

Pope Awesome and Other Stories

Cari Donaldson

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Cari Donaldson : Pope Awesome and Other Stories before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pope Awesome and Other Stories:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. More of the same, and that's a good thingBy MicaelaI've been reading Cari's blog for about 2 years now. (If you haven't found it yet, you really must.) She's funny and insightful, and the stories she shares there have often ended with me in tears. Tears of side-splitting laughter, tears of profound joy,

tears of been-there-done-that camaraderie. This book is no exception. Cari GETS it. She gets life, she gets motherhood, she gets comedy. Most importantly, she gets so much about the spiritual world that many of us cradle Catholics take for granted (or flat out ignore). I was handed the gift of faith as an infant, and although I've had my struggles coming to terms with Catholicism's teachings, I've never had to question too hard or look too deep; the truth was always close at hand. Donaldson, on the other hand, had to peel away layer after layer of what society had given her as a belief-system to find the core meaning of her existence and her relationship with God. And she did it with a tenacity that would shame the rest of us, if she were not so gracious and so dang. funny. If you're a Catholic, read this book. It will make you proud to be so. If you or someone you know is considering converting to Catholicism, I also highly recommend this book. It's a great look at the thought process many converts go through, but in a highly readable format. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Best ending a biography ever had! By C. Anderson The writing was so enjoyable and engaging, and the story so compelling, I had to force myself to put the book away a little over halfway through in order to avoid staying up all night. I LOVE the humorous footnotes. I have not enjoyed footnotes like that since reading Will Cuppy's "The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody." My favorite kind of footnotes. I wish she had put 100 more of them in the book. I love how the author describes how a painting of Mary moved her heart to realize what she was searching for. I love the "contraband" Catholic medal. Such a lovely personal touch to this story! And the ending? Oh my! It is the most lovely ending I have ever read to any book. It is the mostest, bestest, "feel-good" ending you could imagine. In my opinion. Beautifully chosen and written! It was the perfect event to sum up the story. This story of a soul, longing for God, the REAL God, and His truth (and nothing but the truth), is something I relate to perfectly. It has just been a few short weeks since God dared to even hint to me that what I had been searching for my whole life could be found in the Catholic Church (He knew my upbringing and knew when I would be open to the possibility--after ruling out everything else and realizing where I had gaping holes that needed to be filled in my personal knowledge and by Him). I related almost identically to many moments in this book--and hope to continue on the same path. After reading the Preview, which cut me short very near the author's sharing of an emotional state like to my very own current one, I knew it was what God was sending me to help me through a difficult night. And thank God for Kindle and the ability to have the whole book in less than five seconds. So, I'm not Catholic yet, but praying passionately every day, and letting God take me there if He will (begging Him to do so, actually). Learning about the Catholic faith from scratch can be very overwhelming. I can only look up little bits at a time and process what I'm learning--which means throwing out everything I was told, and relearning what I'm finding to be historically and Biblically true. Bit by bit. I liked the referral to "Catholicism for Dummies." I think I'm going to go get that one now! It is hard to know where to start, but God will lead. Faithful Shepherd. He always does. He led me to this book! The only thing I would have liked to see is photos: Like that Jessica McClintok dress, and the painting of Mary, and that "Catholic Contraband" Medal, and the church with the turquoise roof. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Equal Parts Charming, Informative, Hopeful and Enjoyable By callherhappy My feelings about this book could be summed up with an email I sent to the author: "I am reading your book right now, and I feel like you wrote it just for me. I too grew up (still live) in Michigan. I went to State (2008), and had a conversion after spending years doing a lot of things that I am still not proud of. So, thank you for writing this book. I feel like you are helping me make sense out of my past - a past which is very painful for me." This book is equal parts charming, informative, hopeful and enjoyable. And it's funny too. Just read it already!

Take a two-income, quasi-New Age, newlywed couple with two Greyhounds and the resolve never to have children or to embrace any form of organized religion. Add ten years of hunger for something more. What do you get? A large Catholic family, of course. And one in which the second youngest, while watching Pope Benedict depart the Vatican, solemnly declares, "Now I'll be pope: Pope Awesome the First, with my Swiss Guard army. And if my army men don't give me any new video games, I'll punch them in the face." In words often as sassy as those of her little Pope Awesome, Catholic homeschooler Cari Donaldson here relates how her best friend's newborn baby, a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and the words of the Miraculous Medal called her forth from a selfish, secular way of life into the welcoming arms of the Church. Six children in ten years have banished all her hopes for a tidy secular life, and, in her upscale town, where "Cats, not kids" bumper stickers are seen, have raised countless eyebrows along the way. Undaunted, Cari declares that "If we're to be a traveling carnival freak-show by New England standards, then we're going to be a carnival freak-show for Jesus," although her husband has stopped her from airbrushing onto her van a mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe riding a unicorn over a sparkling river. Above all, Cari tells of the awakening of her love for the Eucharist, the deepening of her love for her husband and her children, and the humility and faith these experiences have nurtured in her. To Jesus she confesses, "You taught me to be open to the lives You wanted to bring into the world through me. I rose above myself just enough to let You bring the blessings of these children into my life. I was sometimes scared and sometimes angry, and always at a loss about how I was going to mother these children, but I knew that it would be Your grace, and not my shortcomings, that would triumph." Through Cari's remarkable tale of her conversion and the joy she's found as a Catholic, you'll be reminded of the many profound, lifelong blessings God gives you through your Faith, and, yes, even through life's small troubles and joys like little

