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Christmas: Origins of the Feast

by: Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio



I think it is around the fourth century that Christians began celebrating Jesus' birth on December 25 in the Western part of the Roman Empire and January 6 in the East (Epiphany). It is true that we really don't know the month or even the year he was born. The end of December was a logical time to celebrate his birth, though, at least in the Northern Hemisphere. After six months of daylight getting shorter and shorter and the sun getting lower and lower in the sky, the sun finally begins to make a comeback! Especially before the days of Thomas Edison, people naturally breathed a sigh of relief and wanted to celebrate this victory over encroaching darkness. Thus, on Dec. 25 a widespread religious group in the late Roman Empire celebrated "the birthday of *Sol Invictus*" or the Unconquerable Sun. Christians, in celebrating Jesus' birth at this time instead, were proclaiming their faith that he is the true "dawn from on high" (Luke 1: 78) and "the sun of righteousness" (Malachi

4:2). For Christians, all the candles and lights of Christmas are ways of reminding themselves that Jesus is the light of the world.

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I Believe - The Heart of Catholic Faith

by: Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.

What exactly is the Creed?

In this dynamic, four-part series, Dr. D'Ambrosio explains how this expression of the fundamental beliefs of our faith is critical to our Christian Lives.

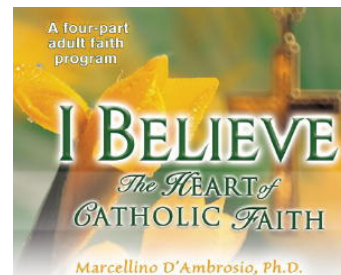
He notes that faith is not a denial of the intellect, but rather a fulfillment of our deepest need for the truth - of our deepest need for a relationship with our Creator.

The Creed teaches us that God is a communion of Persons - the Trinity. With enlightening metaphors and colorful anecdotes, Dr. D'Ambrosio shows that we are called to "live the Creed" by developing a loving relationship with God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and to have a deep devotion to the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.

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