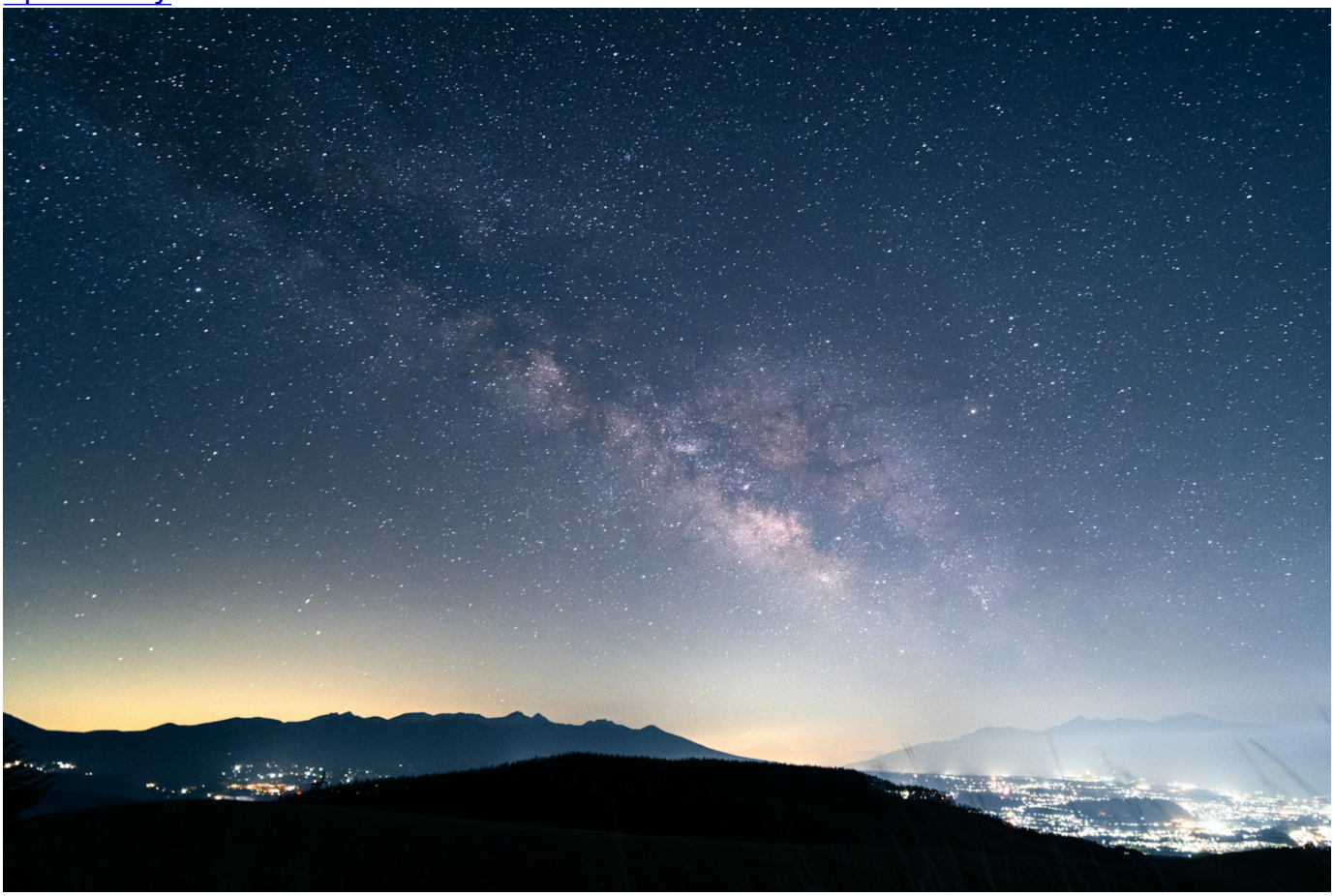
Voices of Sisters
Spirituality



(Unsplash/Chan Hoi)



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May 26, 2026

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Recently, I went to liturgy at an abbey. It was a wondrous structure where, upon entering the body of the church, your eyes immediately lifted to the heavens. The priest was dwarfed by the upward movement of the architecture. I breathed deeply, caught in memories of being in the medieval cathedrals of Europe; amazing structures representing the work of human hands over generations, decades, even centuries, creating a psalm to glorify a God far above the earth, residing in another place named heaven, often pictured as sitting on a throne. Creating such a distance between God and us was intimidating, keeping one in one’s place, just like the societal structures of those centuries.

That day, however, was different. I continued to gaze upwards beyond the ceiling and imagined being on a trajectory into space beyond the boundaries of our planet. Having just seen the movie "Project: Hail Mary," it wasn’t too difficult to envision the galaxies, planets and millions of stars that enfold us. I always feel such awe and a sense of presence when I am under the night sky, especially away from all the ambient light of the city.



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At those times, I feel the transcendence of God, of Divine Mystery. Not at all aloof or cold or impersonal, but rather intimate, encompassing and protective. I believe we are part of an evolutionary journey which began over 13.7 billion years ago on this planet. Sharing the same origin story invites me to see connections where I wouldn’t expect them. Becoming more aware of how evolution moves through periods of destruction and creation provides hope at times of great disruption or radical change.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ saw within evolution a directionality moving toward the Omega Point. He saw the energies of love as the most mysterious of cosmic forces permeating the cosmos. He believed that a greater, stronger, more inclusive love for all people and all of life must be an integral part of the future evolution of the human species.

The experience of the astronauts aboard the Artemis II voyage touches on that experience. They traveled farther from Earth than any crewed spacecraft had gone before. They saw the far side of the moon and Earth hanging in darkness. Seeing Earth from deep space created in them a stronger sense of connection to the planet and to all of us back home. They felt at once tiny yet powerfully connected to one another, fragile yet strong when the crew worked together. They knew that Earth is not just a place we inhabit but a living gift we are given to evolve.

All of this gave them a sense of perspective. Earth looked small, but the human effort behind the space mission was huge. That human effort continues, in space and on earth, and from our perspective of faith, that effort is harnessing the energies of love and, in so doing, transforming the entire earth community.

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Through the centuries, our ancestors in faith didn’t have access to the science we have, but they did have insights born from contemplation. They deeply understood that God, from the beginning permeates everything, everywhere, transcendent, imminent, loving, compassionate and merciful. Today we know that evolution produces more complex, diverse, life forms.

As we humans continue to evolve, so too does our consciousness. We begin to choose love over hate, as Jesus witnessed to. Like the astronauts, we are not alone, and when we work together as a community, we can experience our strength and find hope in the next possible emergence.

Divine Love permeates our universe and our very being. Take time to sit in contemplation with this wondrous mystery. Experience the depths of the Universe shimmering with sacred energy and all of creation alive with Divine Love. Allow love’s presence in you to erupt so that you know it is as essential and as intimate as every breath you take.

You may want to find a way to give expression to your experience of Divine Mystery. Perhaps you can write a psalm. Jan Philips puts her psalm to music in "I Will Not Leave You Comfortless." The words are simple: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will not leave you alone. I am the air you breathe in. I’m the light of every star and every dawn."