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The Catholic Company Man: Collisions of Faith, Catechism, and

Company Meetings

by Eric M. Meyer

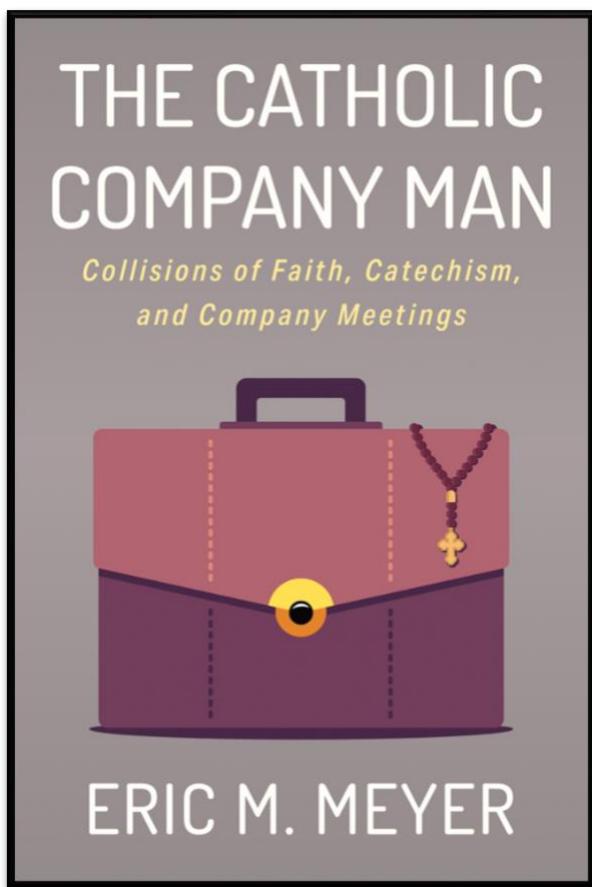
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New Title from Eric M. Meyer

The Catholic Company Man: Collisions of Faith, Catechism, and Company Meetings



The Catholic Company Man is a journey through faith and career. More than twenty years in the trenches with global pharmaceutical companies gave rise to this book. A cradle Catholic, Eric Meyer found a deepening curiosity for understanding the faith while navigating his family and job. The stories come from decades of interesting, sometimes humorous, corporate happenings. As he wrestled with career and faith, Meyer found the need to uncover answers to many questions. *The Catholic Company Man* is an on-ramp to the brilliance of Catholicism for those who don't yet have the theological chops to jump head-long into Aquinas.

Eric M. Meyer is a twenty-year veteran of the corporate world. He lives in Moscow, Idaho, with his wife and four daughters. On Sunday he does his best teaching high school religious education class. This is his first book.



Interview with Eric M. Meyer

What inspired a book called *The Catholic Company Man*?

As a corporate traveler for over 20 years, I've spent long nights in Marriott lounges all over the country. I've eaten at most of the Ruth's Chris steakhouses while consistently spending more than 100 nights away from home each year. As a Catholic it has always been a balance between how to act at work and on the road. A long week of work leads to a long flight home. Then by Sunday you sit in the pew and try and reset a bit before doing it all again the next week. This book reflects my experiences of the collisions of faith, catechism, and company meetings.

What is your corporate background?

I have spent 20+ years in the pharmaceutical business. My skills and experience include sales, operations, and marketing. My family relocated nine times in those years. I've been involved in multi-billion dollar medical brands for diseases like Parkinsons, Multiple Sclerosis, and Childhood Cancers.

How did you come to your Catholic faith?

I grew up in a Catholic household in the 70s and 80s. My mom actually spent about a year in the convent prior to marrying my Dad. We never missed mass, even on vacation, but there was little talk of the faith otherwise. I was 40 years old the first time I opened a copy of the catechism. My journey to faith was slow and steady. Due to a few very divine experiences I kept searching, even through the years of youth and parties. In the end, faith continues to be a constant curiosity and every question I have asked of the faith over the last 54 years has been answered to my satisfaction. I love the Catholic faith, it is brilliant.

What is the goal of the book?

The book is a compilation of stories, all true, which I experienced first hand. Over the last 20 years I've kept notes. The idea was to take each story and combine it with the applicable scripture and catechism citations which work to articulate what I learned from each experience. Given there are so many cradle Catholics like me, on the road all week and in the pew on Sunday, there needs to be an 'on-ramp' to deeper curiosity about our faith. A guy like me is not going to start with Summa Theological, it's too deep. *The Catholic Company Man* is hopefully an 'on-ramp' through relatable stories and reflection.

Have you written anything else over the years?

I've written a few tunes along the way, but this is my first book.

How did you ultimately get published by Wipf and Stock?

Well, like any struggling first time writer I submitted dozens and dozens of queries to any publisher remotely applicable. Then, after nearly two dozen rejections, *The Catholic Company Man* was picked up by Wipf and Stock Publishers from Oregon. Actually, when it was finally finished, I took the manuscript to church in the middle of the day and sat down. I just asked God to do what He willed with it. It's all His.

What, if anything, does the book recommend in terms of taking our faith to work?

For the record, I am not a theologian. My thoughts on faith are simple in nature, but I have found some effective ways to let people know who I am while at work:

Keep an indiscreet crucifix on your desk.

