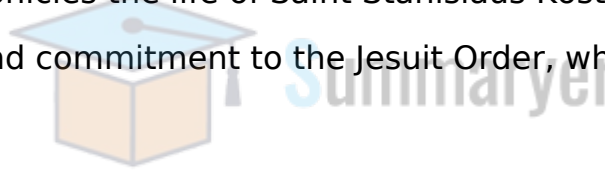


# For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus

For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus by Father Michael G. Koran is a biography that chronicles the life of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, highlighting his deep faith, devotion to God, and commitment to the Jesuit Order, which led to his sainthood at a young age.



## PREFACE

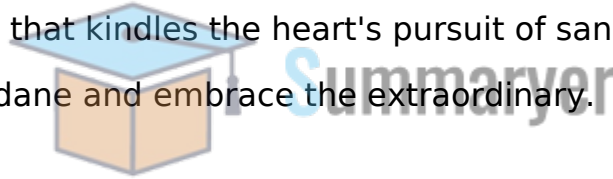
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William T. Kane's preface to "FOR GREATER THINGS: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka" embarks on the defense and illustration of the extraordinary virtues and sanctity found within the youthful adherents of the Catholic faith, presenting Saint Stanislaus Kostka as a paramount model. It delves into the notable triumph and mastery over human frailties—such as weakness and pride—achieved by young individuals within the Catholic Church, a distinction deemed remarkably rare and immensely challenging. The narrative questions how, amidst a backdrop of skepticism and worldly cynicism, the youth, particularly those like Stanislaus, can exhibit profound spiritual valiance and wisdom that surpasses the philosophical and moral endeavors of many esteemed adults.

Kane enlightens the reader on the often supernatural clarity surrounding the lives of saints like Stanislaus, emphasizing that their youthful purity, firm will, and prioritization of spiritual over material values pose questions that defy purely naturalistic explanations. He highlights the miraculous manner in which these young individuals attain a profound understanding of life's ultimate purpose, a

comprehension deeply rooted in divine grace rather than mere natural development.

The author acknowledges potential criticism regarding his lively portrayal of sanctity, arguing instead that the vibrant, energetic essence of saints reflects their perpetual youthfulness and enduring alignment with the generous and unfettered nature of childhood. Kane posits that saints, through their boundless love for God, venture into life's trials with a spirit of heroic adventure, transforming the arduous path to holiness into a captivating journey marked by divine romance. The love of God, he asserts, is the critical element that kindles the heart's pursuit of sanctity, enabling saints to transcend the mundane and embrace the extraordinary.



The preface sets a tone of inspiration and admiration for the profound spiritual life led by Saint Stanislaus Kostka, underlining the significant role of divine love in the attainment of holiness. It beckons the reader, especially the youthful, to envision sanctity not as an unreachable ideal but as a vivid, spirited adventure achievable through genuine love and faith in God.

# CHAPTER I -For Greater Things

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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.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER II -For Greater Things

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In Vienna, a sense of unease enveloped Stanislaus Kostka's brother, Paul, and their tutor, Bilinski, when Stanislaus failed to return home. Having resided in the city for three years under the guardianship of Bilinski, Stanislaus's sudden absence on that day sparked concern. Their afternoon inquiries among friends and acquaintances bore no fruit, leading them to suspect that Stanislaus had fled, a suspicion born from their intimate knowledge of his character and recent conversations hinting at his desire to escape.

Their fears centered around Augsburg, motivated by Stanislaus's uttered intentions and his admiration for Peter Canisius, the Provincial of the German Jesuits residing there. Determined to retrieve him, Paul, Bilinski, and Senator Kimberker, their host and a Lutheran confidant, planned an immediate pursuit but were forced to delay until dawn due to the nightfall. With a servant and a swift carriage, they ventured towards Augsburg, pressing their coachman to hasten their journey. Upon reaching an inn where Stanislaus had briefly stayed, their queries met with strategic silence from a cautious landlord, offering them no leads.

