PREFACE

In October 1972 I began a long journey with the Gospel of John. A fascination with the Son of Man question led me to approach Professor Morna Hooker, then at Oxford University. Professor Hooker had written two significant books: one on the use of Suffering Servant language and imagery in the New Testament (*Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* [London: SPCK, 1959]), and the other on the Son of Man in Mark (*The Son of Man in Mark: A Study of the Background of the Term “Son of Man” and Its Use in St. Mark’s Gospel* [London: SPCK, 1967]). She generously supported my interest, and suggested that I work on the use of the Son of Man as a theological title in the Gospel of John as, to that point, there was no monograph dealing explicitly with that issue. My dissertation first appeared in 1976, and in a second edition in 1978 (*The Johannine Son of Man* [2d ed.; BibSciRel 14; Rome: LAS, 1978]).

My career has been strongly determined by work on the Gospel of John. The request that I edit and update the posthumous work of Raymond E. Brown, to produce *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2003), was an affirmation of my place as an established authority on the Fourth Gospel. Over the years much of my published work has focused upon this Gospel. It is with a sense of satisfaction, as I come to the end of my academic career, that I publish a collection of studies on the Gospel of John that may be otherwise unavailable to many. Most of these studies come from recent writing, and more than half from the six years that I have spent at the Catholic University of America, initially as the Professor of NT in its Biblical Studies Department, and then as Dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies. The collection that follows, therefore, witnesses my mature reflection upon this fascinating Gospel text. The studies are produced here almost exactly as they appeared in their original publication. I have, however, unified the appearance of the whole collection. Some of the originals followed special style sheets required by European journals. I have also added internal cross references where studies elsewhere in this volume were relevant to an issue under discussion.
These studies are reflections upon major Johannine themes, currents in contemporary Johannine scholarship, and some detailed exegetical studies of particular passages. A five word aphorism has come to undergird all my NT scholarship: *text without context is pretext*. There are many contexts, and my own situation as a scholar at the end of a career that has been dominated by the Gospel of John is but one of them. However, the studies that follow are all directed by the more traditional idea of “context.” Readers will find that my basic hermeneutical principle in reading the Fourth Gospel is that John is the best interpreter of John, be that in terms of his broad theological view, or in coming to grips with detailed exegesis of specific Johannine passages. It is this approach to the Johannine text that has determined the title of this collection: *The Gospel of John. Text and Context.*

I am grateful to Patrick Alexander, the Publishing Director Brill Academic Publishers, and to R. Alan Culpepper, the editor of this series. Their combined efforts led to the publication of this collection. It is dedicated to the people at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., who have accompanied and encouraged me during my seven years at the Catholic University of America: my colleagues and my students. These years have been marked by a rich period of research and writing, and an intense return to academic administration after the sudden and tragic death of Dean Stephen Happel on October 4, 2003. I include Stephen in my dedication as one of my finest colleagues. I have done my best to serve the Catholic University of America, as both a scholar and an administrator. The dedication of this collection is a sign of my gratitude to those who have journeyed with me: my colleagues, and especially the students in the Biblical Studies program. Among the latter, I am particularly indebted to my research assistants in Washington, over my years at the Catholic University, Dr. Rekha Chennattu, R.A., and Sherri Brown.