Catholics who fell outside such a definition. It was not their record during the Civil War, then, that excommunicated Catholics from the Union; it was the northern, Protestant, liberal nationalism animating the victorious Republican Party that excluded Catholics (as well as southerners) from the “Promised Land.”

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Faced with the continued decline of Christian principles in society, Fr. Brian Mullady, OP, STD, sets out to expose the roots of the issues and provide a foundational and systematic overview of Catholic social teaching. Identifying the demise of the traditional family in particular as the cause of many other woes, he seeks to rearticulate a conceptual foundation for a Christian social order based on the teachings of modern popes, and especially St. John Paul II. Fr. Mullady emphasizes the continuity of Catholic tradition with particular focus on the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, which grounded that of many of the popes who contributed to modern Catholic social teaching.

Fr. Mullady takes Aristotelian Thomistic metaphysics as his starting point for Christian social order, laying the groundwork for a worldview in which all being has its source in God and is intelligible, first by natural reason and then with the help of faith. The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas holds that action follows being and that the God-given nature of a being grounds its purpose and potentiality—a concept lost in our society, which idolizes license.

Christian social order is society as governed in accord with the plan in the mind of God, to which St. Thomas refers as the Eternal Law. Man can participate in the Eternal Law according to natural reason by way of the Natural Law—the principles written by the Creator into human nature. He can further and more clearly participate in the Eternal Law through the Revealed Law, given in the Old and New Testaments. Laws promulgated by human authority, namely Positive Law, must be in accord with the Natural Law and the Revealed Law. Mullady points out that today we encounter a serious problem in that many civil laws no longer take any account of the Natural Law and are thus not grounded in objective reality. Even though
our society tends to deny the existence of the Natural Law, traces of the Natural Law are found within its codes. For example, human rights are protected by law in many modern states. But our contemporaries do not usually trace those rights back to their ground, which is the dignity of the human person on account of his spiritual soul and higher calling.

Fr. Mullady rejects the metaphysically devoid social-contract theories of the Enlightenment, instead holding that communities first arose to safeguard the common good—the aim of their social union under the Natural Law—and to choose the manner by which to designate an authority to represent and direct this common good. For Mullady, obedience is due to authority not merely because the authority wields the sword but because he represents God’s order in the Eternal Law. With few exceptions, such authorities can only be licitly disobeyed when they order what is contrary to the Natural or Revealed Law. Pointing this out, Fr. Mullady makes a case against dissent from the Magisterium of the Church—which furthermore has been established by God—since its pronouncements do not contradict the Natural or Revealed Laws but rather clarify them.

Christian social order is enacted not by utilitarian ethics but by the virtues. Likewise, Fr. Mullady identifies Pope Pius XI’s concept of social justice, which has been taken in various directions today, with the Thomistic virtues of legal justice (giving society what is due) and distributive justice (society giving the person what is due). Ever opposed to the ‘Nanny State,’ Fr. Mullady insists that such an institution violates God’s order in as much as it arrogates roles that are rightly given to the family and the Church. Social reform must begin there and work its way up to the state. The family, the state, and the Church are each essential to the common good on their own levels, and to deny any of these would stunt man’s flourishing, since he is a union of both body and soul.

Fr. Mullady gives special attention to marriage and the family in light of John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. He insists that the Theology of the Body cannot be understood as radically new as some have proposed, emphasizing instead the influence of St. Thomas Aquinas on John Paul II’s thought. Phenomenology, Mullady argues, is not adequate for explaining the Christian teaching on marriage and family, but John Paul II uses it as a method to highlight and explain by human experience what has already been laid down.

In Thomistic terms, the nature of marriage, whether natural or sacramental, must be ordered to its essential goods: the procreation and education of children and the fidelity and friendship of the spouses. In the marital act, the couple cooperates with God to create a new life, which God endows with a soul. Hence human seed is sacred and its exchange,
according to the Natural Law, requires openness to life. Because of the complex spiritual nature of the human person, the education of children is an even greater responsibility and requires a long-term commitment from both the mother and the father, who, as man and woman, each bring a unique contribution to the child’s upbringing. He argues that the traditional family is thus crucial for proper childrearing and also demonstrates ways in which the family is the bedrock of society, branching out into further communities.

According to Fr. Mullady, gay marriage follows logically from the sexual revolution, which abandoned the procreation and education of children as a chief good of marriage. The Church, however, can never endorse gay marriage because of the impossibility of procreation. A man and a woman bound in marriage, however, do not violate the goods of marriage if they are unable to have children; the goods of marriage are not ordered in a utilitarian manner but rather as an object of the will.

In this ambitious but concise work, Mullady sweeps through major intellectual movements in history with ease, driving at the heart of the matter and exposing fundamental flaws that led to later problems. The book is not just another Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church; it is a work of a particular theology and philosophy consistent with and reflective on that tradition, with particular emphasis given as a corrective to trends in the Catholic world that the author believes have strayed from the path, acquiescing to secular humanism. Insightful for both its breadth and precision, Christian Social Order is a must-read for those who wish to engage in a serious study of the relation of faith and society.

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In the midst of the Second World War, Hitler once angrily denounced the Vatican as a “nest of spies.” Mark Riebling’s new book provides evidence of the extent of church-based espionage, and puts flesh and blood on the whole enterprise. Written more like a spy novel than historical research, Church of Spies relies on new archival evidence that tells the story of a Bavarian-Jesuit spy network known as the “Orders Committee” and centered around Josef Müller, a World War I hero and Catholic lawyer who