

This page, a letter from Sr. Anne Marie Lom and Joe Thiel, is a follow-up to the personal note we all received from Fr. Paul here last week.

To our readers:

Last week in this space, Fr. Paul took the opportunity to express a few things personally, including some of his history with these Gospel Reflections that he has been writing for decades. He explained the founding of his Gospel Reflections, their function, and the effectiveness of the simplicity of their format. He added some personal notes, including about some health issues, and why his current cancer condition requires him to step away from this ministry, at this time. He expressed appreciation for your participation in this ministry, his hope that it has blessed you in your personal journey with God, and his thanks for your prayers and support. And he introduced us as “the new face of the Reflection Questions.”

Fr. Paul wrote that we two have been a special part of this ministry for years, that we are willing to see that it goes on, and that we talked some months ago about doing that if he would need to step away. Each of us has worked with Fr. Paul on these Reflections for over a decade. Neither of us want them to come to an end. Instead, we prefer to continue to put our effort into them, so they remain available each week to those who find them useful and inspiring, as we and you do. And because of the wealth of written material he has produced and left for us to work with, we also agree that going forward, same as it has been these past many years we worked with him and his writing, Fr Paul is still the face of the Reflection Questions, and their lead author. They will continue to look like and feel like and read like his work because they are his work. We will be able to prepare, edit, and continue to distribute Fr. Paul’s written work, because of the archive of his writing that he provided us access to, without requiring him to write another word, if he isn’t up to it. And we are grateful for the opportunity to do it, working on it together.

In Fr. Paul’s letter last week, he left us a statement of what the Reflections were established to be, and what they continue to be. What he wrote will continue to be the mission statement for these Gospel Reflections, as they continue to be what they will be, going forward.

The Gospel Reflections are a way to reach out to people. They center on the Sunday Gospel, and include some added background material. The simple format brings together insights from Catholic scripture scholars and helps us, the readers, see the Gospels as whole, not just incoherently disconnected individual texts that we hear at Sunday Masses. The real heart of the Reflection Questions is that they ask us to see our own life experiences as windows to experience the Sunday Gospel as it is addressed to us in our life journey. They also encourage us to talk with God from our own experience of reflection on the Gospel. The goal remains to help us hear the Gospel as addressed to us and help us to respond authentically and share it further.

We appreciate your participation in this ministry. We hope it continues to bless you in your personal journey with God. And we thank you for your prayers and support for Fr. Paul!

Sister Anne Marie Lom, OFM, and Joe Thiel