Despite the setback, the pursuit continued until a potential sighting of Stanislaus redirected their efforts. A boy in humble attire caught their attention, briefly stirring their hopes, but the carriage sped on, the figure dismissed as a peasant. Yet, Paul's intuition suggested otherwise, leading to a fervent but futile attempt to investigate the lane the boy had taken. Unnaturally resisting horses and an overwhelming sense of dread convinced them of a divine intervention, ceasing their chase and turning back to Vienna.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to his pursuers, Stanislaus navigated away from the road via a stream, evading capture with resilient determination. His journey, marked by the generosity of strangers and unwavering faith, continued toward Augsburg, reflecting

his heroic spirit motivated by divine love. His venture encapsulates not just a flight from familial constraints but a profound commitment to his spiritual calling, a testament to his enduring legacy as a figure of faith and dedication.



## CHAPTER III -For Greater Things

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In Chapter III of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," the narrative follows the aftermath of Stanislaus Kostka's escape to join the Society of Jesus, highlighting the distress it caused his family and their fear of Lord John Kostka's wrath. Bilinski and Paul Kostka, deeply troubled, discover a letter from Stanislaus explaining his need to follow God's call, which they forward to his father, along with reassurances from others involved in the unsuccessful pursuit. Lord John's furious reaction includes blaming the Jesuits and vowing to drag Stanislaus back in chains, reflecting his deep love for his son and the honor of his house. Despite his noble status and high hopes for Stanislaus, Lord John is heartbroken over his son's choice.

The chapter delves into Stanislaus's early life, emphasizing his inherent dedication to God, even in a hostile environment. Despite the usual inclinations and temptations faced by young men, Stanislaus is portrayed as a steadfast fighter against sin, demonstrating courage and purity even among the rough men of his time. His resistance to vile speech and commitment to purity are highlighted as acts of significant effort and dedication to God, challenging the notion that saints live lives of effortless virtue. Stanislaus's early piety and struggle against temptation underscore his remarkable spiritual strength and deep faith.

Through Stanislaus's story, the chapter invites readers to recognize the profound challenges and choices that define sanctity, urging a reevaluation of what it means to live a holy life. It portrays sanctity not as a path of ease but as a journey of continuous effort, resilience, and unwavering faith in God's will.

## CHAPTER IV -For Greater Things

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In Chapter IV of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," the narrative follows the journey of Stanislaus and his brother Paul as they embark on an adventure to continue their education in Vienna. Their father, the Lord John Kostka, arranges for a young tutor, John Bilinski, to accompany them, providing servants and good horses for the six hundred miles or more trek on horseback. The brothers' journey is characterized by their interaction with the natural world and the people they meet along the way.

Stanislaus, nearly fourteen, and his brother, approaching fifteen, relish the challenge and beauty of their journey across diverse landscapes. They ride through open fields, mountain torrents, across great rivers, and alongside the foothills of the Carpathian mountains, spending nights under the stars. The boys' travel reflects the era's mode of transportation, where the wealthy rode horses and the poor traveled on foot across Europe's great highways and more remote paths.

Encounters with various people en route highlight Stanislaus's compassionate and noble character. His interactions with peasants and travelers showcase his humility and desire for spiritual connection. Stanislaus often dismounts to let weary travelers ride his horse, engaging in conversations that reveal his longing for heaven and eternal values beyond earthly wealth and stature.

Stanislaus's kindness leaves a lasting impression on those he meets, whether it is tar burners, frontiersmen, or peasants. Through acts of generosity and his discussions about heavenly aspirations, Stanislaus appears as a figure of light and inspiration, touching lives with notions of divine aspiration and equality in the eyes of God.

As the brothers progress towards Vienna, their journey symbolizes not merely a physical transition but an exploration of spiritual and social ideals. Stanislaus's actions



and words demonstrate an understanding of life's greater purpose, showing his early recognition of his calling and the impact of faith and charity on those around him.



