

CHAPTER I -For Greater Things

In mid-August 1567, as Vienna awakens to a new day, a remarkable young nobleman named Stanislaus Kostka makes his way through the city's western gate, destined for Augsburg. At nearly seventeen, with an appearance that marries nobility to a lively spirit, Stanislaus embarks on a striking journey—dressed in finery but feasting on humble bread, carrying his possessions like a commoner, despite his noble Polish lineage. This paradox captures the essence of his trip: a blend of earthly splendor and divine simplicity.

Stanislaus, dressed extravagantly due to his noble heritage, contrasts his luxurious attire with an intent to don a simpler outfit post-Vienna, reflecting his disdain for material opulence. His gait and demeanor, fueled not by earthly ambitions but by a profound love for God, set him apart as a unique pilgrim amidst the adventurers of his era. Unlike others whose pursuits of glory, rank, or wealth define their journeys, Stanislaus's voyage is a spiritual quest, prompted by a call he believes is divine—to join the Jesuit order, against his father's wishes.

After attending Mass and renouncing his wealth to beggars, he leaves Vienna with nothing but his faith and determination. This leap of faith, devoid of material support, illustrates his unwavering trust in divine providence. The narrative follows Stanislaus's confident first steps away from the city, shedding his noble attire for a pilgrim's robe, a symbolic transformation emblematic of his internal shift from worldly grandeur to spiritual humility.

As Stanislaus makes his way, his interactions with the people he encounters—whether offering his fine garments to a peasant or relying on the kindness of strangers for sustenance—highlight a journey underscored by faith, kindness, and an unshakeable joy derived from his spiritual mission. His first day ends at an inn, where his noble air

earns him lodging despite his proclaimed poverty, further testament to the persuasive power of his character and purpose.

Stanislaus Kostka's trek is more than a physical journey; it's a narrative of faith, sacrifice, and the pursuit of a calling that transcends conventional understanding. In a world captivated by earthly achievements, Stanislaus's story is a beacon of divine aspiration, marking him not just as an adventurer, but as a spiritual hero embarking on a quest for greater things beyond the grasp of worldly acclaim.

