**St. Stanislaus Kostka**

**Novice religious**

**(taken from http://www.sjweb.info/)**

Even though he was a Jesuit for less than a year when he died, Stanislaus Kostka (Stanislaw Kostka, 1550-1568) is known for his youthful holiness and iron determination to follow God's call despite family obstacles. He was a Polish noble by birth (his father being castellan of Zakroczym and a senator of the realm) and was destined for public life. In 1564 his parents sent Stanislaus and his older brother Paul to study at the newly opened Jesuit college in Vienna. Initially the two young nobles boarded in the Jesuit residence at the college, but moved to the house of Senator Kimberker after seven months. Kimberker was a staunch Lutheran who would not allow a priest to enter his home with the Blessed Eucharist. That became an issue when Stanislaus unexpectedly fell ill with an undiagnosed sickness in mid-December 1565. Stanislaus kept asking for Viaticum, but his brother put him off. Stanislaus prayed to the patron of the sodality to which he belonged, St. Barbara, to intercede with God so he could receive Viaticum before he died. He had a mystical experience of Mary visiting him and placing the Christ Child in Stanislaus' arms, which he interpreted as meaning that he was to enter the Society of Jesus.

After this extraordinary experience, the young nobleman recovered and then approached the Jesuit provincial in Vienna to ask entrance into the Society. The provincial was favorable but said that he could not accept Stanislaus without his parents' approval, which Stanislaus knew they would not give. The determined student talked to another Jesuit who suggested he go to Augsburg, Germany to ask the provincial there, Father Peter Canisius, to accept him. Stanislaus decided to follow the suggestion and slipped out of Vienna on the morning of Aug. 10, 1567. He left behind his fine clothes and donned coarse pilgrim's robes, which hid him from his angry brother who had followed him on the road but did not recognize him dressed so poorly.

Stanislaus trudged 450 miles to Augusburg and then another day to Dillingen where Fr. Canisius had gone. He explained his desire and offered a letter of introduction from a Jesuit in Vienna. Canisius recognized his sincerity and spiritual qualities and decided to accept him. He also arranged for him to accompany two young Jesuits about to travel to Rome which was further from Poland than Germany, far enough to prevent the family from stopping Stanislaus. Kostka and the two Jesuits left Germany in late September and arrived in Rome on Oct. 25, making their way to the residence of the superior general, Father Francis Borgia.

Stanislaus gave Canisius' letter of recommendation to Borgia, who had the young man remain at the Gesú for three months before going briefly to the Roman College and then to the novitiate of Sant'Andrea. Stanislaus's novitiate would only last 10 months. In early August 1568 he had a premonition he would soon die. He became sick with a fever. Since he did not seem to be gravely ill, the brother infirmarian discounted his premonition. On Aug. 14 Stanislaus told the infirmarian he would die the next day but the remark was not taken seriously. Later that afternoon he took a turn for the worse and lost all strength. He received viaticum and prayed with the novices and other Jesuits who were with him. About three in the morning of the feast of our Lady's Assumption on August 15, he announced that Mary was approaching with angels to take him to heaven and soon died.