

TO MEN OF GOOD WILL

PART I



Has there ever been an age more loquacious — more full of words than ours? Has there ever been an age more extraverted, and more concerned with the cosmetic appearance of the surface of things? Addicted to noise of every sort, our age allows no room for silence — it is afraid of silence. Full of confusion and unrest, our progress-mad civilization has moved very much away from the mysteries of divine revelation. Modern man finds it difficult to pursue such a path. Our age is no longer familiar with the language of mystery. Our church, actually, no longer speaks of mystery, and in its unbounded effort to be acceptable to all men, our church has buried the very things that would still be of help to mankind at the end of the second millenium. Our church has set aside the supernatural in order to tease the natural instincts of modern man. Modern man has no time to listen to what God has to say. Modern man is overcome and overwhelmed by a constant stream of words — words poured out from printing presses and loudspeakers, floods of words from today's computers, the ever present television and the cassette tapes of every sort and description. Most of this outgush leaves no intelligible impact on the mind so widely dulled and compacted. The mind is so compacted that independent thinking becomes difficult. The Christian people are no exception. They, too, are caught in the noisy whirlwind. Worse yet, our Catholic people no longer receive the guidance and direction from a strength giving Church that once gave them PEACE, FORGIVENESS AND STABILITY. The Church they once looked to was a strong and ancestral Church. Catholics always realized and understood that if the continuity of the ages was to be found, it was found only in the bosom of that Church. But the wonderful and powerful structure, once the foundation of everything they believed in and hoped for, has fallen to a state of tragic disarray. And the holy and sacred and unchangeable beliefs that formerly gave comfort, have all been given a new and different definition, and this has shaken all the foundation stones of a structure that was believed to be indestructible. That the Roman Catholic Church is in a state of disarray is a fact that is only now being reluctantly admitted by church leadership. This fact has long been known by some conscientious people. As the walls were beginning to crumble, these remnant people tried to preserve what they could of what they knew to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. For this these good people have been forced into splintered groups and have been labeled schismatic: they were condemned as schismatic simply because they struggled to maintain the ancestral continuity of the ages.

Since the time of Adam, man has been exposed to influences that cause instability, insecurity and fidgetiness. We can understand this historical fact. And as we continue to read the pages of developing history, we find Christians, even after the many warnings of Jesus Christ, traveling on the road of least resistance, adapting themselves to the wavering standards of the majority. But as people walked through the ages since the time of Christ, there was always the presence of a Church — a strong Church — a Church always giving guidance and hope and dependable leadership. Whatever the criticism, that Church always stood apart. Today's church has joined the majority. Today's church is a weak church.