

THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

Amen!

In 1996, the community of Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota, began planning and working on *The Saint John's Bible*, the first handwritten, illuminated Bible to be commissioned by a Benedictine monastery in 500 years. This exhibition showcases *Letters and Revelation*, the final of seven volumes, and



On May 9, 2011, Donald Jackson writes "Amen," the final word in *The Saint John's Bible*. (Image courtesy of Donald Jackson's Scriptorium, Wales)

celebrates the completion of this monumental achievement, some 15 years in the making. *The Saint John's Bible* was created by a team of 23 professional scribes, artists, and assistants in a scriptorium in Wales, under the artistic direction of renowned calligrapher Donald Jackson. This extraordinary example of one of the world's great religious texts was conceived to be an expression of faith relevant to the modern world. It is a visual record of a new generation's perception and artistic interpretation of an historical document.

This unique undertaking combines a centuries-old tradition of craftsmanship with the latest capabilities of computer technology and electronic communication. Handwritten on calfskin vellum using hand-cut quills, traditional inks, natural pigments, and 24-karat gold, *The Saint John's Bible* is a collaborative effort, involving many people in both Wales and the United States.

The 1,150 pages of *The Saint John's Bible* remain unbound at this time to allow for exhibition; when and how to bind the seven volumes will be determined at a later date. The permanent home of the Bible will be the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library on the Saint John's University campus. It will be used in worship in the Abbey Church and will be accessible to thousands of visitors each year. *The Saint John's Bible* will also serve as an educational resource for scholars, churches, and synagogues.

In the Middle Ages, monumental Bibles were made for daily use in monastic communities, and carefully preserved for future generations. *The Saint John's Bible* is the modern representative of that great tradition, and it aspires to be ecumenical as well—to unite humankind, not further divide it. As a work of art it speaks to people of many faiths and many traditions.

This exhibition is organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Saint John's Abbey and University, Collegeville, Minnesota.