

## Celebrating St Stanislaus – The Patron Saint of Novices

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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*By Clare, fcJ*

On November 13th we will celebrate St Stanislaus' Day. This is a lovely feast for us because we especially give thanks for our novices and, of course, spoil them a bit too! It's special to us also because it is a feast that all Faithful Companions of Jesus have celebrated at some point in their lives – given that we've all been novices! For the novices themselves one big highlight of the day is reading the letter that the General Superior sends to them. This is always inspiring and encouraging and fills them with great enthusiasm. Here in our formation community in Indonesia one of the ways we prepare for this feast is to say a novena in the days leading up to it. This helps to keep us focused on the meaning of St Stanislaus' Day for today and also ensures that we gradually harvest the "spiritual fruit" that is being offered to us.

If you want to join us in praying in preparation for the feast of St Stanislaus we have posted an adapted version of our novena below...You can adapt it further and use it in any way that suits you.

### **The Life of St Stanislaus**

Stanislaus was born in Poland in the year 1550 the second of six children. When he was fifteen Stanislaus and his elder brother Paul were sent by their parents to study in a Jesuit college in Vienna. Stanislaus was a studious youth who was also cheerful, innocent and gentle. He was deeply religious. attended Mass every day and had great love for Our Lady. Stanislaus' character was in total contrast to that of his elder brother. Paul was often frustrated and angry with Stanislaus and he sometimes gave his younger brother a severe beating. Stanislaus bore his suffering with patience and humility. At one time he said "Ad maiora natus sum" "I was born for greater things." These words became his motto and he lived his life by them.

Stanislaus became critically ill and he asked for a priest. The family who owned the house would not allow a priest to enter it. As Stanislaus was praying to God through the intercession of St Barbara she appeared to him accompanied by two angels and gave him Holy Communion. Several days later he saw a vision of Our Lady holding the child Jesus and Stanislaus was healed.

In thanksgiving for his miraculous healing Stanislaus decided to enter the Society of Jesus. In August 1567 Stanislaus crept out of the house in tattered clothes and began his long walk to Rome. His brother and tutor gave chase but were unable to find him. Stanislaus' family was shamed by his behavior and disowned him. He arrived in Augsburg, Germany, having covered 600 kilometers in fifteen days. He went to meet Peter Canisius, the Provincial of the German Jesuits. With a letter of recommendation written by Peter Canisius he walked a further 1,200 kilometres within a month and finally arrived in Rome. He was received into the novitiate on 28th October, 1567.

During the ten remaining months of his life, according to the testimony of the master of novices, Father Giulio Fazio, "he was a model and mirror of religious perfection. Notwithstanding his very delicate constitution he did not spare himself the slightest penance". In August 1568 Stanislaus fell critically ill with a high fever, and he knew he was dying. He hoped to die on the Feast of the Assumption so he could celebrate this feast with Mary in heaven. His desire was granted and he died on 15 August, towards four in the morning. The entire city proclaimed him a saint and people came from all parts to venerate his remains and to obtain, if possible, some relics. He was beatified in 1605 and canonized in 1726. St. Stanislaus is a much loved Polish saint. He is especially loved because he is the patron saint of novices.

St Stanislaus...pray for us.

#### **In thanksgiving for our vocations...**

Oh God,

From a young age St Stanislaus left everything to follow his call. He lived his vocation with deep joy. We too give you thanks that we have been called to leave everything and follow you.

We pray in gratitude with and through Jesus.

Amen

#### **For a great desire to serve God**

Loving God,

You loved St Stanislaus because he wholeheartedly consecrated his young life to you.

Renew us with your Spirit and strengthen our desire to live fully for you.

May we always run in the path of your Gospel.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus your Son.

Amen.

#### **For the awareness that we are born for greater things...**

God of mercy, God of love, you form us to send us out on mission.

Renew in our hearts, O God, the awareness that we, like Stanislaus, are born for greater things.

May all that we do proclaim the Good News that you are God with us.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

#### **That we always seek to live fully for God...**

Most gracious God, we long to love you with all our heart and mind and soul.

Strengthen us and keep our ideals strong for the whole of our lives.

Grant this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

#### **For our older sisters...**

Gentle God, our older sisters have served you faithfully for many years as FCJs.

We ask you to bless them with health and joy and many more years of peace and contentment.

May they continue to serve you through their ministry of prayer.

We ask this mindful of your love and care.

Amen.

#### **For the gift of Companionship...**

True Christian community is never free from the tensions of daily life and because of this deep companionship is needed to preserve union of minds and hearts.

We pray that we may value and nurture the companionship we enjoy in our various communities.

We ask this through Jesus who showed us the way to build community in the Reign of God.

Amen.

#### **For young people who haven't yet discerned their way in life...**

God our creator,

We pray through the intercession of St Stanislaus that today's young people will have the courage to offer themselves to you for your glory and service. We especially ask that you send many young women to serve you and your people as Faithful Companions of Jesus.

We ask this in union with Jesus our Companion.

Amen.

### Rejoicing in St Stanislaus

All holy, ever present God, we rejoice in the glory of your saints and all holy women and men.

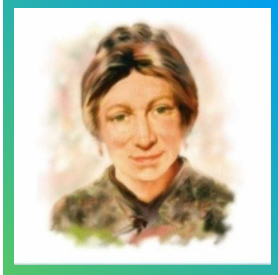
At this time we give thanks for St Stanislaus, the patron saint of novices.

May his good example inspire us and his prayers strengthen us.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord,

Amen

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**“ Soyez dignes de votre beau nom par un grand amour pour Jésus, un amour qui se montre non par des paroles ou des désirs stériles, mais par le courage dans son service. ”**

*Marie Madeleine d'Houët*

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