The mission of The Saint John’s Bible is to ignite the spiritual imagination of people around the world of all faith journeys.
Photos courtesy of Lee Hanley and John Salmon
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Led by Fr. Michael Patella, OSB, the Committee for Illumination and Text (CIT) selected which verses to illuminate and provided the theological oversight for *The Saint John’s Bible.*

1998 - 2011

Photo courtesy of Saint John’s University
The first words, “In the beginning …” were drawn by Donald Jackson on Ash Wednesday in 2000 in his Scriptorium in Wales.
The pages of *The Saint John's Bible* are made of calfskin vellum. The skins are soaked in lime, dried, scraped or "scratched," and sanded smooth. The final product is nearly translucent, with a "hair side" and "smooth side."

Each piece of vellum holds four pages.
Rare Chinese black ink made in the 1890’s was used for all the calligraphy.
All the script is written using quills. Only the largest flight feathers, called "primaries," are used: goose quills for the main body of text, turkey and swan quills for heavier letterforms.

Six calligraphers, or scribes, completed the 1,150 pages.
Vermillion, lapis lazuli, and other cakes and powdered pigments are used for color. The materials are mixed with egg and water to make paint that is thicker than the black ink. The paint is then loaded onto the quills using brushes.

Six artists created the 160 major illuminations.
Gold leaf makes the manuscript truly illuminated. Using the moisture of breath imparted through a bamboo tube, the artist activates the glue binding agent in gesso until it bonds with the gold leaf. Burnishing tools and brushes finish the gilded image.
Illuminating the Word

Birth of Christ, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2002, The Saint John’s Bible, Saint John’s University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You are free to eat from all of the trees of the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day you eat from it, you will surely die.” But the serpent deceived the woman and said to her, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a desirable tree to look at, and she took some of its fruit and ate it, and she also gave some of it to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened; and they knew that they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

I will put My spirit within you and you shall live.
Wisdom Woman, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2006, The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
To err is human ...
11 Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me;  
12 I preferred her to scepters and thrones,  
and I accounted wealth as nothing  
in comparison with her—  
13 Neither did I liken to her any precious gem,  
because all gold is but a little sand in her sight;  
and silver will be accounted as clay before her.  
14 I loved her more than health and beauty,  
and I chose to have her rather than light;  
because her radiance never ceases.  
15 All good things came to me along with her,  
and in her hands uncounted wealth.  
16 I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom leads them;  
but I did not know that she was their mother.  
17 I learned without guile and I impart  
without grudging:  
I do not hide her wealth,  
for it is an unfailing treasure for mortals;  
those who get it obtain friendship with God,  
commended for the gifts that come  
from instruction.  
18 May God grant me to speak with judgment,  
and to have thoughts worthy of  
what I have received;  
for he is the guide even of wisdom  
and the corrector of the wise:  
19 For both we and our words are in his hand,  
as are all understanding and skill in crafts.  
20 For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge  
of what exists,  
to know the structure of the world and:  
21 The multitude of the wise is the  
salvation of the world,  
and a sensible king is the stability  
of any people.  
22 Therefore be instructed by my words,  
and you will profit:
Thaddaeus, Judas Iscariot, and the twelve who came out of his mission. He has gone down from Jerusalem said, "He has cast out demons, and by the ruler of the demons he cast out demons." 25 And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 26 If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 27 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 28 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his prop could not even eat. 29 When his family heard it, they