



Holy Spirit Interactive: [The Catholic Charismatic Renewal](#): The Renewal and the Church

The Renewal and the Church

The charismatic experience, which began at Duquesne in 1967 and caught on campuses across the United States, soon moved beyond colleges and began to have an impact on regular parishes and other Catholic institutions. Loose organizations and networks were formed. Catholic charismatic conferences began to be held, drawing massive crowds. One conference held at Notre Dame campus in South Bend Indiana drew over 30,000 people. It soon caught the attention of the church.

Leon Joseph Suenens, the Cardinal of Malines-Brussels and one of the four moderators of the Second Vatican Council, was one of the first champions of the Charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church. After visiting some of the principal centers he understood "that Pentecostal grace was at work, and that it was not a question of a movement - there was no founder, no rule, no precise structure - but the breath of the Spirit, which was vital for many aspects of life and indeed for all movements".

After presenting his findings to Pope Paul VI, he recommended that the Pope invite the Catholic leaders of this Renewal on a pilgrimage to Rome with a view of witnessing to their faith and their faithfulness to the Church.

In the summer of 1975, some 10,000 Catholic charismatics gathered in St. Peter's Basilica. Also present were prominent Protestants who were invited to take part as well, thus giving the movement a moving ecumenical dimension. In his homily, Pope Paul VI called the Charismatic Renewal "the good fortune for the Church and the World" and thereby gave his formal seal of approval to the movement.

Cardinal Suenens was asked to oversee the integration of the Catholic Renewal into the heart of the Church. He accepted the mission. From 1974-1986, he also drafted a series of six articles, the "Malines Documents," which detailed the personalities and ideas he wanted fostered in the Charismatic movement, among them being ecumenism, social action, and the strange phenomenon of "slaying in the spirit."

Encouraged by the leadership of Pope Paul VI and later by John Paul II, many Catholic bishops of the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Europe wrote pastoral statements supporting and encouraging the Renewal.

Vatican II said this about the charisms: "It is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God. He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit' (1Cor.12:7). These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church."