

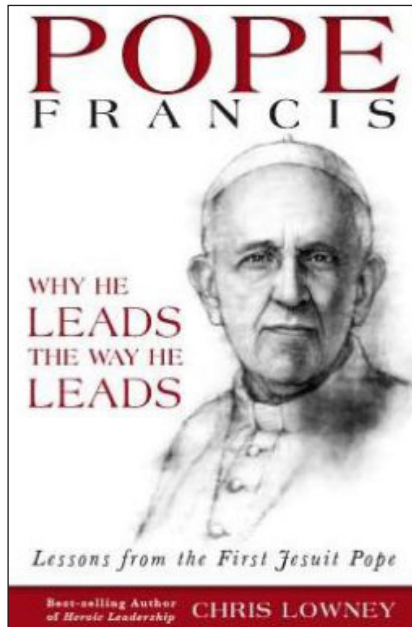
LEADERSHIP FORMATION: THE POPE'S EXAMPLE

REVIEWED BY FR. JOSEPH J. DRISCOLL, MDiv, MS

In 2013, on that cold March night in Rome, the flooding spotlights leaped back and forth from the balcony of St. Peter's, where the smiling Pope Francis stood, to the square below, with its throng of a hundred thousand waving handkerchiefs. And the flood of spotlights has not ceased between the Pope and the people. Perhaps it even has intensified, as Francis has come down off that balcony and clearly chosen to remain closer to the people he serves.

The back and forth leap of spotlights is an apt metaphor for Chris Lowney in his latest book. The title accurately puts Francis center stage as a case study on leadership. Lowney, however, a former Jesuit and former managing director at the investment bank J. P. Morgan, also chooses leading characters in the public square from the worlds of business, religion, politics and history. He states that this book is about all of us, "managers, popes or parents." For him, leadership spans the global world of business to the home where parents lead in the family. He is true to his word, in that he consistently traverses the different worlds, applying the leadership principles to the roles of all three.

Lowney's premise is that "leaders act



POPE FRANCIS: WHY HE LEADS THE WAY HE LEADS

BY CHRIS LOWNEY
Loyola Press, 2013
184 pages, \$17.80

on beliefs and convictions formed long before they reached the executive suite or papal apartments." Consequently, if you want to understand Pope Francis'

"leadership vision," then you need to understand the underlying "leadership formation" which, for Francis, was the rigor of his training as a Jesuit.

The heart of the book, then, is an exploration of this Jesuit formation that Lowney and Francis shared, the "management vision" of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Lowney identifies six "foundational commitments" that he says are core to the Jesuit life. These six combine into pairs of seemingly paradoxical commitments: Know myself deeply, yet transcend that self to serve others; immerse myself fully in a complex world, yet step back for daily reflection; and live fully in the present while reverencing the past, yet boldly create a future.

In succeeding chapters, the author explores each commitment using three sources: the words and actions of Pope Francis in his first months in office; the Pope's own formation experience; and interviews with seminarians who had him as a formation director when he was in that role many years ago in Argentina.

A critical metaphor for Ignatius in his ministry formation is that of a journey. One critical tool for this life journey of growth into leadership was the *examen*. This tool of reflection and prayer was the way Ignatius sought to "keep Jesuits recollected and God-focused, despite their activist lifestyles," Lowney says. He suggests that this inner process of daily reflection is the place where all the commitments of authentic leadership are tested in confronting one's own weaknesses and strengths.

Lowney skillfully spotlights aspects

FROM POPE FRANCIS: WHY HE LEADS THE WAY HE LEADS

You can't lead others if you use power primarily to serve yourself and your ego. Leadership is not about you, it's about the rest of us — your family, community, colleagues, or customers. "Get over yourself" is how we blunt New Yorkers put it. Pope Francis employs a richer concept: "Authentic power is service."

of the journeys of authentic leaders. He highlights Pope Francis visibly breaking tradition, washing the feet of a woman who is non-Christian, and describes a seminarian's lasting memory of Francis — Fr. Jorge Bergoglio, at that time, supervisor of a Jesuit seminary — wearing dirty plastic boots and feeding pigs. Lowney then tells of a Colorado doctor who takes off his shoes and gives them to a barefoot homeless man in the emergency department before discharge.

As the book ends, the author deliberately turns the spotlight away from Francis and his leadership and aims it down into the throngs of us in the square. He sketches out a succinct summary of the six commitments in the style of a credo, challenging us to comment on it in the margins, change the words, even “rip out” and “trash” the pages and start all over again.

In these final pages, Lowney wants us to “plant a stake in the ground” as did the 32-year old Jorge Bergoglio in a one-page credo he wrote and has carried in his breviary all these years.

If there were ever a workbook for ministry formation for leaders, Lowney provides the resource here, in this compendium of stories both inspiring and humorous; in an articulation of principles in language clear and translatable; and in a portable tool that worked for Francis over 40 years ago and surely can work for our leaders today.

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JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, March-April 2014

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