## CHAPTER V -For Greater Things

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In "FOR GREATER THINGS: The story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," Chapter V titled "SCHOOL DAYS" presents an engaging dive into Stanislaus Kostka's early education in Vienna, a city thriving with culture and increasingly influenced by the Jesuits' educational endeavors. Vienna, a staunchly Catholic city, was on the cusp of religious reform, making it a vibrant epicenter for diverse theological thoughts. The narrative unfolds in the mid-16th century, highlighting the establishment of a Jesuit college that Stanislaus joins. The Jesuit Fathers, known for their pioneering educational methods, provided an intimate learning environment, blending academics with spiritual growth and physical activities, reflecting the societal norms and expectations of nobility during that era.

The college emphasized a holistic curriculum, comprising languages, mathematics, and the limited science of the period, with Latin serving as the lingua franca, embodying the era's educational and social nexus. Despite the nascent presence of Greek studies, the Jesuits' pedagogical approach was less about rigor in every available subject and more about forming well-rounded individuals. The narrative also captures the time's physical activities, such as swordplay and archery, mirroring the martial aspirations of the nobility.

Stanislaus, the protagonist, is portrayed as a paragon of academic and athletic prowess, yet it is his character that sets him apart. His popularity amongst peers was not merely due to his achievements but stemmed from his profound character, marked by piety, unselfishness, and an innate ability to love and inspire. His leadership in the college's sodality, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, underscores his spiritual maturity and eloquence, making him a source of wisdom and inspiration for his fellow students. Stanislaus' discourse on pious matters, devoid of timidity or affectation, reveals his deep integration of faith into his daily life, making the sacred an approachable and

integral aspect of his being. Through this narrative, the chapter encapsulates the essence of Jesuit education that seeks not just to educate but to form individuals who embody excellence, faith, and service, as exemplified by Stanislaus Kostka's early life at the Viennese college.



## CHAPTER VI -For Greater Things

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In Chapter VI of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," the narrative shifts to Vienna, where the young Polish nobles, Paul and Stanislaus, encounter significant changes. Following the death of Emperor Ferdinand I, their Jesuit-run boarding school is closed due to the new Emperor Maximilian II reclaiming the building. Faced with the need to find new lodging while continuing their education as day scholars, they, under the guidance of their tutor Bilinski, settle in the spacious residence of Senator Kimberker, a Lutheran, located in the fashionable Platz Kiemark.

The mansion, despite its grandeur and the generous accommodation offered by Kimberker, brings unfamiliar challenges for Stanislaus. Notably, his spiritual and lifestyle differences soon clash with the more worldly pleasures favored by Paul and Bilinski. The house under Kimberker becomes a lively hub for gatherings, often marked by drinking and gambling, environments from which Stanislaus withdraws. This withdrawal is not from disdain but from a mismatch of values; while he remains polite and uncomplaining, his solitude grows.

Yet, Stanislaus's isolation becomes a fertile ground for deep spiritual growth. Unlike his brother and Bilinski, whose focus on entertainment grows in the absence of parental oversight, Stanislaus turns inward. His loneliness, rather than becoming a source of despair, leads him to seek companionship in the divine. He converts the mansion's empty spaces into places of prayer, where he communicates with God and the saints with the openness and sincerity of a return after a long absence.

Through these personal trials and the transformation of physical solitude into spiritual companionship, Stanislaus's character shines. His resilience, cheerfulness, and devoutness amidst the hedonistic lifestyle around him underscore his sanctity. The chapter highlights the stark differences in coping mechanisms among the youths far from home: while Paul and Bilinski immerse in temporal joys, Stanislaus finds solace

and strength in his unwavering faith, turning the mansion into a sanctuary of quiet devotion and reflection.



## CHAPTER VII -For Greater Things

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In Chapter VII of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," titled "The Test of Courage," the narrative delves into the trials faced by Stanislaus due to the relentless bullying from his brother Paul and their guardian Bilinski. Paul, unable to comprehend Stanislaus' genuine piety and dedication to his faith, interprets his brother's refusal to partake in their boisterous activities as a personal rebuke. This misunderstanding fuels Paul's resentment, leading him to physically and verbally harass Stanislaus, often encouraged by Bilinski and bolstered by their cousins' support.

