

## PREFACE

This collection of essays is an exploration of some of the issues regarding the Faith and the culture that it has created, as it has been expressed in its first homeland, Europe, and in Europe's extensions overseas, especially the United States. To some extent they were occasioned by the debate over multiculturalism which began raging fiercely in the United States in the late 80s. It seemed to me that many interesting issues were raised by this debate, and that it afforded a good opportunity for Catholics to examine the connection between the culture and civilization created by the Church — Christendom — and what we call Western culture. Until something is attacked or questioned it is often taken for granted. Thus when Western culture is attacked we are forced to articulate exactly why it is valuable. But in order to do that we must first examine it and understand it. Then perhaps we will see that its value does not always lie where we thought it did. The value of Christendom is in its being a *Christian* civilization, and any defense of the West that does not recognize this does not understand either the genesis or genius of Western culture.

Most of these essays have been previously published, in *Caelum et Terra*, *New Oxford Review*, *Faith & Reason*, *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* and *The McNeese Review*. These have all been revised, to a greater or lesser extent, and I hope that their republication, together with those published here for the first time, will contribute to study and debate of these important cultural matters.

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