



The Catholic Enlightenment: The Forgotten History of a Global Movement (Hardback)

By Ulrich L. Lehner

Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2016. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Whoever needs an act of faith to elucidate an event that can be explained by reason is a fool, and unworthy of reasonable thought. This line, spoken by the notorious 18th-century libertine Giacomo Casanova, illustrates a deeply entrenched perception of religion, as prevalent today as it was hundreds of years ago. It is the sentiment behind the narrative that Catholic beliefs were incompatible with the Enlightenment ideals. Catholics, many claim, are superstitious and traditional, opposed to democracy and gender equality, and hostile to science. It may come as a surprise, then, to learn that Casanova himself was a Catholic. In *The Catholic Enlightenment*, Ulrich L. Lehner points to such figures as representatives of a long-overlooked thread of a reform-minded Catholicism, which engaged Enlightenment ideals with as much fervor and intellectual gravity as anyone. Their story opens new pathways for understanding how faith and modernity can interact in our own time. Lehner begins two hundred years before the Enlightenment, when the Protestant Reformation destroyed the hegemony Catholicism had enjoyed for centuries. During this time the Catholic Church instituted several reforms, such as better education for pastors,...

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