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Publisher's Synopsis

Do miracles really happen? What is the evidence for paranormal phenomena that demonstrate divine power, and what alternative explanations can be offered for such apparently miraculous occurrences? How does the earnest enquirer assess the conflicting evidence and reach a conclusion?

These and related questions are answered in the illuminating examination of miracle claims by respected historical, paranormal, and forensic investigator Joe Nickell.

Not a critique of religion but rather a careful examination of the evidence relating to specific claims of the miraculous, *Looking for a Miracle* investigates a panoply of strange events, powers, and objects that are at the center of the controversy between so-called miraculists and confirmed skeptics.

Among the phenomena studied are "Miraculous Pictures", like the Shroud of Turin, the Edessan Image, and the Image of Guadalupe; seemingly "Magical Icons", such as weeping, bleeding, and otherwise animated paintings and statues; "Mystical Relics", including "burning handprints", the liquefying blood of St. Januarius, and ostensibly "incorruptible" corpses of saints; "Pentecostal Powers", such as speaking in tongues, the gift of prophecy, taking up serpents, and other powers and immunities; "Faith Healing", including the reported miracle cures at Lourdes and the practices of evangelists, Christian Scientists, and "psychic surgeons"; "Ecstatic Visions", like the apparitions of the Virgin Mary at Fatima and Medjugorje; and such "Sanctified Powers" as luminosity, levitation, bilocation, stigmata, inedia (going without food), and the ability to produce objects out of thin air.

Looking for a miracle is a wide-ranging investigative study of a controversial topic that has all too often been approached either with excessive credulity or a dismissive attitude. Religious believers and rationalist thinkers alike have much to learn from this revealing examination of the evidence for the miraculous.

Joe Nickell is a former stage magician and private investigator who has been featured in Discovery, Omni magazine and Scientific American. He now teaches technical writing at the University of Kentucky, where he is Writing Program adjunct to the College of Engineering. Dr. Nickell's other books include Inquest on the Shroud of Turin, Mysterious Realms, and, for young people, Wonder Workers!, and The Magic Detectives, all published by Prometheus Books.

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