Pope Awesome punching his Swiss Guards in the face that come along every day. Cari's tale will help you come to share her conviction that we never know what God has planned for us tomorrow, but, for sure, it will be better than anything we could have planned, even in our wildest dreams.

Lisa M. Hendey, Founder of CatholicMom.com and author of A Book of Saints for Catholic Moms "Pope Awesome and Other Stories reads like you're sitting across the table for coffee with a good friend, the cool one who always makes you laugh and leaves you feeling inspired, like you can take on anything in life. Cari Donaldson's book -- a smart, sassy, irresistible spiritual memoir -- is the New Evangelization done right. If each of us shared our love for our Church just as openly as Cari does here, the New Evangelization would be a smashing success. Can't wait to share this great book with friends and family!" Fr. Dwight Longenecker -- parish priest, blogger and author of Quest for the Creed and The Romance of Religion "Pope Awesome is a rollicking, thoughtful, hilarious, heart-string tugging conversion story. Cari Donaldson stands up for life, love, family and faith with feisty good humor, open hearted intelligence and a subversive twinkle in her eye." Jen Fulwiler, author, speaker, and blogger at conversiondiary.com "Cari Donaldson is a brilliant storyteller who knows how to share her experience in a way that is humorous, touching, and imminently relatable. Pope Awesome is a memoir that everyone is sure to love." Hallie Lord, speaker, editor of Sex, Style and Substance, and blogger at moxiewife.com "Cari Donaldson brings the reader into the wild ride of conversion, marriage, and family life. The funny, often poignant tales from her life are sure to have readers laughing and nodding in recognition." Colleen Martin, blogger at martinfamilymoments.blogspot.com "Cari's hilarious and uplifting stories really touched my heart and renewed my love for our amazing Catholic faith! If I wasn't already a mother and a Catholic, this book would inspire me to become both." Daria Sockey, author of The Everyday Catholic's Guide to the Liturgy of the Hours "As a cradle Catholic sometimes tempted to take the life of faith for granted, I need to snack on conversion stories from time to time they delight while they nourish. Cari Donaldson's was a real banquet. Her journey from secular nothing-ism to full blown, culture-of-life orthodoxy is astounding. Her tortuous online search for truth brought home to me the loneliness of unbelief. Her amazement and relief at discovering Christ revived my joy. And her zany descriptions of large family life are just plain fun." Rebekah Es, blogger at RebekahsWeblog.blogspot.com "I was truly inspired by this book's tale of how Faith was found and met with unabashed courage, and was allowed to radically change Cari's life." Ana Hahn, blogger at TimeFliesWhenYoureHavingBabies.blogspot.com "The presence of God's grace is all too evident in this beautifully and hilariously written book. Through so many heart warming and humorous stories, Cari does a stellar job of mixing the sublime with the real and constantly hearkening back to God's loving providence." --Personal Endorsements From the Inside Flap In words often as sassy as those of her little Pope Awesome, Catholic homeschooler Cari Donaldson here relates how her best friend's newborn baby, a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and the words of the Miraculous Medal called her forth from a selfish, secular way of life into the welcoming arms of the Church. Six children in ten years have banished all her hopes for a tidy secular life, and, in her upscale town, where "Cats, not kids" bumper stickers are seen, have raised countless eyebrows along the way. Undaunted, Cari declares that "If we're to be a traveling carnival freak-show by New England standards, then we're going to be a carnival freak-show for Jesus," although her husband has stopped her from airbrushing onto her van a mural of Our Lady of Guadalupe riding a unicorn over a sparkling river. Above all, Cari tells of the awakening of her love for the Eucharist, the deepening of her love for her husband and her children, and the humility and faith these experiences have nurtured in her. To Jesus she confesses, "You taught me to be open to the lives You wanted to bring into the world through me. I rose above myself just enough to let You bring the blessings of these children into my life. I was sometimes scared and sometimes angry, and always at a loss about how I was going to mother these children, but I knew that it would be Your grace, and not my shortcomings, that would triumph." Through Cari's remarkable tale of her conversion and the joy she's found as a Catholic, you'll be reminded of the many profound, lifelong blessings God gives you through your Faith, and, yes, even through life's small troubles and joys like little Pope Awesome punching his Swiss Guards in the face that come along every day. Cari's tale will help you come to share her conviction that we never know what God has planned for us tomorrow, but, for sure, "it will be better than anything we could have planned, even in our wildest dreams."