

## The Cosmic Walk

The Cosmic Walk is a walking meditation that offers a glimpse into our sacred origins by connecting the work of scientists with our on-going spiritual search to better understand who we are and how we came to be.

Sister Corlita Bonnarens, RSM, is the artist who captured in watercolor 25 significant moments in this unfolding story of the universe, giving us a glimpse of the Sacred Mystery that has been at work for more than 14 billion years. Sister Corlita holds master's degrees in Art and Spirituality. She is spiritual director and facilitator of retreats and workshops around art and spirituality.

We are grateful to everyone who helped bring this walking meditation into reality.



Wheaton  
Franciscans

[www.wheatonfranciscan.org](http://www.wheatonfranciscan.org)

## the UNIVERSE STORY



## The Universe Story

A Cosmic Walk Meditation

Watercolor Images by Sr. Corlita Bonnarens, RSM

Text based on work by Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry



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- 1 13.7 billion years ago, the Universe begins as the primordial  
flaring forth of stupendous energy out of Ultimate Mystery.  
Hydrogen and helium form and EVERYTHING, all of creation  
unfolds from them.
- 2 Approximately 12 billion years ago, the first stars appear. They  
expand and then collapse, forming carbon, oxygen, sulfur, iron,  
some of the elements necessary for life. This process continues  
for billions of years, creating a trillion galaxies, each with billions  
of stars.
- 3 4.6 billion years ago, in the Milky Way Galaxy, a supernova forms  
and explodes in a flash of brilliance. From this rich and gaseous  
debris come copper, silver, magnesium and other elements
- 4 4.5 billion years ago, the SUN is born
- 5 4.45 billion years ago, the EARTH and other planets in our solar  
system form. Earth is full of fire and creativity. Earth cools, its  
surface develops a crust. Vapor escapes from its boiling interior,  
forming clouds. Rain begins: it lasts for centuries, forming the  
oceans, cooling the surface and hardening it into rock.
- Pause for silent prayer and reflection on the goodness of our  
creative God. We thank you, Creator, for the gift of life!*
- 6 4 billion years ago, BACTERIA emerge; photosynthesis begins.  
EARTH AWAKENS. Life begins.
- 7 A little over 1 billion years ago, cells joined with each other for  
survival and development. Sexual reproduction begins.
- 8 600 million years ago, worms and jellyfish appear with the first  
nervous systems.
- 9 500 million years ago, fish emerge. Now the nervous system is  
protected by bone, a key development for further complexity.
- 10 410 million years ago, life moves onto land.

*Pause for silent prayer and reflection on the generosity of our  
creative God. We thank you, Creator, for the gift of life!*

- 11 395 million years ago, INSECTS come.
- 12 370 million years ago, the first TREES and AMPHIBIANS appear
- 13 235 million years ago, dinosaurs and flowers spread across the  
earth.
- 14 216 million years ago, the first MAMMALS appear
- 15 150 million years ago, BIRDS fly.

*Pause for silent prayer and reflection on the generosity of our  
creative God. We thank you, Creator, for the gift of life!*

- 16 25 million years ago, WHALES the largest marine animal, emerge.
- 17 A little over 2 and half million years ago, the first HUMANS walk on  
earth.
- 18 500 thousand years ago, CLOTHING, FIRE, SHELTER are  
discovered.
- 19 40 thousand years ago, HUMAN LANGUAGE begins. 32 thousand  
years ago the first musical instruments are made.
- 19a 11 thousand years ago, Agriculture begins. Humans begin to  
shape the environment.

*Pause for silent prayer and reflection on the generosity of our  
creative God. We thank you, Creator, for the gift of life!*

- 20 3500 BC the rise of Mesopotamian Civilization. A little over 2000  
years ago, Jesus was born.
- 21 In 1543 AD, Copernicus publishes his theory that the SUN, not the  
earth is the center of the known universe. Earth and the other  
planets orbit around the sun.
- 22 Over 400 years ago, the rise of the Modern Nation begins.
- 23 In 1961, our planet Earth was seen from space. In 1972, the  
famous "Blue Marble" photograph of planet earth was produced.
- 24 **TODAY, the story of the Universe is being told as our sacred  
Story. It continues to unfold in each of us.**

