

MAY 23, 2026 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

Today, on this last day of the Easter season, tomorrow, of course, is Pentecost, we hear the final part of the Book of Acts and the last part of the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John has so much in it. It comes right after Jesus tells Peter, “Someone will fasten a belt around you and take you to places where you do not want to go.”

This speaks to many of us, especially later in life, when we may be led to places we do not wish to go. As our health declines, we may need to be cared for by others, perhaps even in nursing homes. But it is also a spiritual reality. God can lead us on journeys we never expected. For someone with a vow of availability, for example, one may be sent to places one does not want to be, but if we accept it, things often work out.

There is also the question of the end times. Jesus speaks about them, and Peter wonders about John. Jesus responds, in essence, “What is it to you?” The early Christians believed the end would come soon, yet we are still waiting. We can spend much time thinking about the second coming of Christ, but in the meantime, we are called to live our lives as best we can, each in our own unique way.

Judgment will come one day, but we do not need to worry about it if we strive to live a good life. Instead of being anxious about tomorrow, we are called to live faithfully today. It is simple, yet often difficult.

Another important message is this: mind your own life. Jesus tells Peter not to be concerned about what will happen to others. This is something many of us struggle with. We can become overly focused on what others are doing instead of looking inward. Even in confession, people sometimes speak more about the faults of others than about their own.

This is especially true for parents and their adult children. Parents can become anxious about their children’s future, their faith, and their

decisions. But as children grow, they must make their own choices. Parents can offer guidance and support, but there comes a time when they must step back. Often, people return to faith later in life, learning through their own experiences.

It is all part of conversion, allowing God to lead us and focusing on our own journey. We are called to be available to others when they seek help, but not to control their lives.

In the first reading from Acts, we hear of Paul in Rome. Though under guard, he continues to evangelize. Some accept his message; others reject it. Paul understands that his role is simply to witness to Christ, not to force others or interfere in their lives.

Both Peter and Paul ultimately gave their lives in Rome. Tradition tells us that Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down, not considering himself worthy to die in the same way as Jesus. While the exact details remain uncertain, we know they died for their faith sometime between the years 64 and 68 under Emperor Nero.

Their witness reminds us of our own call: to give our lives to God, one day at a time, staying focused on Him rather than on distractions. Let us keep our eyes on where we are going, trusting that God is with us always.

Amen.