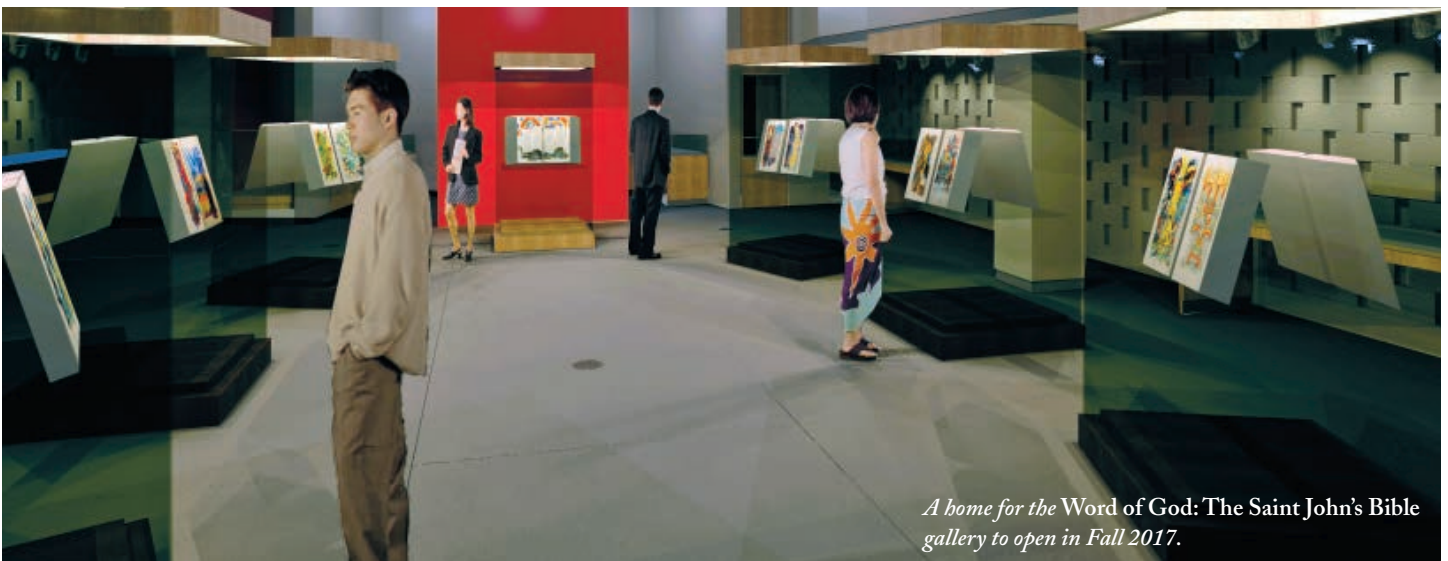


# The SCRIBE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE HERITAGE EDITION —  
THE FINE ART EDITION OF THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

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*A home for the Word of God: The Saint John's Bible gallery to open in Fall 2017.*

## Construction Begins on New *Saint John's Bible* Gallery

In her remarks accepting the Colman Barry Award in 2006, Sister Wendy Beckett, known for her wonderful art series on the BBC, made a bold prediction: "I can see in the future pilgrims coming to Saint John's, coming on their knees, to look at this achievement, this holy work, that both shows the glory of the Bible and the glory of humanity. It is a glory that God has enabled his dear Benedictines to bring about." She was talking about *The Saint John's Bible*, not yet complete but already, as she said, "a master work, a treasure for humanity."