Paul's critique centers on Stanislaus not fitting the mold of a nobleman, accusing him of acting more like a peasant due to his devout practices. Despite the escalating confrontations, including physical violence that Paul justifies as retribution for Stanislaus' supposed provocations, Stanislaus maintains his composure, adhering to a path he believes is right without resorting to retaliation. His resilience is rooted in a deep-seated faith and a desire to embody Christ-like forgiveness, even when facing aggression from his own brother.

Stanislaus' choice not to defend himself physically, despite being capable, highlights his profound commitment to his convictions and his desire to avoid sin. His approach to suffering—with a view toward eternity, a consciousness of his own temper, and a wish to align his sufferings with those endured by Christ for humanity's sake—illustrates a profound spiritual maturity.

The chapter showcases Stanislaus's strength not in physical retaliation but in unwavering peace and goodwill towards those who wrong him. His ability to endure, coupled with a refusal to vilify or seek retribution against his aggressors, is presented as a testament to true courage. This narrative not only exemplifies the virtues of

patience and forgiveness but also underlines the young saint's remarkable capacity to see beyond temporal strife, aspiring to please God regardless of earthly tribulations.

Stanislaus' story within this chapter serves as an emblem of enduring faith and resilience, marking his journey as one distinguished by an internal courage that transcends the need for external vindication. Through persistent kindness and a heart forgiving enough to offer his brother help immediately after being mistreated, he lays down a powerful marker for what it means to live a life of piety and steadfastness amid adversity.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER VIII -For Greater Things

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Chapter VIII of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka" recounts the severe illness that struck Stanislaus towards the end of his two-year period of isolation and suffering at the hands of his family and tutors. At sixteen, after enduring constant emotional and physical strain with remarkable patience and faith, his health inevitably succumbed to fever in November 1566. Despite his deteriorating condition, Stanislaus maintained his faith and devotion, especially as the feast of Saint Barbara approached—a saint associated with a happy death and the grace of receiving Holy Viaticum.

As his sickness worsened through December, despite the care from physicians and his family's sudden kindness, Stanislaus remained spiritually resolute, confronting even a terrifying vision of a demonic dog with the power of his faith. His health continued to decline, with his body giving way under the strain of the fever and the extraordinary spiritual experience of fighting off a demonic apparition, leaving him profoundly weakened.

Amid his suffering, Stanislaus's request for Holy Communion—to prepare his soul for what he believed was his impending death—was repeatedly denied, primarily due to the anti-Catholic sentiment of their Lutheran landlord and the fear of retribution. Yet, Stanislaus's unwavering faith and his prayers to Saint Barbara bore miraculous fruit. Amidst his family's refusal, he was visited by a celestial vision of two angels and Saint Barbara herself bringing him the Eucharist, facilitating a sacred communion that defied human limitations and their landlord's prohibitions.

This chapter not only captures Stanislaus's enduring faith amid profound suffering but also highlights his miraculous experiences, which solidify his sanctity in the narrative. His spiritual encounters, especially receiving the Eucharist and the visitations from the Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus, underline the profound religious ecstasy and divine



favor that marks the lives of saints. In these moments, Stanislaus's faith transforms his suffering into a deep, ecstatic joy—a testament to his sanctity and the powerful intercessions that shaped his path toward sainthood.



## CHAPTER IX -For Greater Things

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In Chapter IX, "Vocation," of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," Stanislaus Kostka feels assured in his call to join the Society of Jesus following a miraculous vision and cure attributed to the Virgin Mary. Determined to follow her directive, Stanislaus consults with Father Doni, a Jesuit priest, about joining the order. Aware of potential hurdles, especially needing his father's consent or reaching the age of independence, Stanislaus faces resistance when he seeks approval from the Jesuit Provincial, Father Laurence Maggi. Despite Stanislaus' faith in divine intervention, Father Maggi remains prudent, citing recent troubles from enlisting novices without parental permission and emphasizing the importance of either acquiring his father's consent or waiting until legal adulthood.

