

2015 Solstice Greeting

Dies Natalis Solis Invicti
Day of Birth of the Unconquered Sun

Solstice Celebrations have their roots deep in antiquity, the source of which is the primordial fear that the light of the sun would continue to diminish. When the season changed and the days started becoming longer, the people gave themselves up to wild joy. They feasted, gave gifts, decorated their homes with greenery and let go of their quarrels.



In Rome, the Saturnalia had been practiced from at least 218 BCE at the time of winter Solstice. In a movement towards harmonizing religious practices in the 2nd Century CE, Roman emperors had sought to impose the cult of Sol Invictus (a monotheistic form of sun worship) on their subjects. The cult of Sol Invictus adopted and maintained the festive practices of the Saturnalia.



In the beginning of the 4th Century CE the Emperor Constantine (pictured above) moved towards replacing Sol Invictus with Christianity as the State Religion choosing to somewhat blur distinctions between the two. The celebration of Jesus' birthday was moved to December 25, already celebrated by the cult of Sol Invictus as Dies Natilis Solis Invicti, the rebirth of the Sun: this being the time when Sol proved once again to be yet unconquered by the longer days bringing more light and dispelling the ancient fear of ever growing darkness.

Sol Invictus



Syrian Bishop Jacob Bar-Slibi records: "It was a custom of the pagans to celebrate the birthday of the sun at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. Christians also took part in these reveries. Accordingly when the doctors of the church perceived that their congregation had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true nativity should be solemnized on that same day."