

The early Christian [community](#) distinguished between the identification of the date of Jesus' birth and the liturgical celebration of that event. The actual observance of the day of Jesus' birth was long in coming. In particular, during the first two centuries of [Christianity](#) there was strong opposition to recognizing birthdays of [martyrs](#) or, for that matter, of Jesus. Numerous Church Fathers offered sarcastic comments about the pagan custom of celebrating birthdays when, in fact, saints and martyrs should be honoured on the days of their martyrdom—their true “birthdays,” from the [church's](#) perspective.