

The Pope, iPhone and a 'New Era' With Pentecostals

An iPhone video message from Pope Francis to American charismatic Christians has gone viral, starting what some religious leaders are calling "a new era" with Pentecostals.

In January, the pope recorded a video greeting to a clergy friend with ties to Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Texas.

Copeland played the message to a gathering of ministry leaders and pastors.

"And let's pray to the Lord that He unites us all. ... And this is a miracle, the miracle of unity has begun," the pope says in the video.

The pope also asked the Pentecostal church to pray for him, adding he will pray for them as well.

"It's going everywhere. I've probably sent it out to 50 people or more," Cecil M. Robeck, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., said of the video. "They keep writing back and saying, 'We have to spread this.'"

One Pentecostal leader said that small gesture did more to heal the rift between Catholics and charismatics than the past four decades of dialogue.