

This 120-Year-Old Pentecost Prayer Still Rings Out Today

This year on Pentecost Sunday, June 4, Christians are looking back to celebrate the outpouring of the Spirit and eagerly anticipating a new outpouring for a new Pentecost.

Many trace the modern outpouring of the Holy Spirit to a prayer initiative begun in the Catholic Church 120 years ago by Pope Leo XIII. He established a nine day period prior to Pentecost, called a Novena, for the Church to pray for a new Pentecost just as the first century Church gathered for nine days prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. His prayer still resonates today:

“Renew, your wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost. Grant to Your Church that, being of one mind and steadfast in prayer, it may advance the reign of our Divine Savior, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Amen.”

The Pope’s prayer was answered within a few years in the Protestant church, as the Spirit fell in Topeka Kansas in 1900 and at Azuza Street in 1906. Hundreds, then thousands, then millions experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit which John the Baptist spoke of after he saw the Spirit descend on Jesus at His baptism (John 1:32-33). While many thought that speaking in tongues was the defining feature of the movement, William Seymour of Azuza Street saw a much larger picture:

“Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service.”

Fifty years ago Pope Leo XIII’s prayer was answered in the Catholic Church with the charismatic renewal. From its start in a small meeting at Duquesne University, it has spread through the Catholic Church and in to the Protestant and

Orthodox churches. Today there are 150 million charismatic Catholics and 600 million charismatic Christians.

Forty years ago charismatic Christians of all denominations met in Kansas City to worship and pray together. Yet even in the midst of the celebration, there was an awareness of the unfinished business of the charismatic renewal. Ralph Martin gave expression to this desire to go further together:

“I would have made you a light on a mountaintop, a city glorious and splendorous that all the world would have seen, but the body of My Son is broken.”

This year Pope Francis will welcome all Christians to Rome to celebrate Pentecost Sunday. Ralph Martin will return to Kansas City with the Kairos 2017 United in Christ meeting (See for details). We believe that God wants to heal the broken body of Christ.

Let us then join both Pope Leo XIII in praying for a new Pentecost and Ralph Martin in prayer for healing the broken body of Christ. Let us join with William Seymour in prayer to be flooded with love of God.

And let us dedicate ourselves to be united in Christ so that the world will know Him (John 17:23). {eoa}

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman, CPA and author who serves in local, national and international ministries spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is founder of the International Star Bible Society, telling how the heavens declare the glory of God, and the Emancipation Network, which helps people escape from financial bondage, and co-founder with his wife, Pat, of Corporate Prayer Resources, dedicated to helping intercessors.