Note: As a companion piece to the article "Pope Francis, Pentecostals and Interreligious Action", we recount a brief history of Pentecostalism and how it made its way into the Catholic Church.

Though it has been an incursion into the Catholic Church for only 47 years, Pentecostalism is of longer history. The majority of authors identify its true father as England's John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. Wesley preached about the baptism of the Holy Spirit (or "second blessing") that he claimed was an intense personal experience confronting the Christian with the presence of God.

In time, Wesley's Methodist sect became more mainstream, and Pentecostalism branched off into different areas. In his booklet "*Assemblies of God" and other "Pentecostal Churches*", the great counter-reformation apologist Rev. Dr. L. Rumble (of Radio Replies fame), traces Pentecostalism's expansion through the conduit of 19th Century Revivalism that spawned "Holiness Churches", the Latter Rain Movement and the Assembly of God churches. Since this booklet was written prior to present ecumenical confusion, Father Rumble clearly recognized Pentecostalism as another heretical sect that Catholics must avoid.

Regarding "talking in tongues" and other emotional outbursts, Father Rumble wrote:

> "It was a kind of new discovery that such exciting manifestations could result from strong religious feelings. Prophet after prophet arose to engage in a revivalism aimed deliberately at creating such abnormal displays. The idea grew that they were proof of a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon elect souls; and such emotional experiences were interpreted as evidence of 'Spirit Baptism,' a 'Second-Blessing', conferring holiness upon all who received such gifts."[1]

This point warrants comment. It stands to reason that within Protestantism, a need would develop for an intense personal experience as proof of the presence of God. Protestants falsely believe that Christ did not establish a Church to "teach, govern and sanctify in His Name" until the end of time. Protestantism, rooted in private interpretation of Scripture, is merely a loose confederation of believers who accept the Bible as the only source of Divine Revelation. They lack the certainties of a Divinely instituted authority teaching infallibly that the God-given sacraments of the Catholic Church always give grace (the source of true holiness) to a soul who is properly disposed.

This need, then, for proof by experience of God's presence in one's life is the direct result of

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the Protestant's rejection of the Catholic Church, its teaching authority and its sacred, grace-giving sacraments. Since this need is founded on an objective mortal sin against Faith, any emotional manifestations (that supposedly comes from being 'baptized in the spirit') can only be explained by natural causes or demonic influence. Such manifestations also confirm the Protestant in his sin of unbelief. Since the Pentecostal believes he has the Holy Spirit already (and can demonstrate it on cue), then who needs the Catholic Church?

Aligned with unchangeable Catholic teaching and tradition, we can say that to describe these exhibitions as the working of the Holy Spirit is blasphemy. To seek and imitate such phenomena is a reckless endangerment of one's Catholic Faith. To promote such manifestations is to play the role of false prophet.

Topeka's Tongues

Catholic Pentecostals believe that the great outpouring of the spirit in modern times really began from a small Protestant sect in Topeka, Kansas, led by Charles F. Parham. Some "Catholic" Charismatics such as Peter Herbeck (of Ralph Martin's Renewal Ministries), treat Parham's revivalist movement as a Divine manifestation equal in drama and holiness to the visitations of Our Lady of Fatima.[2]

In his book *Minority Religions in America*, William J. Whalen succinctly des-cribes the sect's important role in modern Pentecostalism:

> "The reappearance of glossolaly (speaking in tongues) was reported in 1901. Charles F. Parham, a Holiness preacher, was dismayed by the aridity of his own spiritual life. He rented a white elephant mansion in Topeka, Kansas, and started a Bible school with about forty students. Together they set out on an intensive study of scriptures and came to the conclusion that speaking in tongues was the one sign that a Christian had indeed received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At 7 p.m., on New Year's Eve in 1900, one of the students, Miss Agnes N. Ozmen, startled the assembled group when she began to pray in tongues. Within a few days many more followed suit.
>
> "Parham spent the next five years as an itinerant preacher before opening another Bible school, this time in Houston. One of his students, a Negro minister named W.J. Seymore, carried the 'full-gospel' message to Los Angeles. A three-year-long reviv-al in that California city attracted people from all over the country, and these people planted Pentecostalism in most of the major cities in the U.S., as well as in many European nations. The old Holiness Churches

