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Review of William A. Barry, S.J., and Robert G. Doherty, S.J.

Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way.

New York: Paulist Press, 2002. Repr., September 2003 (paper, \$11.95).

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This admirable little volume professes to do one thing; it does two. Its goal is to explain the spirituality that accounts for the "influence" and "vitality" of the Jesuits. It illustrates this spirituality with episodes of conflict and controversy in Jesuit history, some famous, even misunderstood, and some not well known. The reader who knows little about the Jesuits and their history will learn much from these examples; those more familiar with the Society will see them to be out-workings of its robust spirituality.

Barry and Doherty articulate eight defining characteristics of "Jesuit spirituality." All of them derive from Ignatius's call to be a "contemplative in action." The general discussion of spirituality that opens the book, the fruit of the authors' long experience, is accessible to those unfamiliar with the vocabulary and penetrating for those who are. One might quibble with the distinction between "Ignatian" and "Jesuit spirituality," but it is an attempt to skirt preconceptions and to focus on what is specifically "Jesuit." The reader acquainted with the *Spiritual Exercises* will recognize a fine unfolding of the First Principle and Foundation in the first three of their characteristics of Jesuit spirituality.

The implications of the eight characteristics are developed in

the rest of the book through a discussion of seven "tensions" that arise in the attempt to live out Jesuit spirituality in the real world, i.e., to be a "contemplative in action." The articulation of these tensions and some historical examples depend on John O'Malley's *The First Jesuits*, which is cited a number of times: that volume would provide a useful complement to this one. Barry and Doherty are bracingly honest about the "tensions" in Jesuit history. Their treatment is remarkably free of apology. They avoid turning Ignatius into a postcard saint and do not shy away from examples recent enough still to be painful, including questions about obedience that arose at and after the thirty-second General Congregation in 1975 and those concerning poverty emerging at the same time. The authors illumine some of the dark days of Jesuit history, and their treatment of the suppression in the 18th century, for instance, is helpful.

The book manages to dispel a number of common misconceptions about Jesuit community life, poverty, obedience, and (especially) the fourth vow of obedience to the Pope in the matter of missions. A graceful account of the internal controversies surrounding the early Jesuits's entrance into education quickly comes to the identity issues that were at stake: a mission inherently involving stabi-

ty, financial responsibility, and engagement in "intellectual culture" would massively alter the character of the early Society and force a rethinking, even abandonment, of its ideals of poverty and itinerant missionary work. Many tensions in living out the Society's charism remain because of their decision.

The real richness of this little book, however, lies in its articulation of the most important feature of Jesuit spirituality. It often goes under the (twisted) aphorism, "pray as if everything depended on God; work as if everything depended on yourself," but it really is about cooperation with God, about the real tensions that result from attempting to live at the intersection of the divine will for human good and the realities of this world, accompanying the incarnate Christ. This attempt is the goal of the *Spiritual Exercises*, useful descriptions of which are scattered throughout the book, as are other Jesuit spiritual practices, e.g., the Examen. Barry and Doherty bracket their entire discussion with the notion of cooperation. The reader who has recognized by the end of this volume that it is at the heart of the "contemplation in action" that characterizes Jesuit spirituality, has glimpsed the basis of the influence and vitality of the Jesuits and of their educational mission, and may be able more fully to appreciate, even embrace, it.