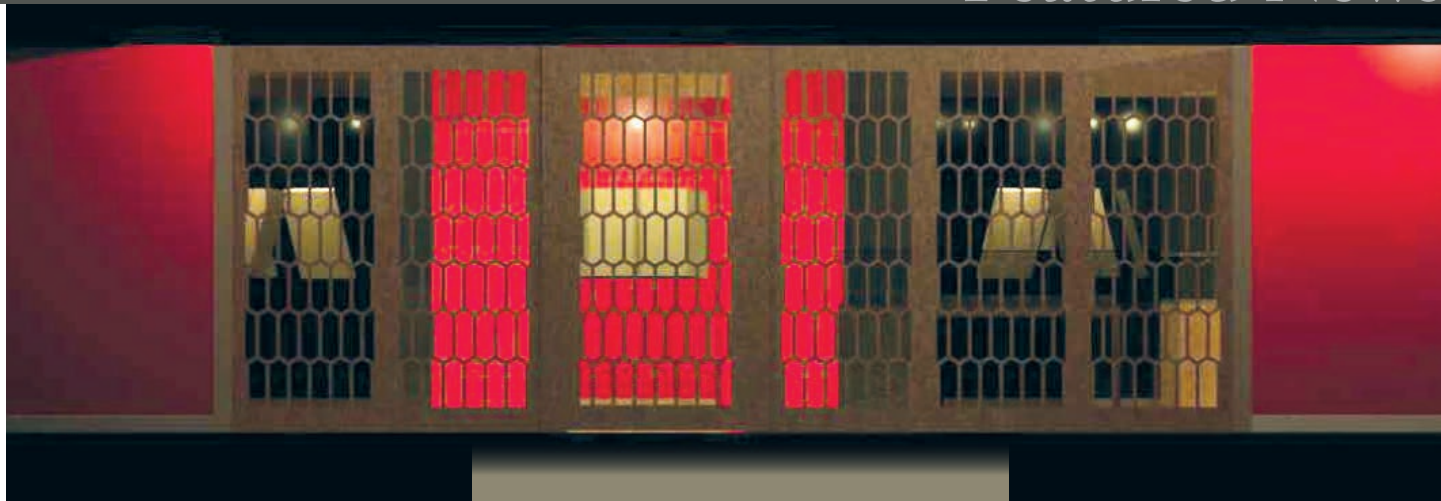
On Friday, April 22, a groundbreaking ceremony at Alcuin Library on the Saint John's University campus brought this prediction one step closer. The major library renovation project includes the transformation of a presentation space on the lower level into a permanent gallery for *The Saint John's Bible*, scheduled to open in Fall 2017.

The gallery will include seven glass towers able to display four folios from each of the seven volumes, so guests will have the opportunity to see fourteen opened two-page spreads, or twenty-eight pages. The Book of Honor, the hand-lettered book of all

the people who made the project possible, including donors, artists, committee members, and others, will also be on display in the gallery. Additionally, there will be space for many of the objects that give the folios context, including materials used in the creation of *The Saint John's Bible* and ancillary archival materials related to the folios, artists, and other aspects of the program.

Tim Ternes, director of *The Saint John's Bible* Project, welcomes the opportunity to easily mount the folios so that the exhibits can be changed more frequently. The current cases for original pages were designed for traveling exhibits, since no permanent space existed on campus for showing the volumes. They take a long time to prepare and mount. Ternes foresees a new exhibit in the space every three months once the gallery is up and running.

Most people who have seen the Bible at Saint John's visited the gallery inside the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML). Before HMML was renovated in 2014, signs directed



## PERMANENT GALLERY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

visitors around the outside of the library to an entrance at the back where pages of the Bible were available for viewing. The new gallery, however, will be inside the library, where it will be much more prominent and welcoming to students and campus guests.

Kathy Parker, director of libraries, media and archives, put the new gallery in the context of highlighting the university's rich overall work in special collections. "I especially like that the entrance to HMML has been oriented to Alcuin Library. We are also creating a spectacular special collections area in the basement," accessed from the same foyer as the new gallery. Not only will the gallery offer space to tell more of the story of *The Saint John's Bible*, it will open the opportunity for students and guests to see the place of manuscripts in Benedictine history and identity. "Students will be able to see *The Saint John's Bible* not as an isolated artifact, but rather as part of a continuum of manuscript and printed books, and the ongoing Benedictine commitment to valuing books as a record of human experience."

"Saint John's University is committed to our identity as people of the book," said Rob Culligan, vice president for institutional advancement. "Scripture is seen as a source of learning and of the monastic identity of our founders. The gallery will facilitate exhibits and the use of *The Saint John's Bible* as a source of religious and spiritual discovery as well as a source of learning for students and visitors to campus."