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> refused to give emphasis to tongue-speaking, but dozens of independent Pentecostal Churches were soon organized."[3]

The charismatic Msgr. Vincent Walsh, an enthusiastic promoter of "Toronto Blessing" aberrations, wrote approvingly, "Due to the ministries of Parham and Seymore, modern world-wide Pentecostalism was launched."[4] As a phenomenon among Protestant assemblies, it enjoyed spectacular growth. And in 1967, a group of Catholics in Pittsburgh, with their defenses flattened by the steam-roller of Conciliar *aggiornamento*, and infatuated with a Protestant Minister's success story among young New York hoodlums, would adopt a "new way of thinking," study the Scriptures according to this new mind-set, and plunge themselves headlong into the arms of heterodox practice.

"Stirrings in Pittsburgh"

In the book *Catholic Pentecostals*, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan (founders of the Catholic Pentecostal movement) describe the movement's beginnings. The Ranaghans and their colleagues at Duquesne University had been involved with various activities popular at the time (civil rights, etc.). In the midst of these undertakings, they were plagued with great spiritual aridity. To combat this, they claim, the group went in search of a greater influence of God in their lives.

The date was 1966, a time of unprecedented ecclesiastical upheaval. Thomas Merton would soon be off to Tibet praying with the Dalai Lama and calling for a unity which resembled Hindu "Oneness". New Age writer Teilhard de Chardin was practically reverenced by many Catholic intellectuals as the fifth evangelist. It was a tumultuous period in Church history with violent winds of change uprooting and destroying countless Catholic landmarks. With so many of the familiar signposts swept away, it was all too easy for Catholics to wander out of bounds seeking God in the wrong places.

At a Cursillo Congress, this group met Ralph Martin and Steve Clarke who introduced them to the book *The Cross and the Switchblade*, the story of Protestant Minister David Wilkerson's success among teen gangs in New York. Because of what Ranaghan and friends regarded as "positive aspects" of Pentecostalism found in this book, and because of the "transformed lives" of two of their friends involved with such activities, they sought a similar experience.

Ranaghan recounts that his group solicited the counsel of an Episcopalian minister, thus ignoring the Catholic wisdom of the ages forbidding positive religious camaraderie with heretical sects. This clergyman introduced them to a Protestant, Pentecostal gathering. The

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Catholic group attended the meeting and took part in the Bible study.

One of those present, Ralph Keifer, wrote that at the end of this prayer meeting:

> "Pat [Bourgeois] and I asked to be prayed with for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They broke up into several groups because they were praying over several people. They simply asked me to make an act of faith for the power of the Spirit to work in me. I prayed in tongues rather quickly."[5]

Later on, the same Ralph Keifer laid hands on two others (unidentified in the book) and they too "received the baptism in the spirit."

Mr. Ranaghan and his friends seem to have forgotten the warning of Msgr. Ronald Knox that "to speak in tongues you had never learned was, and is, a recognized symptom in cases of alleged diabolic possession."[6]To freely expose oneself to such dangers borders on madness; and defies the wisdom of great spiritual writers such as Saint John of the Cross who warns of the great dangers of seeking extraordinary spiritual gifts. The more corporal and tangible the "experience," he cautions, the less certain it is from God. St. John of the Cross also warned that so easily does the devil meddle in such manifestations that if a souls seeks, then it is virtually impossible for that soul not to be deceived.[7]

On this point, there revered theologian Father Reginal Garrigou-Lagrange explained, "On this point he [St. John of the Cross] is in compete accord with St. Vincent Ferrer and shows that the sould desring revelation is vain; that by this curiosity it sgives the devil the opportunity to lead it astray; that this inclination takes away the purity of Faith, produces a hindrince of the spirity, denotes a lack of humilty and exposes the soul to many errors."[8]

This is the direct opposite of what we find in "Pentecostalism" wherein some sort of alleged "supernatural experience" is the focus of one's desires and efforts.

