

“And, having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

There was an error this past week in the Church ordo kalendar, which you may or may not have caught, and which I didn't catch until the second day of the error. For you literary and historical types, you may know that St. Crispin's Day is October 25, and you angelically minded types may know that the feast of St. Raphael the Archangel is October 24, the day before; but for some reason (I assume, human error) those two days were flip-flopped on the ordo kalendar. And as I said, it took me a full day even to notice it, for I usually just read the life of each day's saint from the Breviary, which is the book that contains all those stories and writings from the early Fathers, and I don't usually bother to double check the kalendar to make sure they match up. But Tuesday morning, the 25th, after reading the story of the martyrs Crispin and his brother Crispinian, I noticed that, instead of red, the color of martyrdom, the ordo kalendar had the day in white. Upon closer inspection I detected the error, that it had switched up those two days of St. Crispin and St. Raphael, and furthermore it forced me to change the white vestments I had already set out for the Tuesday Mass at St. Theodore's for red ones instead. However, Fr. Braddock will be glad to know that I am not fixing to tell you all, “Well, St. Crispin became an angel anyway when he died, so it's all OK,” since as we were reminded a few weeks ago, men are a separate order of creation from the angels. But it did get me thinking, that by definition an angel's feast day could not be in red, because they don't have any blood to spill. Though in a sense that we cannot fully understand, the angels fight for us and do battle against the forces of evil, still they are purely spiritual beings and thus have no bodies and, therefore, no blood. That's something that we actually have on the angels, that God became a man rather than an

angel, and the preaching of the Gospel is something that St. Peter tells us the angels desire to look into.

Well, this might all be a lovely and interesting liturgical diversion, but what does it have to do with Christ the King? Ultimately, it has everything to do with Christ the King, because our heavenly King is one who took not on him the nature of angels, but rather took on himself a real human nature that could bleed and suffer and die. The Lord and Creator of the entire universe, of all that is and has been and ever shall be, became a fragile baby boy, born of a humble peasant woman, destined to die upon a cross for all mankind. In his trial that we heard today, he stands before a stand-in for the most powerful emperor of his day; and yet, he has the ability to call down legions of angels to defend him, to strike down the blasphemers, to rescue him from this hour. But the King of kings becomes a servant to servants, he lays aside his glory for our eternal glory. Our King is not a distant and lofty tyrant far away in a remote capital, but rather one who humbles himself to suffer right along with his lowest subjects. In our pains and burdens and sorrows, Christ our King is right there carrying our cross along with us. It may seem as though he is sending an ambassador in his stead, but when one of our fellow members of his Body helps us with our cross, it is really Christ in them who is lifting it up. It is his power that allows us both to carry our own cross and to help our neighbor with theirs. Crispin and his brother Crispinian were just humble shoe-makers, but Christ the King makes them princes in his realm; since they share in his crown of thorns, he shares with them his crown of glory that will not fade away. As we approach the feast of All Saints, we are reminded that God uses the simple and the humble rather than the powerful and the esteemed to spread his kingdom. The saints on earth are all soldiers in his heavenly army, doing spiritual battle along with those hosts of angels, whether

they die a martyr's death or not. And now that they rest from their labors, they have converse with the angels who serve before God's throne day and night. And there is no envy amongst the saints and angels in heaven; they are not jockeying for position in the royal court, to try to get closer to the King so as to sway him to their own advantage. There will be no court intrigue in heaven, and even better—no elections.

At the end of Mass today, we will be offering Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; and again you might ask, "What does that have to do with Christ the King?" What does this little circle of baked grain and water have to do with the Sovereign Lord of the entire universe? Would it help if I told you that we enthrone that little circle of baked grain and water into what often is the most exquisite liturgical apparatus a parish owns, known as a monstrance? Sometimes, if it can be afforded, a monstrance is crafted out of finely wrought gold and adorned with precious jewels and enamels. OK, well now I see what it has to do with Christ the King—all that gold and jewels is what kingship is all about. Wrong: that's not what Christ's Kingship is all about. For no matter how ornate or expensive a monstrance may be, the most important thing is that little piece of what appears to be ordinary bread in its center, that simple host that has cost the church only a few pennies to purchase. Christ's Kingdom is not one adorned with diamonds and rubies and emeralds, it is not about accruing power or money or land, but rather it is about the simple everyday life of humble, lowly saints in our midst, the shoe-makers and the shepherds and the fishermen, who are ignored or rejected or enslaved by those who wield the scepters of this world. Our King laid down his body and shed his blood for his subjects; he is at the top of a very short list of earthly rulers who have ever done the same. But unlike any other earthly ruler, he continues to give us his Body and his Blood, the same Body and Blood in a mystical and

sacramental way which we cannot understand, that he took up in the womb of his Virgin Mother and allowed Pontius Pilate to crucify and rose again with on the third day. And though that same Body sits on his throne of glory in heaven as the King of the Angels, yet it is still enthroned here on this altar to feed us and nourish us and strengthen us to bear our cross through his strength, that his royal Blood may run through our veins, and that we his lowly subjects may reign with him forever.