

12 Gems from Sr. Anne Joan Flanagan, FSP

1. “When we look at what Paul did and wrote about collaboration...they all begin in an encounter with Christ and His Word. And that hospitality to the Word turns us into a place of welcome.”
2. “Before St. Paul ever speaks about collaboration, he speaks about adoption...We are adopted children of God, sons and daughters in the eternal Son.”
3. “St. Paul's characteristic form of address is ‘brothers and sisters.’ He's not using that for rhetorical purposes. It's theological. St. Paul is giving family bonds to people he wouldn't have chosen as neighbors.”
4. “Paul’s first imperative for collaboration is, ‘welcome one another as Christ welcomes you for the glory of God.’”
5. “Communion saturates the Letter to the Philippians. From that letter, we see how Paul trusted his collaborators and entrusted them with enormous responsibility...He praised their efforts, acknowledged their partnership, counted on their prayers.”
6. “The second Pauline imperative for collaboration is, ‘Do not stifle the Spirit’...It means recognizing, respecting, and promoting the gifts of others.”
7. “Barnabas welcomed Saul when others were afraid of him. Without Barnabas’ hospitality, we would not have Paul as we know him.”
8. “Paul stands at the center of one of the most relational and inclusive circles in all antiquity. Paul learned to see the invisible people and make room for them in the circle.”
9. “The third Pauline imperative for collaboration, and it’s the deepest, it’s the most intense, it’s the one—the form that will never, never stop: ‘offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, your spiritual worship.’”
10. “Paul never presumes that our lives will be free of pain, sorrow, or failure any more than his was...He says, ‘I rejoice in the sufferings I bear for you,’ and that ‘for you’ is what reveals Paul's sufferings to be the sufferings of Christ and not just a stream of misfortunes.”
11. “Offer it up. Yeah, offer it up. It’s Catholic shorthand for the meaningfulness of suffering. And Paul says that this suffering in the context of mission is the suffering of Christ overflowing to us.”
12. “So, become who you are. Be that vibrant member of the Body of Christ, collaborating with millions of others, each one with a unique mystery of Christ to give our needy world.”