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Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 450th anniversary of the death of Saint Stanislaus Kostka

The following is the Message the Holy Father Francis sent to H.E. Msgr. Piotr Libera, bishop of Plock, Poland, on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the death of Saint Stanislaus Kostka (1550-1568), Jesuit novice, which occurs today, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Message of the Holy Father

To the dear brother
H.E. Msgr. PIOTR LIBERA
Bishop of Płock

Today, on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is the 450th anniversary of the death of Saint Stanislaus Kostka. At the age of only 18, due to a serious illness, this pupil of the Jesuit novitiate in Rome, one of the most excellent sons of your country and of the Society of Jesus, ended his earthly pilgrimage. Therefore, in commemorating his entry into the glory of the Lord, I join in the prayer of thanksgiving of the faithful of the Diocese of Płock and of the whole Church in Poland, who will soon be attending the central celebrations of the year dedicated to him in Rostkowo, the birthplace of the saint.

I would like to take this opportunity to address first of all the young people of whom Saint Stanislaus is patron. I like to recall the phrase that Saint John Paul II pronounced in the church of Saint Andrew at the Quirinal, when he venerated his relics: “The journey of his short life, begun in Rostkowo in Mazowsze, through Vienna and then to Rome, can be compared to a great cross-country race towards the goal of every Christian’s life, which is holiness” (13 November 1988).

Dear young friends, I know that many of you, in September, will make the pilgrimage on foot from Przasnysz to Rostkowo, from the place of his baptism to the place of his birth. It is, so to speak, the first stage in Stanislaus’ “race” towards holiness. I encourage you to remember, not only during this march, but on all the paths of your

daily life, that you too are capable of performing this “race”. You too are driven by the love of Christ and strengthened by his grace. Be brave! The world needs your freedom of spirit, your confident gaze on the future, your thirst for truth, goodness and beauty. Saint Stanislaus teaches you that freedom which is not a blind race, but rather the ability to discern the goal and to follow the best ways of behavior and life. He teaches you always to seek first of all friendship with Jesus; to read and meditate on His word and welcome in His Eucharist His merciful and powerful presence, to resist the conditioning of the worldly mentality. Saint Stanislaus teaches you not to be afraid of the risk and dreams of true happiness, whose source and guarantee is Jesus Christ. “Jesus is the Lord of risk, He is the Lord of the eternal ‘more’… He wants your hands to continue building the world of today. And he wants to build that world with you” (cf *Address at the Prayer Vigil of World Youth Day*, Krakow, 30 July 2016). May Saint Stanislaus support you from heaven, and inspire you with his motto: “*Ad maiora natus sum*” – “I was born for greater things”.

Dear Brother, by the intercession of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, I invoke divine protection upon you, on all the bishops and priests, on the faithful and especially on the young people of the Church in Poland. I ask you to pray for me, and bless you from my heart in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

From the Vatican, 15 August 2018

FRANCIS