Fundraising for the gallery has been part of the overall capital campaign for Saint John's University. Several families

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KATHY PARKER, DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES,  
MEDIA AND ARCHIVES



who sponsored a volume have made funding commitments, as well as other donors connected to the Bible project. Thus far Saint John's has raised \$850,000 toward the total \$1.5 million goal.

The entire manuscript will continue to be housed at Saint John's University and its long-term care under museum standards will be managed by HMML. The museum-quality gallery will provide a secure

and appropriately temperature-controlled space for the original pages, state-of-the-art exhibit technology, as well as access to a presentation and reception space.

A page-turning kiosk — similar to one offered by the British Library — will be located outside of the gallery. This will allow guests to turn full-size virtual pages electronically, allowing access to the entire Bible any time Alcuin Library is open.

Extensive attention was given to the design of the space. The design was guided by the terms "sacred," "meditative," and "powerful." The final design shows a beautiful, contemplative space in which to encounter the pages and their stories

Alcuin Library is closed for renovation until Fall 2017. Until then, there will be no original pages of *The Saint John's Bible* on display on campus. However, if you are visiting Saint John's and would like to see all seven volumes of the Heritage Edition, please contact Kerry Werlinger at (320) 363-2611 or email her at [kwerlinger@csbsju.edu](mailto:kwerlinger@csbsju.edu) to schedule a time. 📖



Photos courtesy of the Diocese of Westminster

*Cardinal Vincent Nichols confers a Papal Knighthood upon Donald Jackson at an investiture ceremony at Westminster Cathedral.*

## Jackson Receives Apostolic Knighthood

Donald Jackson, MVO, the artistic director and scribe for *The Saint John's Bible*, received one of the highest honors bestowed upon laypeople by the Holy See. On June 15, Jackson was inducted into the Order of St. Gregory the Great, a papal knighthood granted for outstanding service to the Catholic Church. Jackson received the honor in a special ceremony at Westminster Cathedral in London from Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the archbishop of Westminster.

Jackson was nominated by Bishop Donald Kettler, the bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud. "In the course of its creation and since, *The Saint John's Bible* has touched the lives of Catholics within our diocese as well as millions around the world," said Kettler. ... Mr. Jackson and the Benedictine monks of Saint John's Abbey have once again pointed to the central role of the Bible to the vitality of the Catholic Church."

Jackson, one of the world's leading calligraphers, is the artistic director and principal illuminator of *The Saint John's Bible*. For more than 50 years, he has also been responsible for the creation of official state documents in Great Britain as senior illuminator to the crown office of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Jackson resides in Wales and is a member of the Anglican communion. It is rare for non-Catholics to receive papal knighthood.

*"There is no doubt in my mind that [Mr. Jackson] has provided spiritual insight and inspiration to countless numbers of Anglicans and Roman Catholics alike."*

RT. REV. NICHOLAS HOLTAM,  
THE ANGLICAN BISHOP OF THE  
DIOCESE OF SALISBURY



"Mr. Jackson has made a singular contribution to contemporary Christian art," said Rt. Rev. Nicholas Holtam, the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Salisbury, a longtime friend of Jackson's. "There is no doubt in my mind that he has provided spiritual insight and inspiration to countless numbers of Anglicans and Roman Catholics alike."

The honor further fulfills Saint John's goal to share the Word of God with the world. "Through his talent, Mr. Jackson has demonstrated once again the power of the artist to be in service to the sacred," said Abbot John Klassen, OSB.

Jackson was at his Scriptorium in Wales when he learned about the honor. "I give my sincere thanks to His Holiness Pope Francis for this award and to those who proposed it," said Jackson. "I am

delighted to accept it as both a symbol of his recognition of what has been achieved and of his encouragement for Saint John's mission to 'ignite the spiritual imagination' of all peoples."