Undeterred, Stanislaus devises another plan to gain admittance into the Jesuit order without waiting for years or confronting his father, who he knows would oppose his decision. He turns to Cardinal Commendoni, the Pope's legate in Vienna with whom he had previously established a rapport. Stanislaus hopes that, given the Cardinal's position and their friendship, Commendoni could influence Father Maggi. Although the Cardinal sympathizes with Stanislaus' fervor and recognizes the validity of his vocation over familial objections, his intervention does not sway the Provincial. With the Cardinal also dissuaded by the Provincial's caution against admitting Stanislaus without his father's permission, the situation appears to be at a dead end.

However, Stanislaus' unique courage—fueled by a deep fear of wasting a divine calling—prevents him from succumbing to despair over these setbacks. Despite facing significant obstacles and disappointments, including the resistance of his own family and the wary Jesuit leadership, Stanislaus' resolve to pursue his religious vocation only strengthens. His story showcases a profound faith in his spiritual journey and an unshakable belief that divine will would eventually clear the path to his entering the

Jesuit order, regardless of the daunting challenges ahead.



## CHAPTER X -For Greater Things

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In Chapter X titled "THE RUNAWAY" of "FOR GREATER THINGS: The story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," Stanislaus Kostka decides to run away from his hostile living situation, particularly the abuse from his brother Paul. Unlike his previous reactions to Paul's mistreatment—where Stanislaus would internally manage his anger—this time, he chooses a path that would liberate him from further abuse. He prepares for his departure by purchasing a peasant's tunic and rough shoes suitable for a long journey.

Paul's temper flares again over something trivial Stanislaus does, leading Paul to attempt to physically assault him. However, Stanislaus, with a newfound resolve, firmly defends himself and informs Paul that he will no longer tolerate his brutality and is planning to leave in search of peace. This unexpected resistance frightens Paul, who is taken aback by Stanislaus's strong and determined demeanor. Despite Paul's blustering and swearing, Stanislaus remains unmoved and declares his intention to leave, advising Paul to explain the situation to their father.

After the confrontation, Stanislaus feels a sense of relief and focuses on his journey ahead to Augsburg. He spends his last night at home praying and resting. Before dawn, he dresses in his finest clothes and leaves a letter for Paul and his father, entrusting it to a servant named Pacifici, whom he wakes to inform of his departure. He instructs Pacifici on what to say if anyone asks about his whereabouts. Stanislaus then leaves his home and heads to the Jesuit church, where he participates in Mass and receives Holy Communion, marking the beginning of his escape and the next chapter of his life. This decision and act of defiance mark a pivotal moment in Stanislaus's life, representing his commitment to pursuing a life of faith and service away from the abuse and conflict within his family.

## CHAPTER XI-For Greater Things

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Arriving in Augsburg on the brink of exhaustion after a four-hundred-mile journey, young Stanislaus Kostka's spirits plummeted upon learning that Father Canisius was not in town. Initially crushed, Stanislaus's resilience quickly surfaced. He was determined to find Canisius, who had moved to Dillingen, some thirty-five miles away. Despite offers from the Jesuits to rest, Stanislaus opted to continue his quest immediately, his resolve unfazed by the prospect of further travel.

Accompanied by a lay-brother on the road to Dillingen, Stanislaus faced the journey with a light heart and unfaltering faith. That night, he slept in a field, embracing the simplicity of his circumstances. The following day, his pursuit of Holy Communion led him to a little village church. Mistakenly entering a Lutheran church, Stanislaus prayed earnestly, soon experiencing a miraculous vision where angels brought him the Blessed Sacrament, fulfilling his spiritual longing in an unexpected way.

Stanislaus reached Dillingen, meeting Peter Canisius, a stalwart defender against heresy, who was intrigued by the young pilgrim's piety and zeal. Canisius, wary of the challenges that lay ahead for such a spirited and youthful aspirant to the Jesuit order, decided to observe him further before making any commitments. He suggested Stanislaus stay at the college, not as a student, but as a servant, a proposal to which Stanislaus agreed without hesitation.

