrian Basilica**  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Zalav%C3%A1r\\_-\\_Convent.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Zalav%C3%A1r_-_Convent.jpg)
5. **The Historical Memorial Park of Zalavár**  
<http://www.muemlekem.hu/images/thumbs/magazin/20100819zalavar/011-700x.jpg>
6. **The Charter of the Zalavár Convent with Seal**  
<https://paradisum.osb.hu/katalog/kat211.html> (Downloaded: 30 August 2017)
7. **Wax Seal Depicting St. Adrian**  
<https://paradisum.osb.hu/katalog/kat211.html> (Downloaded: 30 August 2017)
8. **Statue of St. Adrian**  
[https://www.kozterkep.hu/~25340/Szent\\_Adorjan\\_szobra\\_Zalavar\\_1999.html](https://www.kozterkep.hu/~25340/Szent_Adorjan_szobra_Zalavar_1999.html) (Downloaded: 17 July 2017)
9. **The Building of the Veszprém Castle Prison in 2003** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
10. **The Spiral Staircase of the Veszprém Castle Jail that was in use for centuries** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
11. **Ferenc Deák**  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/81/De%C3%A1k\\_Ferenc\\_1867.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/81/De%C3%A1k_Ferenc_1867.jpg)
12. **Károly Csemegi**  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Csemegi\\_K%C3%A1roly\\_Erd%C3%A9lyi.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b2/Csemegi_K%C3%A1roly_Erd%C3%A9lyi.jpg)
13. **Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison**, (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
14. **The Buildings of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison, which include the characteristic shape of the star and the stylised key**, Sándor H. Szabó, MTI
15. **The Staircase of the Main Building of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison**, Sándor H. Szabó, MTI
16. **The Building of the Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
17. **The Chapel of the Vác Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
18. **Balassagyarmat Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
19. **The buildings of Márianosztra Strict and Medium Regime Prison contains a monastery as well, built in the 14th century** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
20. **The Memorial Room of Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty in the Sopronkőhida Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
21. **The Memorial Plaque of the POW Camp on the Wall of the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
22. **Memorial Plaque of the Tököl Pride Point** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
23. **Prison Museum, Sátoraljaújhely Strict and Medium Regime Prison** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)
24. **The St. Adrian Decoration founded and awarded by the Minister of the Interior** (Photo of the Hungarian Prison Service)



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## **Stronger than rock, more lasting than iron**

Our publication wishes to commemorate those who have bravely stood their ground at their time and place. Their oaths last a lifetime, as the oaths of their glorious forerunners who, during our thousand-year-old history have stood without compromise in service of the fatherland and justice. The Hungarian Prison Service lives by values like unconditional loyalty, comradery, perseverance and self-sacrificing service.



*The St. Adrian Decoration founded and awarded by  
the Minister of the Interior*