It was not surprising then that Kevin Ranaghan was the first speaker on opening night at the 1997 30th anniversary Conference. After boasting that God had filled him to overflowing with the Spirit, Ranaghan recounted that in the early days, in order to in the spirit", he and his friend sought spiritual advice from a Protestant prayer-group:

> "In the beginning the contact with Pentecostals of our area helped us to grow in an understanding and experience of the charisms. We met in the home of the representative of the Full-Gospel Businessmen. And when he heard that a group

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> of Catholics was coming, he rallied the troops, and brought in several Pentecostal ministers and a room full of prayer warriors to engage in what they were sure would be a hard-fought battle. What they found was the most shockingly easy prayer-time they had ever known. We claimed that we had already been baptized in the Holy Spirit, which they found hard to believe because, after all, we were Catholics." (The audience broke into great laughter, in a kind of joyful mockery of the 'exclusive salvation' doctrines of the Catholic Church.)

He continued:

> "We said that we just wanted their help and advice on yielding to and using the gifts. They laid hands on us, and one by one the whole roomful of us started to pray and sing in tongues. No battle, just a victory celebration." (Thunderous applause)

In making this statement, this "anointed preacher" (as they referred to each other) seems to have forgotten that a Protestant victory over Catholicism cannot be regarded as a victory for the Holy Ghost.

Then Ranaghan, further indoctrinating the crowd into religious indifferentism, sang the praise and blessings of heretical sects. He said "Praise God for the old-time Pentecostals and for the independent charismatics God sent our way in those days … Yes, from the beginning, it was an ecumenical celebration."[9]

This is how the "Catholic Charismatic Renewal" began — Catholics receiving a Protestant mock-sacrament of 'baptism of the spirit', not through the sacramental channels of grace established by Christ, but through collaboration with heretical groups.

From Pittsburgh the movement spread to Notre Dame and then to Newman Centers at Michigan State and the University of Michigan. Within four years from its beginning, "Catholic Pentecostalism" fanned out to dozens of areas in the U.S. and Canada.

Now it is a worldwide movement[10] regarded as a percolating sign of hope in the "New Evangelization". Its function seems to be to mainstream hundreds of thousands of Catholics into Vatican II's new ecumenical religion.

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Notes:
[1] *"Assemblies of God" and other "Pentecostal Churches,"* Rev. Dr. L. Rumble, M.S.C., [St. Paul: Radio Replies], p. 18.
[2] Peter Herbeck, "The Titanic Battle", *Renewal Ministries Newsletter*, Ann Arbor, MI, May, 1997.
[3] *Minority Religions in America*, William J. Whalen [Staten Island: Alba House, 1971], p. 179-180.
[4] *What is Going On?,* Msgr. Vincent M. Walsh, [Wynnewood, PA: Key of David Publications, 1995], p. 31.
[5] *Catholic Pentecostals*, Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, [New York: Paulist Press, 1969], p 15.
[6] *Enthusiasm*, Msgr. Ronald Knox, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950], p. 551.
[7] Saint John of the Cross wrote, "Wherein the devil habitually meddles so freely [in revelations and extraordinary phenomena), that I believe it is impossible for a man not to be deceived by them, unless he strive to reject them, such an appearance of truth and security does the devil give them." *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, St. John of the Cross, Book 2, Chap. 27.
[8] *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Vol. II, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, [Rockford: Tan, 1989], pp. 583.
[9] Kevin Ranaghan also spoke at Celebrate Jesus 2000, Saint Louis, MO, June, 2000. See *Close-ups of the Charismatic Movement,* John Vennari, [Los Angelus: Tradition in Action, 2002], Part II, "A 'Catholic' Charismatic Extravaganza".
[10] Pope Paul VI's eventual 'blessing" of the Charismatic Movement in 1976 was due to pressure from Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, one of the most modernist prelates of the 20th Century, who exercised great influence over Paul VI. For details, see "The Charismatic Cardinal Suenens", Section III of the book *Close-ups of the Charismatic Movement*.

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