

elapsed since this day became truly known to us; in the beginning it was known to those of the Occident, and they taught it to us not so long ago. Above all the inhabitants of Rome had *exact knowledge* of it, and they celebrated it for a long time and according to an ancient tradition." Also, St. Augustine says, that Christmas in Rome was celebrated on the 25th December *from the beginning*. And when the Church of Rome elevated the rank of this festival, the Eastern as well as the Western churches adopted it without reluctance. Hence the 25th of December is the historical day, and this determines also the 25th of March as the day of the Incarnation.

But are we to count the first year from the 25th of March or the 25th of December? The word Incarnation is used in a two-fold sense, namely, dogmatically as the day on which the Son of God assumed human nature, and this took place on the 25th of March, and secondly in common parlance as the day on which he appeared as man to us, and in this sense it is synonymous with the Nativity (25th of December). Hence the phrase, *post Christum natum*—after the birth of Christ—leads us to believe that the first year commences not with the Incarnation but with the Nativity of Our Lord, consequently on or after the 25th of December.

In pagan Rome they counted the time from the founding of the city, "*anno urbis conditae*," and commenced the new year on January the first. The god Janus, after whom January was named, was represented as two-faced—one the face of an old man looking back, the other the face of a young man looking forward, thus symbolizing the passing of the old and the beginning of the new year.

There can be hardly any doubt that Dionysius followed the Roman custom in computing the year, and therefore commenced the first year of the Christian era with the 1st of January, *after* the birth of Christ.

The 1st of January as New Year's Day found, however, little favor in the eyes of the Christians. Tertullian, Augustine and Chrysostom preached against participation in the festivities in vogue on that day, and the beginning of the year in sundry places and at different times was counted from different days, some counting from the 1st of January, others from Christmas, others from Easter, or the 25th of March. Only towards the end of the 15th century all the Christian nations united upon the 1st of January as New Year's Day, and this accounts for the differences in historical works, of which one records an event as happening in say, 1244, whilst others place it in 1243 or 1245.

The salient question in controversy is: When does the year 1 commence? Some maintain that time does not commence with one, but with 0 (naught), and hence the 10th of January would designate a fraction of the first year, and only after the first 365 days were over we would have a unit, the year one, and consequently the date 1900, January 1st, would mean 1900 full and complete years and one day above. According to this opinion the 1st of January, 1900, would in reality be the first day of the year 1901, and therefore the first day of the new century.

Now, independent of the fact that time has never been computed from its beginning, but arbitrary beginnings of computation were made after time had existed for thousands of years, we have to go according to the common