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Foreword to Journey of Faith, Journey of the Universe: The Lectionary and the New Cosmology

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Foreword

One of the challenges of the liturgical readings from Scripture is for them to stay fresh—that is, for us, hearing them many times in a lifetime, to continue to listen to them deeply. We may, subconsciously, feel we know them and have little left to learn. An opposite situation arises from the discourse around the so-called new cosmology, where the language and concepts may seem so strange—even forbidding—to us that we can't find a way in. The very unfamiliarity of the science and philosophy, the geology and physics, may close our ears to what is offered there for us.

Journey of Faith, Journey of the Universe, by Ivan Nicoletto, OSB Cam, provides wonderful assistance for each of those challenges. He knows the Scriptures intimately, from both a lifetime of study and the liturgical home in which all the Benedictine traditions live. And he has steeped himself in the world of cosmogenesis, studying with the recognized experts in the field, becoming deft at making the complexities of that new discourse accessible for lay listeners. The reflections provided here integrate these two realms in ways that are both insightful about Scripture and illuminating about the cosmogenesis viewpoint: one of the signs of the times in which we live. The blend is not always easy, and Nicoletto does not delude us into thinking the matter a quick study, that new cosmology is simply standard cosmology refurbished. In the reflections offered here, Nicoletto chooses his language with great care, each word helping us to understand more clearly and deeply the insights he would share. Though each homily stands on its own, readers will hear, over the span of them, certain themes repeated and reexpressed, able to open the Scripture reading in ways that will surprise and please. Cosmogenesis challenges Christians' long-established sense of a personal God. And yet, as we read on, we can feel consoled that the classic and intense imagery of so many biblical passages is deeply suitable to our Universe—multiverse—identity and roots. Pushing us beyond our traditional sense of stewardship and human governance of the world to a deeper and more respectful sense of our place within creation, we learn how deeply suited is the biblical tradition to much of what we hear emerging in the cosmological conversation. Christian believers will find themselves challenged by both the liturgical readings and the fresh cosmology to a more intense ethical praxis. We can think of no better way for third-millennium Christians to be drawn into the stories that shape our lives in ways we have, perhaps, scarcely begun to understand than to explore the great mystery in which all creation-partners live.

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