systemization of data provided a strong base for the author's subsequent research.

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Patrick Samway, S.J.

William J. Byron, S.J.: A Biographical Essay. Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2018. Pp. vi + 139. Hb, \$30.00.

In this "biographical essay," Patrick Samway, S.J., chronicles the life of William J. Byron, S.J., currently professor emeritus of business and society at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia in twenty-one short chapters, all but one of five to six pages. The image of the man that emerges is that of a faith-filled, capable and loyal Jesuit, fully committed to the mission of the Society of Jesus, and ready to do whatever he can, or is asked to do, to further that mission. Samway's choice to write a biographical essay rather than a critical biography allows his perspective on Byron's career to come forward but does not provide the richness and complexity that a critical biography might deliver.

Byron was born in 1927 in western Pennsylvania and grew up during the Depression. After the death of his physician father, his mother moved the family to Philadelphia. He was graduated from St. Joseph's Preparatory High School during World War II and served in the Army Paratroops in Germany. After the war, he attended and was graduated from St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia, entered the Maryland province of the Society of Jesus in 1950 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. He earned his doctorate in economics from the University of Maryland in 1969. He taught at and/or held significant academic and executive leadership positions in several Jesuit institutions, including Woodstock College, Loyola of Maryland, the University of Scranton, Loyola of New Orleans, St. Joseph's Preparatory High School in Philadelphia, and St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. He served as President of The Catholic University of America from 1982 to 1992, a period which included the multi-year legal battle over the right of Father Charles Curran to teach his field of expertise, moral theology. In addition, Byron held significant pastoral roles: rector of the large Jesuit community at Georgetown and pastor of the Jesuits' Holy Trinity Parish in Georgetown.

The short chapter format focuses on what might be called “high points” of what Byron was doing at a particular time in his career, as seen through the eyes of the author. The brevity and focus on action allow for only limited attention to wider contexts and to what Byron thought about his impact. The final chapter on Byron’s time as university professor at St. Joseph’s is an exception for its inclusion of Byron’s commentary on society and values, and on his own life. However, citation of sources is informal throughout the essay, with quotes being employed but not fully documented. There is a “Notes” section (121–24) with two sequences of notes, each starting at one; two notes are either omitted or numbered incorrectly in the second sequence (123). The exploration and interpretation of events are suggestive, not exhaustive, as the treatment of Byron’s presidency at The Catholic University illustrates.

The chapter on Byron’s ten years from 1982 to 1992 as president at Catholic University is the longest in the essay at thirteen pages (75–88). But even thirteen pages require that Samway condense the theological, ecclesial, and legal issues that embroiled Curran, Byron, and Catholic University. Curran had been granted tenure in 1971, but the question of his teaching in his area of expertise arose from Vatican investigation, subsequent to his being tenured, into his body of work that increasingly was attracting controversy. Samway tries to convey some insight into how Byron steered the university between expectations for full academic freedom and the restrictions on who might teach Catholic theology deriving from the university’s pontifical status. On one hand, Samway explains that Byron proposed a concept of “ecclesial limits” to academic freedom, a concept intended to accommodate both academic freedom and ecclesial expectations (84–85). On the other, Samway describes an airport meeting between Curran and Byron at which Curran suggested, for what reason Samway does not specify, that Byron should resign. Byron is quoted as responding: “There are approximately 400 members of the faculty and I am not about to quit because of one faculty member” (84).

Samway’s account cannot present either the situation and/or the intentions of the key actors in a depth equal to the complexity and importance of the issues. That he includes mention of the airport meeting could suggest that he approves of Byron’s resoluteness in refusing to resign at Curran’s suggestion. However, the lack of citations—of a page reference for the concept of “ecclesial limits” in Byron’s 1989 *Quadrangle Conversations* or of the conversation between Curran and Byron—diminishes the objectivity of the account. In a critical biography, the motivations of those involved might have been explored in some depth and the entire case situated in context of years of discussions and tensions between Catholic higher education, chiefly but not solely in the United States, and the Vatican. Those discussions led up to the publication in

1990 of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* by Saint Pope John Paul II and continued during the period of the reception and implementation of that document.

In tone, Samway's essay resembles hagiography: consistently appreciative of the subject, often admiring, and at the conclusion, close to adulatory. The author's appreciation for his subject's life and career is evident throughout the essay. One example is Samway's approving mentions of Byron's willingness to "step forward" to do what is needed or what Byron is called to do by and for the Jesuits. The first, but not the only, instance of this was Byron's willingness to take on the presidency at the University of Scranton (69). Other examples include his short stint as interim president at Loyola of New Orleans (107–8) and his late-career tenure as president of St. Joseph's Preparatory High School (111–14). The author's appreciative tone would likely resonate with readers who either are members of, or who are familiar with, Catholic religious orders in which loyalty and commitment are highly valued. The essay concludes on a note that comes close to adulation as Samway describes the regular and unassuming quality of Byron's presence in the Jesuit dining room, presumably at St. Joseph's University, as indicative of his deep commitment to the bond of brotherhood with his fellow Jesuits (119). Most readers would respect such admiration for a colleague as accomplished as William J. Byron, S.J.

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