



Chapter 3 The New Rome and The Holy See

"The Holy See".



On the morning of November 20, 1843, the Italian cannons sent their first hail of destruction at the walls of Rome. Loyal papal troops responded with a weak volley of their own, a token resistance. The Italian cannons roared again and again and again. Pius IX said a special mass at eight-o'clock for the diplomatic corps and preached a sermon, in which he held King Victor Emmanuel, the Republican Government and the Great Powers of Europe responsible for this unworthy and sacrilegious despoiling of the sovereignty of Papal properties. He then told those gathered that "we will be a prisoner in St. Peter's until this desecration is over."

Mussolini for two years had been busily concerned and involved with a secluded enterprise, which in the years ahead would bring him the most outstanding success of his political career. His plan was the Conciliation of the Church of Rome and the state of Italy. Until 1859 the Pope of Rome was at the same time the sovereign head of the Papal States, which consisted of 16,000 square miles of the Italian peninsula and the city of Rome, in which lived over three million people. The territories belonging to the Pope were lost to the kingdom of Italy

between 1859 and 1870 when Rome was occupied by Italian troops. This then was the unfortunate situation which Mussolini determined to bring to an end and to normalize the relationship between the Holy See and the government of Italy in Rome.

Mussolini had resolved the basic quarrel of the Italian government with the Church of Rome when no one else could manage to do so. In June, 1929, the Holy See and Italy exchanged ambassadors.