

Saint Crispina

St Crispina was held in high veneration all though Africa and is honored by St Augustine in various parts of his works, in which he speaks of her martyrdom. She was a noble lady, very rich, and the mother of several children. When she found herself in danger of losing her children, her possessions, and her life, in the persecution which was then raging, instead of being intimidated, she was filled with a holy joy, not unworthy the Christian education which she had received from her most tender years. Being arrested in her native city of Thagara by order of the proconsul Anulinus, and brought before his tribunal, he inquired of her whether she was aware of the imperial edicts which commanded that all persons should sacrifice to the gods of the empire.

Saint Crispina replied: "I have never sacrificed, nor will I sacrifice to any other than to one God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ His Son, who was born and suffered for us."

Anulinus then said, "Leave this thy superstition, and adore the gods."

"Every day," said Saint Crispina, "I adore my God, and besides Him I know of no others."

"I perceive now," said the judge, "that thou art obstinate, and dost contemn our gods. Thou must be made to experience the rigor of the laws."

"I shall suffer most willingly," replied the saint, "whatever may be exacted as the testimony of my faith."

"I will give thee to read," said the proconsul, "the edict of the emperor, which it behooveth thee to observe."

The saint replied, "I observe the commands of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Anulinus said, "But thou shalt lose thy head, unless thou wilt observe the commands of the emperor, as they are observed throughout Africa."

"No on shall oblige me to sacrifice to demons," Crispina answered. "I sacrifice to the Lord only, who made heaven and earth."

Here the proconsul began to exhort her to obey the edicts and to avoid the terrible consequences of the emperor's wrath. The saint courageously replied: "I fear not the anger of men; all they can do is nothing: I fear only God who is in heaven; and I should be lost forever were I to offend Him by sacrilege."

"Thou shalt not," said the proconsul, "be guilty of that crime by obeying the princes and adoring the gods of the Romans."

But Saint Crispina, raising her voice, exclaimed, "Wouldst thou then have me guilty of sacrilege before God, in order not to appear sacrilegious to the eyes of men? It never shall be! God alone is great and omnipotent, the Creator of all things; men are His creatures; what, therefore, can they do?"



Anulinus, seeing that the saint continued firm in the faith, after some other invectives and threats, ordered that her head should be shaved, as a token of degradation, adding, that if she continued obstinate he would condemn her to a most cruel death.

The saint answered, “I care not for the present life, and am only anxious for the life of my soul. I fear eternal torments only.”

“Instantly obey,” exclaimed the proconsul, “or your head shall at once be struck off!”

The saint meekly answered, “I shall return thanks to my God, for making me worthy of this blessed lot. God is with me, that I may not consent to thy suggestions.”

Here Anulinus exclaimed, “Why do we any longer bear with this impious woman?” Then, having caused the process of her trial to be read over, pronounced the final sentence, that Crispina should lose her head, for obstinately refusing to sacrifice to the gods, in obedience to the edicts.

Crispina, having heard the iniquitous sentence, calmly and with holy joy said, “I return thanks to Jesus Christ, and I bless the Lord who has vouchsafed thus to deliver me from the hands of men.”

Saint Crispina consummated her martyrdom on the 5th of December, about the year 304.

Saint Augustine frequently proposed in his sermons the example of this martyr. “See,” says the holy Father, “how St Crispina despised all things, and life itself, for the love of Jesus Christ. Rich and noble as she was, she might have lived somewhat longer in the enjoyment of earthly happiness; but she would not have obtained everlasting life. Wisely, therefore, did she prefer to live forever, than to prolong for a short while her temporal existence.”