The Pontifical Order of St. Gregory the Great was established in 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI. This special honor is bestowed upon Roman Catholic men and women (and sometimes in rare cases to non-Catholics) in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and to the Roman Catholic Church, through their unusual labors, their support of the Holy See, and their excellent examples set forth in their communities and their countries. 🏰

*[This article is adapted from The Saint John's Magazine.]*

## Donald Jackson's Earlier Work Shines with What Was to Come

By Jonathan Homrighausen

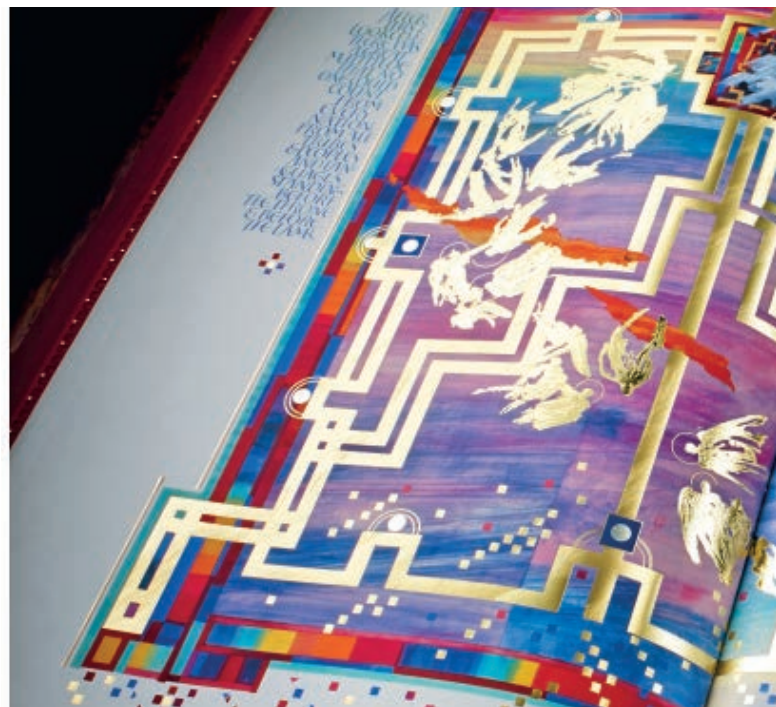
When I first began studying *The Saint John's Bible* in order to show the Heritage Edition at Santa Clara University, I learned that Donald Jackson had wanted to create an illuminated Bible for decades. But after discovering some of Donald Jackson's earlier works, I was startled to find that Jackson was not just contemplating the overall project but fashioning artistic motifs that would make their way into *The Saint John's Bible*. For example, he used gold leaf to depict divine presence and divine figures, including these three stand-alone works from the 1980s, which parallel two illuminations of *The Saint John's Bible*.

Jackson's 1981 book *The Story of Writing*, written to accompany a film series Jackson narrated on the subject, includes his 1980 calligraphic treatment of Genesis 1:1-3, 10 and Revelation 1:8, 11-13, 16-17.



Calligraphy by Donald Jackson, 1980 taken from Donald Jackson, *The Story of Writing* (New York, NY: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1981), 171

These two scriptural passages juxtapose God's creation with Jesus' final coming in the eschaton. The phrase "let there be light" is itself gold, referencing the gold figure above, the Son of Man (Revelation 1:13) who is the Light (John 1:4), the "alpha and the omega" (Revelation 1:8). In addition to the text, Jackson includes one of the "candlesticks" in Revelation 1:12 in the form of a menorah, a frequent motif in *The Saint John's Bible*. He also includes a geometric diagram, a motif in *The Saint John's Bible* evoking order and design, as in the frontispiece to Ecclesiastes. The main focus of this piece, however, is the gold figure of the Son of Man.



Another Jackson piece with parallels in *The Saint John's Bible* is *And He Shall Send His Angels*, a 1988 piece included in *fi fifti fifti*, the catalogue of a 1988 exhibit of Jackson's work at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA). This piece illuminates Matthew 24:30-31, part of Jesus' eschatological discourse in Matthew 23-25, with several angels blowing on the trumpet referenced in Matthew 24:31.

The depiction of both of these divine figures brings to mind an apocalyptic illumination from *The Saint John's Bible*, the *Vision of the New Jerusalem* (above) in Revelation 21:1-22:5. This illumination depicts the angels that inhabit the New Jerusalem, praising God for all time in the heavenly city lit solely by God's radiance (Revelation 21:23).