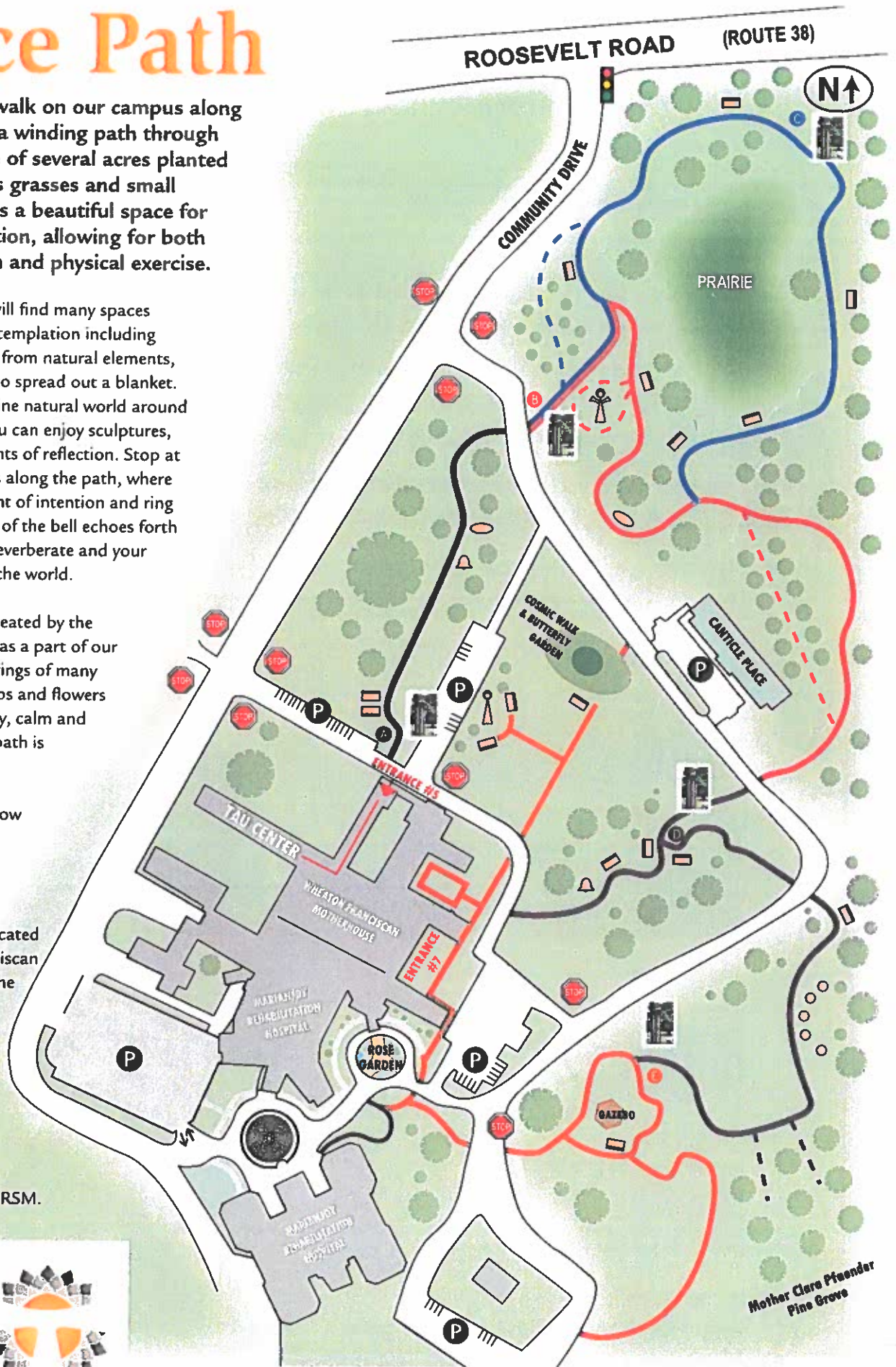
# Peace Path

Enjoy a peaceful walk on our campus along the Peace Path – a winding path through a beautiful prairie of several acres planted with native Illinois grasses and small woodlands. This is a beautiful space for a walking meditation, allowing for both spiritual reflection and physical exercise.

Along the path, you will find many spaces to sit in prayer or contemplation including benches, seats carved from natural elements, or small grassy areas to spread out a blanket. In addition to the Divine natural world around you, along the way you can enjoy sculptures, statues and other points of reflection. Stop at one of the Prayer Bells along the path, where you can take a moment of intention and ring the bell. As the sound of the bell echoes forth – so do your prayers reverberate and your intentions are felt for the world.

The Peace Path was created by the Wheaton Franciscans as a part of our healing ministry. Plantings of many varieties of trees, shrubs and flowers add a quality of beauty, calm and peace. The mile-long path is paved and wheelchair accessible with many intersections which allow you to circle through the prairie for shorter or longer exploration.

The Cosmic Walk is located on the Wheaton Franciscan campus surrounding the new butterfly garden. The paved path includes 25 posts with images of the watercolor prints, *Significant Moments of the Unfolding of the Universe* by Sr. Corlita Bonnarens, RSM.



= .12 miles
  = .15 miles
  = .34 miles
  = .27 miles
  = .39 miles

# SELF-GUIDED WALKING Meditation

## Along Our Outdoor Peace Path



You are invited to enjoy a walking meditation along our Peace Path on your own by using the map on the other side along with the meditation below.

### AS YOU WALK THE PEACE PATH...

- Walk slowly, notice as each foot touches the ground and then lifts away, feeling the ground beneath you...
- As you continue to walk allow yourself to engage your senses...
- Listen as a sound emerges, observe as it becomes louder or softer, closer or farther, high or deep...
- Breathe in slowly, bringing awareness to the smells that are offered in the landscape...
- Feel the breeze on your skin, reach out to touch the bark on the tree or the blades of grass...
- With a soft gaze, observe the variations of color and light in the sky, in the meadow...
- Take time while on the Path to reflect – walking as long, or as briefly, as you would like...

### AT EACH PEACE POLE, READ THE INSCRIPTION...

As you continue to walk, pause along the way to recite this prayer of Loving Kindness or another of your choosing:

#### Peace Pole #1 **A**

May I be peaceful  
May I be happy  
May I be safe  
May I be free

#### Peace Pole #2 **B**

May my friends be peaceful  
May my friends be happy  
May my friends be safe  
May my friends be free

#### Peace Pole #3 **C**

May my enemies be peaceful  
May my enemies be happy  
May my enemies be safe  
May my enemies be free

#### Peace Pole #4 **D**

May all beings be peaceful  
May all beings be happy  
May all beings be safe  
May all beings be free

#### Peace Pole #5 **E**

Read all four sections of the prayer above together

