Gill K. Goulding  

In recent years, the history of the Jesuits has increasingly been imagined as a narrative of development from the sixteenth century and Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Jesuits, to the 21st century and Francis, the Jesuit pope. In this new book, the author, an associate professor of Systematic Theology at Regis College, Toronto, highlights what she calls an “ecclesial disposition” from Ignatius to Francis. Such a disposition she finds in the Rules for Thinking with the Church, some eighteen rules appended by Ignatius to his _Spiritual Exercises_, a book first published in 1548. Against interpreters of Ignatius that minimize the role of such ‘rules’ in the _Exercises_, or see them as extrinsic to the principal focus of the _Exercises_, Goulding argues that they are central to them and to an authentic understanding of the life and work of Ignatius.

Careful to acknowledge the difficulty of translating the phrase _sentire cum ecclesia_, Goulding makes clear that what Ignatius meant was as much an affective, loving relationship with the Church as an intellectual acceptance of Church teachings. In the Presupposition to the _Exercises_, Ignatius lauds a readiness to give a positive interpretation to a neighbor’s words. Goulding shows that Ignatius recommends a similarly positive attitude and course of action in one’s response to Church teachings and practices. Yet the author does not see Ignatius as excluding altogether criticism of the Church, such as criticism, in our times, by theologians. She argues that when “theologians are truly grounded in love for the Church, as Ignatius advocates, then pertinent private critical points may be raised in full fidelity” (p. 49). In the years since Vatican II many experts on the _Spiritual Exercises_ have focused on the confidence Ignatius had in God’s direct, unmediated dealings with individuals. Though such a confidence could suggest possible tension with an ‘ecclesial disposition’ that privileges obedience to Church authorities, especially the bishop of Rome, Goulding insists that in the life of Ignatius we see his “conviction that the Holy Spirit continues to work in the Church both through individuals and through the directives of authority” (p. 81). As a student in Paris, Ignatius had shared lodgings with Francis Xavier (1506–1552) and Pierre Favre (1506–1546), both of whom who would eventually be among the first Jesuits. Leaving aside Xavier, Goulding examines Favre as an example of a Jesuit who shared the loving disposition of Ignatius for the Church. Recently canonized as a saint by Pope Francis, Favre, in Gouldings’ view, both retained his childhood preference for popular piety such as devotion to relics of the saints and to guardian angels, and became
as an adult a master of the *Spiritual Exercises* and an itinerant preacher and teacher, sent in obedience to various parts of Europe.

Mary Ward (1585–1645) sought to create the female equivalent of the Society of Jesus. To say that there was, in her time and beyond, opposition to such a project, would be to understate all that she had to endure, often at the hands of Church authorities. Goulding, herself a member of the Congregation of Jesus (nomenclature currently used for at least parts of Mary Ward’s congregation), does a superb job of showing how Ward’s love of the Church went hand in hand with hostility, misunderstandings, rejections, excommunication, and imprisonment. She “loved the Church because she loved Christ” (p. 161). Even with “severe persecution Mary was enabled to live without bitterness or resentment” (ibid.). Declared Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI, Ward may eventually be beatified and canonized.

Shifting her attention to twentieth-century Jesuit theologians, Goulding focuses on Henri de Lubac (1896–1991) and Avery Dulles (1918–2008). In some ways this is a rather abrupt transition, not only in time but in the kind of individuals considered. The author does not exaggerate in labelling Ward’s ‘persecution’ at the hands of Church authorities severe; but de Lubac knew a much milder form of such treatment, and Dulles none at all. Indeed Dulles came from an extremely prominent, Protestant, American family, whose opposition to his conversion to Catholicism and entrance to the Jesuit novitiate was probably the hardest thing he ever had to endure. Both de Lubac and Dulles were eventually made cardinals by Pope John Paul II and thus received a level of endorsement and honor from the hierarchical Church to which Ward never came close. Still, Goulding’s point is that in the lives and especially in the writings of these two prolific Jesuit theologians one finds the ecclesial disposition of love that animated Ignatius, Favre, and Ward.

In her final section, Goulding turns to what she terms the “contemporary papacy” and considers the ecclesial disposition of Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Though she certainly demonstrates the unity of their love for the Church and for Christ, one may ask, does not the ‘contemporary’ history of the papacy start with John XXIII and continue with Paul VI? To be sure, she mentions them briefly, but in a way that privileges John Paul II and his successors. When Pope Francis canonized John XXIII and John Paul II, did he not suggest their equal status in holiness and in significance for the Church? When it comes to love for the Church, would it not be difficult to outdo a bishop of Rome who called Vatican II and who endured more than a little hostility from an entrenched Vatican bureaucracy?

This book raises intriguing questions about what matters most in a trajectory from Ignatius of Loyola to Pope Francis. Though the work could have consid-