To depict these angels, Jackson uses pure gold leaf, supplying only the vague shapes of these otherworldly beings. Here as elsewhere in *The Saint John's Bible*, Jackson uses gold as a symbol of God's divine presence. Rather than depicting divine figures with realism and detail, Jackson merely evokes them, engaging the viewer to use their imagination to fill in the portrait.

*A Cristo Crucificado* (*To Christ Crucified*), another piece from Jackson's MIA exhibit and catalogue, includes the text of a devotional poem by an anonymous 16th-century Spanish poet. Jackson does not depict a suffering, human Jesus, but a golden glorified Christ.

The gold of the cross spills out, shimmering upwards like flames. If one took this image and tilted it slightly, it would look

*Vision of the New Jerusalem*, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2011, *The Saint John's Bible*, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



*A Christo Crucificado* from Donald Jackson, *Painting with Words: The Calligraphy of Donald Jackson* (St. Paul, MN: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1988), fig. 30.

much like the *Crucifixion* illumination in Luke (lower right).

This is the only illumination in *The Saint John's Bible* of Jesus' Passion narrative. The slightly askew tilt of this image represents the world gone topsy-turvy as God incarnate is executed like a common criminal [1]. Although it is noted that Jackson used the German Gero Cross as inspiration for the *Crucifixion* illumination, it seems that Jackson was also contemplating his own earlier work. Just as in the depictions of the Son of Man and angels above, Jackson shies away from realism and instead emphasizes "let there be light" through the use of gold leaf. Jackson's choice to depict Jesus with pure gold removes cultural identity. This Jesus is neither European nor African nor Asian. This could be anyone's Jesus.

It is unclear whether or not these three earlier works — *Calligraphy* by Donald Jackson, 1980, *And He Shall Send His Angels*, and *A Christo Crucificado* — were intentionally created as practice for an illuminated Bible, one for which Jackson had long been hoping to find a patron. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that when creating the visual motifs that make up *The Saint John's Bible*, Jackson drew on symbols and images that he had been fashioning for several decades of his calligraphic career. These images enhance our appreciation of the imagery of *The Saint John's Bible*, and remind us that this massive undertaking is the pinnacle to Jackson's already distinguished career. 🏠

[Jonathan Homrighausen works as a Student Assistant in Archives & Special Collections at Santa Clara University in California, where he has shown Heritage Edition #27 to over 200 people. He is also earning an MA in Biblical Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA.]



*Crucifixion*, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2002, *The Saint John's Bible*, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[1] Laura Kelly Fanucci, "Variation on a Theme: Intertextuality in the Illuminations of the Gospel of Luke," *Obsculta* 2, no. 1 (May 1, 2009): 27-28.

# First Person

Anton Koekemoer, Ph.D.

**Dr. Anton Koekemoer** is a Hubble Astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute. He has been in charge of one of the imaging cameras on the Hubble Space Telescope for some years, and has also worked on Hubble's successor, the James Webb Space Telescope.

Dr. Koekemoer is also a committed Christian and has given his presentation, "Faith and Science in Harmony: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God," at several institutions that have the *The Saint John's Bible* Heritage Edition.



**Q:** The Hubble images are an example of the highest possible technology for imaging, and *The Saint John's Bible* is using pre-modern technology for making images. Yet both affect the way we "see" Creation and the universe in the 21st century. In what way does your work expand our definitions of "art" and *The Saint John's Bible* expand our understanding of science?

**A:** A wonderful aspect of many of the Hubble images we produce is that they are intended to show the true colors and features of each scene on the sky. So, in a sense, these images can be thought of as "landscape portraits" of the cosmos, using Hubble as our camera, which we then make available to the world. The variety of colors and shapes in our images are generally intended to appear as they would if they could be seen directly by the human eye, and I sometimes describe these as revealing "God's artwork on a cosmic canvas." The images also often convey much of the scientific results directly, as the shapes, sizes, and colors of the galaxies, stars, and glowing gas clouds all reveal the astrophysical processes that are at work. So there is often an elegant connection between the images themselves and the scientific results that we can obtain from them. In a similar way, *The Saint John's Bible* artwork based on these Hubble images serves to draw out the connection with the Divine, illustrating the role of God as creator of the cosmos that we observe and also as author of the scientific laws that regulate the processes in the cosmos.

