



The Man Who Could Fly: St. Joseph of Copertino and the Mystery of Levitation

By Michael Grosso

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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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Editorial Review

Review

Grosso, former humanities and philosophy teacher at Marymount Manhattan College, canvasses the spiritual awakenings of St. Joseph of Copertino, the 17th century Italian friar who was purportedly could levitate, dedicating ample space to his troubled childhood. After an introduction that grounds St. Joseph's miraculous feats in contemporary arguments against strict scientific, materialist views on reality—particularly the work of philosopher Paul Feyerabend—Grosso guides readers through St. Joseph's private and public life, detailing the many primary accounts of supernatural events that seemingly encircled St. Joseph: levitation, psychokinesis, poltergeists, inedia, and materialization. He asks the why and how questions of 'is it possible?' Readers who are interested in the mystery surrounding historical figures shunned by the church will discover tidbits of fascinating information regarding this oft-suffering soul. Grosso's work here is thorough. (*Publishers Weekly*)

A miracle, to quote St. Augustine, 'does not occur contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know of nature.' So what happens when a miracle occurs, repeatedly, what can it tell us about the nature of the nature we inhabit and, more importantly perhaps, about its meaning? This is the subject of Michael Grosso's searching, beautifully written and challenging book.... *The Man Who Could Fly* is not only an exemplary case study of a levitating saint but an agenda both for further research, search and reconfiguration of what it might mean to be human in a universe the knowledge of which remains enticingly and enjoyably uncertain, open and inviting. (*Network Review*)

The Man Who Could Fly is a story of considerable interest to parapsychologists, and one which Grosso tells very well indeed, with the attention to relevant detail one expects from a well-informed philosopher. (*Journal of the Society for Psychological Research*)

Provocatively, happily, Michael Grosso's elegant book on the ecstasies and flights of Joseph does not leave the reader with an easy escape from the conclusion that St. Joseph of Copertino really was 'the man who could fly.' (Jeffrey J Kripal, author of *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*)

Grosso's enthralling study immerses us in the strange world of a levitating, seventeenth-century mystic, but does much more too. Above all, it invites us to question present-day assumptions about the dependence of mind on brain and, ultimately, the nature of reality. (Paul Marshall, scholar of religion, and author of *Mystical Encounters with the Natural World*)

The Man Who Could Fly is a thrilling examination of our evolving understanding of consciousness and human abilities. Michael Grosso inverts the conventional dogma that matter makes mind by showing that mind shapes matter. Beautifully written and tightly reasoned, this book is a potent antidote to the suffocating, deadening effects of the materialist ideology of our time. *The Man Who Could Fly* is one of the most important explorations of consciousness thus far in the twenty-first century. (Larry Dossey, MD, Author of *Healing Beyond the Body, Reinventing Medicine and Healing Words*)

About the Author

Michael Grosso has taught humanities and philosophy at Marymount Manhattan College, City University of New York, and New Jersey City University. He is affiliated with the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia, is on the Board of Directors of the American Philosophical Practitioner's

Association, and is a past editor of the journal for that association. His published books include *The Final Choice: Playing the Survival Game* (1985); *Frontiers of the Soul: Exploring Psychic Evolution* (1992), *The Millennium Myth: Love and Death at the End of Time* (1995), *Soulmaking: Uncommon Paths to Self-Understanding* (1997), and *Experiencing the Next World Now* (2004).

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