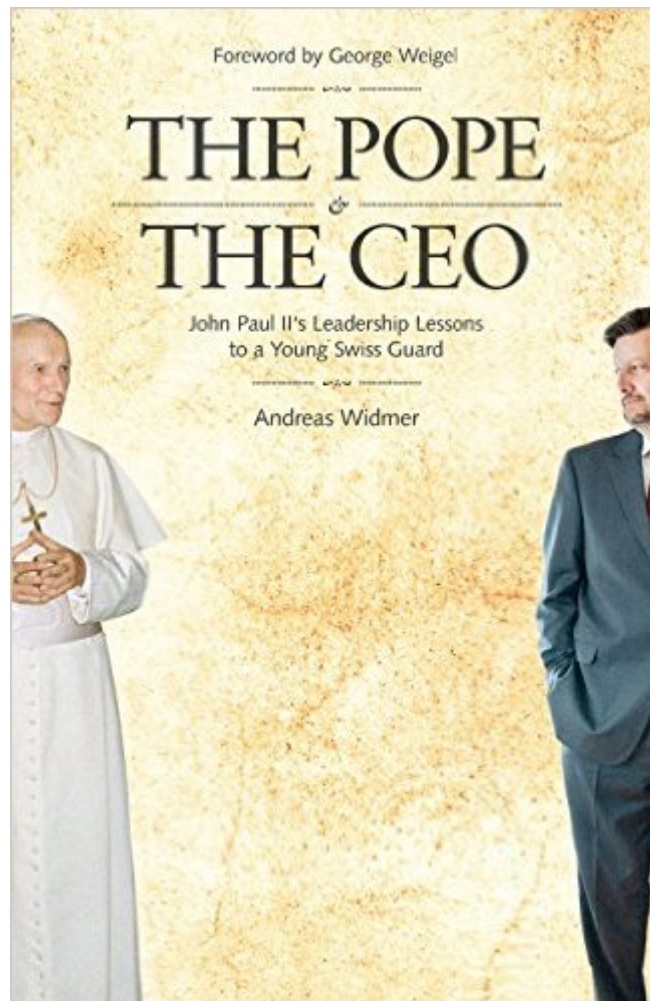


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The Pope & The CEO: John Paul II's Leadership Lessons To A Young Swiss Guard



Synopsis

John Paul II showed me what real leadership looks like. He modeled for me how to pursue our God-given potential. Not coincidentally, this also makes us and those around us better employees, more capable of and more willing to work hard at building a stronger company. That's something that makes both good human sense and good business sense. - Andreas Widmer Former Swiss Guard, CEO and business leader Andreas Widmer gives a behind-the-scenes look into Pope John Paul II, the most authentically human person I've ever met, and reveals how those memories shaped and forged his success as a corporate executive. In what papal biographer George Weigel calls a powerful example of leadership at work, Widmer recounts his personal experiences serving Blessed Pope John Paul II in the Swiss Guard, and the secrets of successful leadership that he learned at the feet of the great pope.

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Customer Reviews

Andreas Widmer, in his early 20s, spent two years protecting Blessed Pope John Paul II as a Pontifical Swiss Guard from 1986 to 1988. As a guard, he could not miss him as he saw and spent time with the Pope more times than he could count. And at 6'9", the Pope could not miss him ("my tallest guard," said John Paul) either. After leaving the Vatican, Widmer came to the U.S. to study international business, worked in several software start-ups, and led the Monitor Group's OTF group. Along the way, he lost the love for what he was doing and questioned the path he was on. When leaving the Swiss Guards, John Paul II told him to "Go and bring Christ into the world;

once you go back and out into the world, it is understood that you will continue to shield Him, only this time with your persona, and how you live your life." And he has...having since founded SEVEN (Social Equity Venture Fund) which is a virtual non-profit entity run by entrepreneurs whose strategy is to markedly increase the rate of innovation and diffusion of enterprise-based solutions to poverty. In the thoroughly enjoyable and memorable "The Pope & the CEO," Widmer shares his life story - his role as a Swiss Guard; his "hitting the wall" and resultant career transformation; and the impact, in later years, John Paul II had on his understanding of his true vocation, and the core beliefs of a leader. Each of the nine chapters is focused on a critical learning of Widmer's (e.g. Know Who You Are: The Importance of Vocation, Know What's Right: Ethics and the Human Person, Life as a Witness: The Testimony of Right Action) and ends with questions for reflection.

According to Andreas Widmer, business leader and author, "No cardinal wants to be pope. They know too well what goes into it, what the office demands. The work is endless, the responsibilities bone-crushing. There is no end to it, save death." Well...until recently! Pope Benedict XVI, the 265th pope, stepped down Feb. 28, 2013, after eight years as the spiritual leader of 1.2 billion Catholics--and the world now watches as the cardinals gather in their conclave to discern God's choice for the next pope. So with that backdrop, I just finished Widmer's poignant book for CEOs, leaders and managers. As a young Swiss Guard to the pope, the author observed the back office leadership of Pope John Paul II. Yet later, Widmer failed in business and had to re-learn the simple, but God-honoring papal principles of leadership. It's a page-turner because the stories are so powerful and practical. There are nine chapters in this spiritual/business portrait of the Pope who asked Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Emeritus Pope tomorrow) to join the Vatican team: Know Who You Are, Know God, Know Where You Are and Where You Are Going, Know the Team and five more very contemporary topics. Until today, this review was pre-written in my mind with killer quotes, arresting lead sentences, and humorous eye-opening stories. My wife, Joanne, genuinely appreciated my "let-me-read-you-another-story" marathon over several evenings. But...I'm skipping all of that to urge you simply to buy the book and read the memorable account from his last chapter, "Live Detachment: Intentional Humility and Poverty." Widmer writes, "Over the years, I've heard a lot of great stories about John Paul II from friends at the Vatican and others who knew him personally.

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