**Q:** The Hubble images on the website are quite colorful, full, and feel kinetic — like there is a lot of movement in space. How are your images in tension with our imaginative perception of space as dark, empty, and still?

**A:** The universe can be very dynamic: planets continually move as they orbit around stars, while stars also move as they orbit within galaxies, and the galaxies themselves are moving all the time, often colliding or interacting with each other. Glowing clouds of gas within galaxies often harbor new bursts

of star formation, and as stars age they can produce strong outflows which eventually cause changes in the surrounding glowing gas clouds. Many of these processes would take millions, or even billions, of years, so our images often reveal only a single snapshot of a much longer saga. There are also some events which we observe on much shorter timescales, like "solar storms" on our own sun, or the energetic "supernova" explosions of distant stars, which can brighten by millions of times within a few seconds before slowly fading for several weeks afterwards. At the same time, the vast distances between stars, and also between galaxies, remains quite empty and provides a perfect contrast to the constant motions of the stars and galaxies themselves.

**Q:** In one of your talks, you say that "mainstream astronomy reveals God's attributes." Could you elaborate on that a bit?

**A:** The scientific results from modern astronomy show us that our universe is almost inconceivably vast, with our own sun already 93 million miles from us, and the next nearest star about 25 trillion miles away! The other hundred billion stars in our own Milky Way galaxy are thousands of times farther away still, and finally our universe is filled with many billions of other galaxies, at distances up to billions of times farther than the next nearest star from us. Just contemplating the sheer scale of the universe, as well as the beauty revealed in all our astronomical images, can leave anyone with a profound sense of awe and wonder, regardless of one's perspective on religion. From my own personal viewpoint as a Christian, I would say that we can appreciate even more deeply how the writers of Scripture were inspired thousands of years ago to write: "the heavens declare the glory of God, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



*This is the first image obtained from the Hubble Frontier Fields project, an ambitious new super-deep study of the universe using the Hubble Space Telescope, aimed at detecting some of the faintest and most distant galaxies ever observed.* Photo courtesy of NASA, ESA, and J. Lotz, M. Mountain, A. Koekemoer, and the Hubble Frontier Fields Team (Space Telescope Science Institute).

# Perspectives

By Jason Engel

## A 'CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER' CASE STUDY

In July of 2013, Jim Triggs and I presented *The Saint John's Bible* at University of Chicago's Calvert House as part of its Theology on Tap series. It was an exciting night, attended by many theology majors and doctoral students who all had great questions and insights. Our discussions went late into the night.

On my way home I stopped at a McDonald's restaurant to have a burger and to read my little blue pocket Bible. Michael walked up to me while I was waiting to order and asked, "Are you a Christian?"

"Well, yes, I am," I answered.

"Me, too," said Michael. There was something slightly ... different ... about him. "I'm homeless." Well, that explained a few things. "And I used to be a drug addict." And that explained a lot more. "But Jesus saved me a couple months ago. My name's Michael. Do you want to have dinner with me?"

"Yeah, sure." Suddenly, all those Benedictine values I learned about as an undergrad at Saint John's University came flooding back. We took our food and sat down to eat. Michael had just spent his last \$3 on a cheeseburger and a soda. I gave him my fries.

Over the next half hour, Michael told me about his drug addiction. I could tell that his addiction had cost him a lot, mentally and physically, but still he exuded peace and calm.

"Now I write poetry for Jesus. Would you like to hear some?" It was getting very late, but there was just something that made it so hard to say no to Michael.

He proceeded to recite poetry from memory for almost an hour. Grand poetry. Beautiful poetry. His words expressed pain and misery, yet soared to the heavens with gratitude and a love for God so profound I lost track of time listening to him.

When he was done, I said: "Wait right here, Michael. I need to go to my car. I want to share something with you."

I came back with the Pentateuch volume of the Heritage Edition in hand. Yes, I had just set down a \$25,000 book on a table at McDonald's and opened it to the beginning of Genesis, to share it with a homeless drug addict. And I began to give my presentation.

