

LEVITATION

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Most of us have had dreams of flying. In fact, they are one of the most reported dream experiences. Freud also noted that they are one the most common dreams that people have although, interestingly, he stated that he had never had one!

Flying dreams are usually exhilarating, joyful and liberating giving a sense of being in control and being above it all. Sometimes there is almost an erotic tingling sense about them.

The dreams are a release from the constraints of our earthbound lives and when we land it almost always is a very soft landing. Flying in our dreams is like being free of gravity, a levitation, and usually is an altogether very pleasant experience.

I was recently reading the G.K. Chesterton book "St. Thomas Aquinas, The Dumb Ox." I was taken back a bit after reading the following:

"St. Thomas' [body build] was of a certain type... His bulk made it easy to regard him humorously as a sort of walking wine-barrel... he joked about it himself...

It seems certain that he lived a sort of secondary and mysterious life. Somebody seems to have caught a glimpse of the sort of solitary miracle which modern psychic people call levitation... there could have been no doubts or degrees about such a prodigious happening to such a person. It must have been like seeing one of the huge pillars of the church suspended like a cloud."

And in a another reference I read noted two of St. Thomas' friends frequently sat beside him and gently held onto him in church so that he would not float up.

Now when I used to think of levitation and defying gravity I had visions of witches, frauds and spiritualists with trumpets that floated through the air. But then we have this very famous passage from Scripture: Matt 14:22-27:

"[After feeding the 5,000, Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had

dismissed the crowds he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the sea.....**walking on the sea**.....When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

There it is in Scripture: levitation.

In fact, many holy people have been said to have experienced levitation; for example:

- Saint Francis of Assisi
- Saint Alphonsus Liguori
- Saint Catherine of Siena
- Saint Francis Xavier
- Saint John Bosco
- Saint Teresa of Avila
- Saint Ignatius Loyola
- Saint John of Cupertino

Saint Francis is recorded to having been suspended above the earth often to a height of 4 to 6 feet.

Saint Teresa's mystical thought describes the "ascent of the soul" in four stages. The last stage is

"intermitted sometimes by such an ecstatic flight that the body is literally lifted into space."

Saint John of Cupertino's levitations are well documented:

On [October 4, 1630](#), the town of Cupertino held a procession on the feast day of Saint [Francis of Assisi](#). Joseph was assisting in the procession when he suddenly soared into the sky, where he remained hovering over the crowd. When he descended and realized what had happened, he became so embarrassed that he fled to his mother's house and hid. This was the first of many flights, which soon earned him the nickname 'The Flying Saint.'

Joseph's life changed dramatically after this incident. His flights continued and came with increasing frequency. His superiors, alarmed at his lack of control, forbade him from community exercises, believing he would cause too great a distraction for the friary. For the fact was, Joseph could not contain himself. On hearing the names of [Jesus](#) or [Mary](#), the singing of hymns, during the feast of St. Francis, or while praying at Mass, he would go into a dazed state and soar into the air, remaining there until a superior commanded him under obedience to revive.

Joseph's most famous flight allegedly occurred during a papal audience before Pope [Urban VIII](#). When he bent down to kiss the Pope's feet, he was suddenly filled with reverence for Christ's Vicar on earth, and was lifted up into the air. Only when the [Minister General](#) of the Order, who was part of the audience, ordered him down was Joseph able to return to the floor.

What can we make of this?

Levitation can certainly be connected with a heightened awareness of spirituality. In many ways it lifts us away from our primary material world and connects us closer to a more holy existence. It fits neatly with our primitive vision of earth and hell being here and perhaps even below while union with God is in some ways up there.

Levitation often starts with prayer. It leads not to just contemplation but to an exciting experience of some sort. In a way it signifies that we are not just an earth grub but are on our way toward something very important – up there.

So then, maybe we should practice levitation. That's right, **practice levitation**. Perhaps it will lead us to a special place. It could be exciting.

I don't have levitation instructions. But I'll tell you what I have been trying to do lately: I try to get myself in the right mood by reading scriptures or perhaps the Liturgy of the Hours. Then I try to use some old concepts of meditation: focus, relax, go to a pleasant scene in my mind, use all my senses for the scene: olfactory, tactile, auditory, visual, taste. Then I imagine I am there with a very large balloon or cloud over my head with fine strings attached from the balloon to my body and with the Holy Spirit inside the balloon or cloud. The Holy Spirit... ever... so... gently... lifts... me... up because I told the Holy Spirit where I want to go; I want to reach the place where I can touch the hand of God.

I focus very hard. The other day, I can't be totally sure, but I could have sworn my chair was almost half an inch above the ground. ---Maybe. ----At least it's a start.