Mention Mass in your conversations.

Talk about your kids' involvement in church.

Always carry a rosary in your pocket.

You don't have to be a street-corner evangelist at work. Simply work into conversation and discussion the fact that you are Catholic and doors to deeper conversation will open.

Where can you find the book?

The Catholic Company Man can be found at Amazon or Barnes and Noble by searching the title. Here are a couple of other sites:

www.bookshop.org/shop/catholic - an organization that supports local bookshops.

www.wipfandstock.com - Buy direct from the publisher, simply search '*The Catholic Company Man*'

An Excerpt from *The Catholic Company Man: Collisions of Faith, Catechism, and Company Meetings*

The apostles must have dominated the cocktail parties. They must have been magnanimous personalities who always showed up bigger than the moment. They could never have been normal dudes like you and me. Right? I mean, these are the guys who walk the halls at the national meeting like they own the joint. But perhaps we should look a little deeper.

Take a look at Peter the fisherman. He scammed the Romans, fished illegally, and fell deeply in debt. Profanity was very likely his first language. He knew how to hose brews, rip off dirty jokes, and wheel and deal. But when the chips were down, he failed. He denied Christ three times but was man enough to ask forgiveness and fulfill his destined role in history. Without hesitation, Peter accepted Jesus's challenge to change the world. When it was all said and done, he accepted his crucifixion upside down so as not to disrespect the death of Christ.

That's just Peter. Paul, John, Andrew, and the others all lived an incredible story. Each would have dominated reality TV today. Mike Rowe would make the story come alive on season five of *The Deadliest Catch*—"The Sea of Galilea."

Rowe: Pete. Now, you formed this little gang with no money and no real backing?

Peter: No, Jesus formed us, but he left me in charge after the damn Romans killed him.

Rowe: Wait, they killed your CEO?

Peter: Yep.

Rowe: A week after you showed up in Jerusalem?

Peter: Uh-huh.

Rowe: Wow. Are you going to throw in the towel? Go back to fishing?

Peter: Nope. They'll probably kill us before it's all over.

The ratings would have been off the charts. All told, the original Twelve ended up being bigger than life, as each one played a major role in world history. Almost every one of them died a martyr. But they were nothing more than you and me at the beginning. They somehow knew their moment and when to act. If so, then my middle-management, twenty-year corporate run to the golden handcuffs may just be a starting point as well. Will I know how and when to act?

There are millions of guys grinding away at the job while still attempting some connection to our grand and magnificent Catholic faith. It's my story, but it's also the story of so many others simply because I'm not all that unique. Is a guy that works in finance at Xerox an apostle? Does being a middle manager at Boeing make you a candidate for sainthood? In this modern age, nobody is being stoned or hung on a cross in the break room for shooting their mouth off about God. At least not yet. Maybe we shouldn't be placed in the same group as Peter and John, but there is good to be done, and we must be the doers.

The biblical stories of the heroes and martyrs who literally built Christianity stone by stone are legendary. There are hundreds of incredible tales of ancient greatness. But there aren't many stories of Saint Bill from the Mailroom or Blessed Frank in IT. The apostles had jobs before they took on the world. They must have whined and moaned about the boss, the traffic, and the government just like you and me. But they just somehow figured out their exact calling at the exact right moment. Perhaps our sainthood awaits us if we can persevere in faith throughout careers littered with conference rooms, corporate travel, and meetings about meetings about meetings. The heroes, martyrs, and apostles didn't set a goal to acquire these labels. They lived the gospel in their everyday lives, likely never knowing the impact. Maybe our moment will come.

Vocation is a big word with a deep meaning. I never thought of my job in corporate America as a vocation. I can see how farmers and ranchers and miners can be satisfied at the end of the day because they literally give humanity the ingredients for life. Doctors can sleep at night, I would hope, since they fix broken people, and teachers must feel pretty good about molding young minds. But corporate guys, I don't know. There are a whole lot of seemingly endless meetings that can dilute any real feeling of accomplishment.

Even in the most efficient companies, the ones with the coolest products, there are guys who endlessly push PowerPoint presentations from conference room to conference room. I don't for a second question the value of what they do, but let's face it, not every job is glamorous. People get bored and go through the motions. Guys get lost while enduring decades of just getting by and providing for the family. Being a company man is noble, but it's really not all that sexy for 86.5 percent of us.

Is it possible that the day will come when corporate guys everywhere venerate Phil from Strategy & Communications as the patron saint of PowerPoint presentations?

Praise for *The Catholic Company Man: Collisions of Faith, Catechism, and Company Meetings*

“This highly personal, hard-wrought reflection on living out the faith in corporate America is long overdue. It is the fruit of one who has wrestled with real life faith issues that are both engaging and timely. I highly recommend it!”

—**Chase Hasenoehrl, pastor, St. Augustine’s Catholic Center**

“In *The Catholic Company Man*, Meyer offers so many interesting anecdotes, takes the reader to so many different places, and, best yet, effortlessly connects his work in a narrative that is both fun and easy to read. I look forward to this book being an essential for any Catholic looking to better live their faith while they live their life.”

—**Gracjan Kraszewski, director of intellectual formation, Vandal Catholic**