Every single time I have ever had the pleasure of sharing *The Saint John's Bible* with people, they have this reaction. This awe. This childlike wonder. And then come all the questions. Like the graduate theology students just hours before, Michael started asking me all kinds of questions about the meaning of each illumination we explored together.

Soon an elderly woman joined us at the table where I was giving my impromptu presentation. While Michael turned pages, I asked her about herself. She hesitated, "I'm... I'm a widow. And I don't like to leave home much. Sometimes I come here to watch TV at night when all the kids are gone and it's quiet. But tonight



*"A few days after my McDonald's encounter with Michael, I came back to take this photo using my Liturgical Press edition of The Saint John's Bible."*

— JASON ENGEL

I heard the most wonderful poetry, and now I get to see this amazing Bible." As I looked on and answered their questions, Michael and this elderly widow turned pages and read Scripture to each other.

Clearly, the staff could tell something strange was going on in the booths. First one teen walked over and peeked shyly. Then another. Then all of them, a half-dozen at least. They listened to Michael and the widow read from the Bible. Their manager came over, angry that her staff had left their posts and were standing around a table. That is, until she saw us looking at an enormous, hand-written Bible. Apparently not all of the teens could read or speak English, so as this strange blend of people touched pages, asked questions, and read Scripture aloud to each other, one girl would translate into Spanish.

That's how *The Saint John's Bible* shut down a McDonald's restaurant one night and transformed it into a church whose members included a homeless drug addict, a lonely widow, a bunch of immigrant children, a harried restaurant manager, and me. Our communion table had a McDonald's logo on it. We broke cheeseburgers together and drank diet soda. I know Jesus was present because I saw him in every person around that table. 🍷

[Jason Engel graduated from Saint John's University in 1995.]

***Sacred Words: The Saint John's Bible and the Art of Illumination* will open on October 15 at Oklahoma City Museum of Art with 70 original folios.**

You can also follow the journey of *The Saint John's Bible* on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Regular updates, advance notices of new publications and photos of new illuminations can all be found on these social media sites.



## Q&A WITH DR. ANTON KOEKEMOER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the skies proclaim His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Contemplating the scale of the universe can also lead us to ponder the ultimate significance of our own humanity by comparison, as stated so eloquently by the Psalmist: "What is humankind, that Thou art mindful of us?" (Ps. 8:4). Yet the very next verses provide an answer to this question, by showing how precious we all are to God. When we consider the universe from the viewpoint of religion, by contemplating God as its creator, faith can be deeply enriched and broadened as a result.

**Q:** What inspires you about *The Saint John's Bible*? What inspires you about space? Are the two related?

**A:** *The Saint John's Bible* is an extraordinary undertaking, blending ancient techniques in calligraphy and art with our modern understanding of the world and the universe in which we live, all within an ecumenical Christian framework. It is particularly inspiring to see how various aspects of our current culture were used as a foundation for many of the illustrations. It is also deeply appreciated that some of our Hubble images have been woven into the artistic themes, for example in the illuminations that depict the narratives in Genesis, with gold leaf used to indicate the divine, thereby forming a powerful visual representation of God's role as creator. To me, this provides a beautiful complement to our scientific study of the universe, where we strive to unveil the physical laws and processes that

determine the behavior of the stars, galaxies, and all their associated components. From a Christian perspective, considering God as the author of the various physical laws that we uncover adds an additional enriching dimension to contemplating the universe in which we live.

**Q:** What is the message you take to audiences with your presentation on *The Saint John's Bible* and space?

**A:** The basic theme of my presentation is that it is quite possible to contemplate the grand scale of the universe, as revealed by modern astronomical science, from the perspective of faith where God is viewed as its creator, as revealed by scripture, and that science and faith can be fully reconciled in this context. Science can be said to describe the physical mechanisms and processes in the universe, while the Christian faith considers God as the agent responsible for its creation and discusses the purpose of our own lives in that context, which is not really a question that can even be posed in a scientific setting. The idea that science can be reconciled with faith in this way, from a Christian perspective, is a welcome message to the audiences of these presentations. In addition, the presentation shows how contemplating the vast scale of the universe can lead to a more deeply enriched view of God. From the perspective of faith it can truly be said that the "heavens declare the glory of God." 