

CHAPTER VIII -For Greater Things

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.

