



# **JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK**

## **MONDAY – 12/24/2007**

### ***HOLIDAY TRADITIONS (PART II)***

**The Roman's celebrated Saturn (god of farming) and their festival "Saturnalia" around the time of winter solstice (mid-December). With cries of "Lo Saturnalia," the celebration would include masquerades in the streets, big festive meals, visiting friends, and the exchange of good-luck gifts called "Strenae" (lucky fruits).**

**Again, the masters and slaves would exchange places. The Romans also decked their halls with garlands of laurel and green trees lit with candles, a custom that was later adopted for Christmas.**

**Some legends claim that the timing of the Christian celebration of Christmas was invented to compete against the pagan celebrations of the winter solstice. The key date of December 25<sup>th</sup> was not only sacred to the Romans, but also the Persians whose religion, "Mithraism," was one of Christianity's main rivals at that time.**

**Traditions say that the Christ child's birth has been celebrated since the year 98 AD. In 137 AD the Bishop of Rome ordered the birthday of the Christ child celebrated as a solemn feast. However, it was not until 350 AD that Julius I, Bishop of Rome, chose December 25<sup>th</sup> to be officially observed for Christmas.**

**Eventually, the Christian church was successful in shifting the merriment, tree lights, and gifts from the Roman Saturnalia festival and bringing them into the celebration of Christmas.**