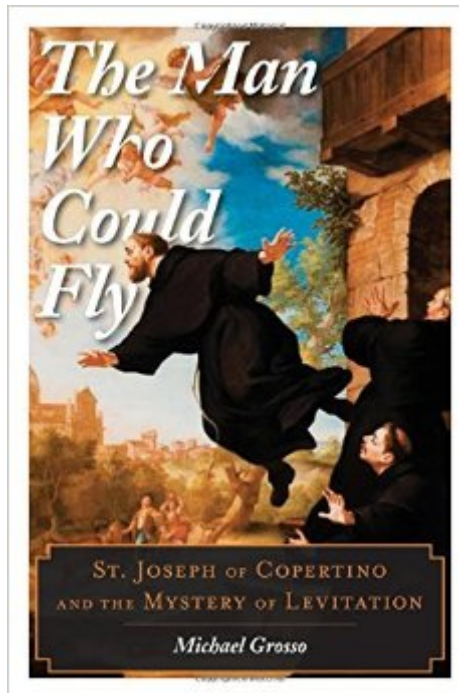


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The Man Who Could Fly: St. Joseph Of Copertino And The Mystery Of Levitation



Synopsis

St. Joseph of Copertino began having mystical visions at the age of seven, but it was not until he began practicing his faith as a Franciscan priest that he realized the full potential of his mind's power over his body—he was able to levitate. Throughout his priesthood St. Joseph became famous for frequent levitations that were observed on hundreds of occasions and by thousands of witnesses, including many skeptics. Michael Grosso delves into the biography of the saint to explore the many strange phenomena that surrounded his life and develops potential physical explanations for some of the most astounding manifestations of his religious ecstasy. Grosso draws upon contemporary explorations into cognition, the relationship between the human mind and body, and the scientifically recorded effects of meditation and other transcendent practices to reveal the implications of St. Joseph's experiences and abilities.

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Customer Reviews

Michael Grosso was particularly qualified to write this book. He is: a PH.D.; a former professor of philosophy; the author of several scholarly books and many, many scholarly articles. He is also author of a book about his own extraordinary experiences, complete with speculations on what they mean. He is a lapsed Catholic, a polyglot able to read the original Italian records concerning Joseph of Copertino, and a believer in the scientific method. All this comes together nicely in this little book that examines Joseph's life and circumstances in a very interesting, perhaps unique, way. The outline of Joseph's biography is covered in a relatively few pages (about 20). All the rest of the book concentrates on the right question: "Given the facts, what do they mean?" What do they say about

reality? What do they say to us, today? Particularly, given the evidence of what is possible, where do we go from here? I can't think of a more important topic. It seems to me that in our day both science and theology are somewhat crippled, because they don't take each other seriously enough. Science -- particularly the most materialistic form of scientism -- dismisses theological concerns, "knowing" there can be no such thing as miracles, non-physical reality, or teleology. Religious thought, similarly, dismisses the idea that its experiences might be studied by those not sharing the beliefs but willing to examine the data. This divorce impoverishes science, because it removes whole areas of human concern from careful investigation, -- and religion, because if "spiritual" concerns are unconnected to mundane reality, how relevant can they be? So it is a relief to find thinkers such as Michael Grosso, willing and able to investigate all sides of a seemingly-well-known phenomenon. His arguments, and his tentative conclusions, are nothing short of mind-opening.

This book is very special and wonderful. Michael Grosso Ph.D. is not a typical historian, nor a typical scientist, nor a typical spiritual person, but rather manages to hold all these separate and usually opposing views simultaneously in a unique way that is thoroughly refreshing. This book is extremely well researched. Grosso searches for feasible, scientific explanations of how St. Joseph of Copertino might have levitated. Yet, in this book Grosso also explores what the spiritual states St. Joseph might have obtained that allowed him to not only levitate, but also to manifest countless other forms of miracles. The fact that the Inquisition itself tried St. Joseph twice and both times found him innocent of any crime other than breaking the normal ways in which our world functions said so much to me. I enjoyed this book for many reasons, but the main reason was that it is not a "New Age" spiritual book in the general sense, yet neither is it a scientific investigation out to disprove magic and miracles. In the last chapter Grosso explores the hypothesis that if St. Joseph's case is historically supportable, then what other beliefs and ideas of what is possible in the material world do we have to reconsider. An overall great book, but it is the last chapter that truly convinced me that knowledge about a fifteenth century Saint is most relevant for expanding the modern mind.

This book really takes you away and makes you wonder. St Joseph's spontaneous levitations and flights were witnessed by hundreds if not thousands over a 30+ year career, at times even soaring high into the air. Now what are the odds that all those people were lying and/or conned, esp. in light of St Joseph's documented guileless to a fault nature (his levitations actually embarrassed him).. Exponentially thought provoking book, he was either truly chosen as an example by God or we live

in a rubbery, mind/ belief created reality (or both).

This is a book that celebrates the marvelous and inexplicable, that reminds us all that "There are more things in heaven and earth. . .than are dreamt of. . ." in just about any dreary reductionist philosophy! Beautifully written and a wonderful book to begin the new year with.

Get ready for a thought adventure! Philosopher Michael Grosso has laid out before us compelling evidence that Joseph Desa born on June 17, 1603 in the southern Italian village of Copertino could levitate while in an ecstatic state. Is the evidence compelling enough for you? Before you read the book, consider whether you are open to the possibility. Human beings throughout history have repeatedly demonstrated that facts do not necessarily change fixed and cherished beliefs. If you are willing to consider the possibility of ecstatic levitation, Grosso's excellent prose will change that possibility to likelihood. In the introduction you will be treated to a hard hitting, well written critique of materialism which Grosso describes as a "metaphysical doctrine, grown fat and triumphant on the back of modern science." (p. 3) Once you are willing to consider the actuality of ecstatic levitation, Grosso provides possible theoretical options including the vast reservoir for explaining improbable events, quantum physics, which itself defies conventional notions of reality. In the final chapter Grosso integrates levitation with the long historical association between religion and what we now call parapsychology. Quoting St. Augustine a miracle "does not occur contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know of nature." (p. 193) We humans seem to be embarking on a much needed evolution from strict materialism to a re-awakening in new forms of our age old sense of the untapped powers of our minds. Michael Grosso and St. Joseph of Copertino are helping to lead the way.

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