Canisius's introduction of Stanislaus to the college's kitchen staff marked the beginning of a new phase in his journey. Far from disheartened by starting in a humble role, Stanislaus displayed cheerfulness and eagerness to serve—a testament to his dedication to his faith and his desire to join the Jesuit order. The scene in the kitchen encapsulated the essence of his spiritual quest: a blend of humility, service, and the perseverance that characterized his path to Dillingen.

## CHAPTER XII-For Greater Things

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In Chapter XII of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka," the narrative progresses as Canisius, recognizing Stanislaus Kostka's humble disposition and dedication, decides that for Stanislaus to evade further disturbances from his family, it would be best for him to journey to Rome and join the Novitiate there. He is promised a letter of introduction to Father General Francis Borgia and is to travel with two company members already bound for Rome. To prepare, Stanislaus is fitted with decent clothing by the college tailor, replacing his worn tunic—undertaking the journey with a sense of belonging and purpose, a contrast to his previously perilous travels.

Starting around September 20th, they travel by foot, traversing through Bavaria, crossing the Tyrolese Alps, and entering the plains of Northern Italy, finally reaching Rome on October 25th. The journey is detailed with vivid descriptions of the changing landscapes—from the towering, snowy Alps to the fertile plains of Italy—and Stanislaus's interactions with his environment and fellow travelers. Unlike his first solitary and strenuous trek, this journey is marked by companionship, spiritual communion, and anticipation, making the long distances and difficult terrains more bearable and even enjoyable at times.

Upon arriving in Rome, their reception by Francis Borgia is warm, and Stanislaus's aspirations are swiftly realized when he is officially accepted into the Novitiate. His journey to Rome not only concludes a physical transition from his homeland but also symbolizes his spiritual journey towards a devout commitment to the Society of Jesus. The chapter encapsulates his transition into a life dedicated to his faith, marked by the start of his noviceship and his integration into the community that includes notable figures such as Claude Acquaviva, adding a layer of significance to his arrival and the company he would keep during his noviceship.

This phase of Stanislaus's journey is reflective of his growth, not just in geographic terms but in his spiritual and personal development, as he moves closer to his calling, surrounded by companions and guides who appreciate and recognize his virtues and potential, setting the stage for his contributions to the Society of Jesus and the impact his legacy would have on the faith and beyond.



## CHAPTER XIII-For Greater Things

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Most people envision saints as individuals who performed visibly great deeds, similar to Saint Paul or Saint Teresa. However, sanctity is not only about monumental acts but the manner in which ordinary tasks are undertaken, embodying a distinct spiritual integrity. This principle is exemplified in the noviceship of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, a seventeen-year-old Polish novice in the Professed House in Rome during 1567. His daily routine encapsulated the essence of a humble, God-centered life, filled with menial tasks like carrying wood for the kitchen, washing dishes, and serving at tables, along with spiritual practices including meditation, Mass, Holy Communion, and spiritual reading.

Stanislaus's noviceship was a period characterized by early morning rises, rigorous spiritual exercises, and diligent work under the guidance of a cook or during religious instructions. Despite the seemingly ordinary nature of his daily activities, what set Stanislaus apart was his perfect adherence to discipline and his extraordinary commitment to every task as a service to God. This commitment was demonstrated vividly when he obeyed the cook's direction to carry only a few pieces of wood at a time, seeing this instruction as a divine command.

The life of a novice, expected to last two years before taking vows and beginning the arduous journey of Jesuit studies, was designed to be a trial of faith and endurance. Stanislaus's personal conduct—marked by absolute obedience, full engagement in prayer, and a humble acceptance of menial work—reflected his saintliness. He distinguished himself not through grandiose actions but through the perfection with which he approached every aspect of his daily routine and his unwavering focus on pleasing God.

