

Stannies Family

VINCENTIAN VOICE

Stanislaus Kostka SJ (28 October 1550 – 15 August 1568) was a Polish novice of the Society of Jesus. He was born at Rostkowo, Przasnysz County, Poland and entered the Society of Jesus in Rome on his seventeenth birthday. Bathurst-based iconographer, Mary Clancy was commissioned by the College to paint his portrait which now sits alongside our Icon of St Vincent de Paul at the College entrance. Mary tells us about her work and arts practice.

About St Stanislaus

St Stanislaus Kostka was not quite 18 when he died in 1568, the same age as many students completing the HSC. Stanislaus was the second son of a Polish Baron. From an early age he was quite religious, unlike his older brother who was more worldly.

The two boys were sent to study at the new Jesuit College in Vienna, Austria where Stanislaus was a very popular and capable student. For a while they boarded at the school, but when the boarding section was closed, the boys and their tutor took private lodgings. These were chosen by the older brother to be suitable for the sons of a baron, but their landlord was a strict Lutheran. This became a problem when Stanislaus became very sick, but the landlord would not allow a priest to come to bring him communion. This was a great trial for the devout Stanislaus.

We are told that he had a number of visions in this time. In one, St Barbara appeared with two angels, bringing the Eucharist to him. In another, Our Lady told him that she wanted him to join the society that bore her son's name. Stanislaus recovered and returned to school. He approached the superior there and asked that he be allowed to join the Jesuits. However, the superior knew that Stanislaus' father would not give his permission and he was not prepared to upset such powerful a man. So, Stanislaus decided to go to a different province.

Without letting his brother or tutor know, he packed a satchel and walked the 550 kilometers from Vienna to Dillingen (an der Donau) in Germany. The provincial of that time, Saint Peter Canisius, put the young aspirant's vocation to the test by employing him in the boarding school for a month. Saint Peter Canisius then wrote of him "I expect great things of him". He finally arrived in Rome at the end of October 1567, just after his seventeenth birthday. He started his novitiate a few days later. His health was not good and he died on the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1568.

About the Icon

An icon is meant to represent the glorified image of the saint and represent some of the heroic virtues or life events on which we can meditate and pray.

The gold halo and surround on an icon represent that heavenly plain. Here St Stanislaus is shown in his Jesuit habit, proudly showing the badge of the Society. He is shown

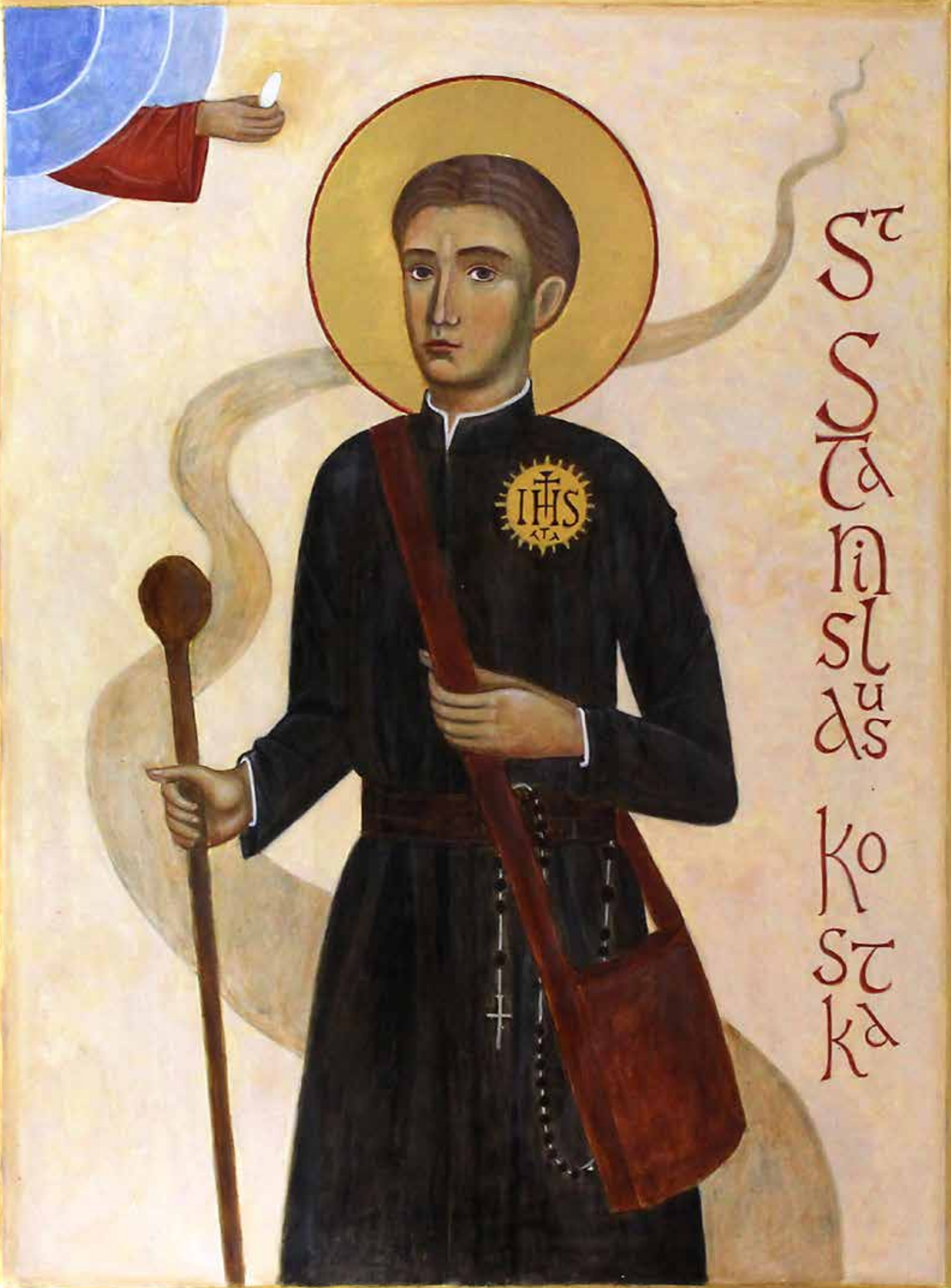
as a young man, who would fit in with any Year 12 group of students.

There is a road on which he has been walking. This represents both the real journey he walked when going from Vienna to Rome, but also the journey to a complete life with God, a journey which we are all called to. On his journey he takes his bag, representing the preparations he made for this journey, i.e. he does what he can to be prepared.

He also has a walking stick, which he has with him for the whole journey. This represents the support of God. This support is always there; it is what we lean on when we are tired and gets us through the rough sections of the road. He is a determined young man, which can be seen from his expression. He is looking at the viewer, inviting the viewer into a conversation with him.

We have in the left corner concentric blue arcs, representing heaven and especially a mystical experience. In Stanislaus' case, this is his Eucharistic communion when he was very sick. As a token acknowledgement of the College, the corner has been kept to simple blue and white stripes, echoing the jerseys worn by Stannies rugby teams! Stanislaus shows us that holiness is not just something that happens to old people or other people. At the age of 17 he died, recognised by all for his holiness. On the bottom of the icon is a quote of his, *I was born for greater things*. A sentiment which we can all take as our own. St Stanislaus' feast day is 13 November.

Mary Clancy, Artist



St
S
T
a
n
sl
as
ko
st
ka

I WAS BORN FOR GREATER THINGS