

MAY 19, 2026 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

Chapter 17 in John is actually one long prayer. Jesus is coming to the end of his ministry, and he is praying for his disciples. In this long prayer, “everything of mine is yours, and everything yours is mine.” It is this unity, everything that the Father has given is also ours. It is good to pray with this.

God is praying for us. Jesus is also praying for Saint Paul in the first reading, that he too will have strength. At that time, Paul was not yet a disciple; he was one of the Pharisees persecuting the Christians. But Jesus prays for everyone, and this prayer resonates through the centuries. Jesus is praying for each one of us individually—that we will live a good life and that we will evangelize the Good News.

This is something to really sit with, because it is such a great gift that each one of us is called to evangelize and not to be afraid. God will give us the words. As mentioned, Jesus is also praying for Paul, even before he becomes a disciple. Paul later responds to this call after being knocked off his horse on the road to Damascus and goes out to evangelize.

Now Paul, nearing the end of his ministry, is traveling through what is today Turkey. He tells the churches he has been evangelizing that his ministry is coming to an end. The Holy Spirit is leading him back to Jerusalem, where he will be imprisoned. He knows this ahead of time, yet he is not afraid, because of what is called holy indifference.

Holy indifference is not about small preferences, like choosing between vanilla or chocolate pudding. Rather, it means embracing whatever comes. Paul is not afraid to go to Jerusalem, even without knowing exactly what will happen. This is also true for us. None of us knows what the future holds, especially as we grow older. There may come a time when we have to leave our homes or face uncertainty, but we are

called to embrace each day and entrust our lives to God, allowing Him to work through us for the good of others.

This is why holy indifference is so important, to let the Spirit lead us. Today, on the universal calendar, we also celebrate Pope Saint Celestine V. He is a somewhat obscure pope, but one who listened to the Spirit. After a long conclave lasting about two years, he then a hermit named Pietro Angelerio urged the cardinals to choose a pope. In an unexpected turn, they chose him.

He became Pope Celestine V in 1294, but he was not suited to administration or politics. After five months, he made a decree allowing a pope to resign and then stepped down himself. A new pope, Boniface VIII, was chosen afterward. Celestine accepted all this peacefully.

This reminds us that God works through us in different ways. What energizes us often points to where God is calling us. Like Paul and Celestine, we are invited to be open, to trust, and to let the Spirit guide our lives.