His devotion and humility were further exemplified in his interactions with others, including Cardinal Commendoni, whom he greeted with the utmost simplicity and



disregard for his own appearance. Stanislaus's life in the noviceship underscores the profound truth that closeness to God, achieved through faithful fulfillment of one's daily duties and spiritual exercises, brings a deep, unshakeable peace that transcends worldly judgment and challenges. In essence, the noviceship chapter reveals that sanctity lies not in the scale of one's actions but in their orientation toward God and the perfection with which they are carried out.



## CHAPTER XIV-For Greater Things

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Chapter XIV of "For Greater Things: The Story of Saint Stanislaus Kostka" titled "Going Home" captures the final moments of Stanislaus Kostka as he nears the end of his life. In this chapter, Stanislaus, a novice for nine months, experiences profound moments that foreshadow his imminent passing. During a visit from Peter Canisius to the noviciate at Sant' Andrea, Stanislaus makes a startling prediction after Canisius' sermon, claiming the month of August would be his last on Earth—a statement that initially goes unnoticed due to Stanislaus' apparent robust health.

The narrative follows Stanislaus through significant religious experiences and personal revelations, highlighting his deep connection to his faith and the divine. His anticipation of joining the feast of the Assumption in heaven is poignantly illustrated in conversations with Father Emmanuel de Sa and through his actions, such as writing a heartfelt letter to the Virgin Mary, which he carries during Communion.

Despite his physical health showing no signs of ailment initially, Stanislaus' spiritual conviction about his forthcoming death grows stronger. He starts preparing for his end with calm and deliberate steps, engaging in acts of penance and devotional practices dedicated to Saint Lawrence, his patron for the month. As his premonition becomes reality, and Stanislaus falls ill quite suddenly, he welcomes his fate with peace and assurance, eager for his "home-going."

Stanislaus' final days are spent in reflection, prayer, and moments of farewell, surrounded by fellow novices and religious figures like Claude Acquaviva and Father Fazio. His death is portrayed as a serene transition, marked by rituals of faith and expressions of community. The chapter closes with Stanislaus' death on the night of August 14, surrounded by the prayers and care of his fellow novices and mentors, capturing his departure from this world as a return to his heavenly home, fulfilling his own prophetic words and demonstrating his unwavering faith.

## CHAPTER XV -For Greater Things

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After Stanislaus Kostka passed away just weeks shy of his 18th birthday, his death catalyzed a surprising wave of reverence, transforming the relatively unknown youth into a figure of widespread veneration in Rome and eventually, across Poland. Despite not having performed any public roles or writings during his life, his sanctity was immediately recognized upon his death, drawing large crowds who treated him as a saint. The General of the Society of Jesus, Francis Borgia, notably ordered Stanislaus's body to be placed in a coffin—an uncommon honor at the time—and buried beside the high altar in their church.

Back in Poland, Stanislaus's father, Lord John Kostka, remained obstinately opposed to his son's spiritual convictions, having even dispatched his eldest son, Paul, to forcibly retrieve Stanislaus from Rome. However, upon arriving in Rome, Paul learned of Stanislaus's death and was deeply moved and transformed by his visit to his brother's tomb. This pivotal event led to a remarkable shift not only in Paul but also in the Kostka family dynamic; the narrative of Stanislaus's piety and the circumstances surrounding his death inspired a newfound reverence towards him within his family and beyond.

Subsequent to Stanislaus's death, biographies and processes towards his beatification rapidly spread the devotion to him throughout Poland. His beatification by Pope Clement VIII in 1604, and later, his canonization in 1726, solidified his legacy as a saint. The impact of Stanislaus's life and death resonated deeply not only within his immediate family—with notable transformations in his brother Paul's life leading him to dedicated service and piety—but also across Poland as a whole, where miracles and victories were attributed to his intercession.

The concluding reflections on Stanislaus's life underscore the challenge of encapsulating the essence of a person who, though young and living a relatively quiet

life, embodied a profound and celestial sanctity. His devotion to God and the spiritual legacy he left behind make him a compelling figure of faith, whose story transcends the ordinary to touch upon the divine. The narrative of Stanislaus Kostka exemplifies how the life of a single, devoted individual can resonate and inspire across generations, manifesting in acts of charity, piety, and national reverence.

