

# The SCRIBE

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

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Photo: GHR Foundation

## Library of Congress Receives Apostles Edition

In honor of Pope Francis' visit to the United States in September, Saint John's Abbey and University presented an Apostles Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* to the Library of Congress. The gift was made possible by Minneapolis-based GHR Foundation.

The gift was made in the presence of Pope Francis, following his address to a joint meeting of Congress, in acknowledgment of the Pope's devotion to scripture; his concern for the poor, sick, marginalized, and for the dignity of all people; his care for creation; and his commitment to justice for all. The Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, received the Bible on behalf of the American people. Also present at the ceremony in House Speaker John Boehner's office were Speaker Boehner; U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), who chairs Congress' Joint Committee on the Library of Congress; Saint John's University President

Dr. Michael Hemesath; Abbot John Klassen, OSB; and GHR Foundation CEO Amy Goldman.

"From the earliest days of the Bible project and the creation of the Apostles and Heritage Editions, it has been our desire to have one of these at the Library of Congress, in

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## #7Days7Pages *Illuminating the Mission*

Beginning Monday, September 21, and throughout Pope Francis' historic visit to the United States, more than 60 institutions turned to the same page of *The Saint John's Bible Heritage Edition*. The event was a display of Christian solidarity shared across the country as people gathered to reflect on some of the Pope's major themes.

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## 7 DAYS 7 PAGES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It was such an exciting opportunity to partner with other institutions in Christian unity to share the mission of love that Pope Francis has initiated," said Luba Zakharov, librarian and curator of special collections and rare books at Azusa Pacific University in California.

The page-turning event, "Illuminating the Mission: 7 Days, 7 Pages," was designed to show support for the Pope's mission during his journey to America. Each day of the week, participating institutions turned to the same page of *The Saint John's Bible*.

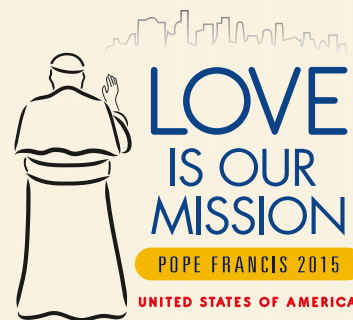
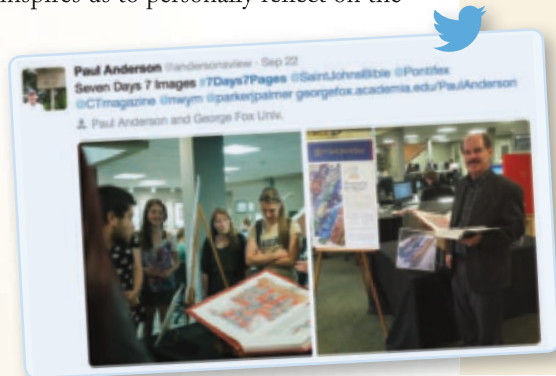
According to Rev. Michael Patella, OSB, professor of theology at Saint John's University and chair of the Committee on Illumination and Text, the illuminations were selected with great care. "These illuminations were specifically chosen because they resonate with values Pope Francis holds dear: hospitality; concern for the poor, sick, marginalized; the dignity of all people; and care for creation," said Patella.

Saint John's University School of Theology provided a reflection for each day's image. The reflections were posted with the open pages, distributed through social media, and used in devotional programs. The hashtag #7days7pages turned up a large number of images of people turning the page across the country, including members of local civic groups like the Knights of Columbus, librarians, students, clergy, and others.

Additionally, Paul Anderson, Professor of Biblical and Quaker Studies at George Fox University, brought the effort to the audience of *The Huffington Post*. Anderson wrote nine essays that were published daily on the popular news website and shared through social media. On the George Fox campus, someone read the brief essay featuring the artwork for that day and a new image was set on a stand near the school's *Saint John's Bible* display.

"It is so appropriate that *The Saint John's Bible* Heritage Edition should be at the center of our thoughts during Pope Francis' visit to the United States and, in particular, Pennsylvania," La Roche College President Sister Candace Introcaso, CDP, Ph.D., said. "In the past three years since La Roche acquired the Heritage Edition, its messages and stunning illuminations have been incorporated into our academic programs, worship services, and campus life. Just as Pope Francis inspires us to seek and serve those in need, *The Saint John's Bible* inspires us to personally reflect on the power and providence of God in our lives." 🍷

[Paul Anderson's articles on The Huffington Post are available at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-n-anderson/>]

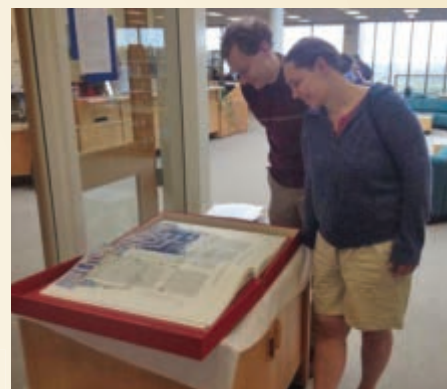
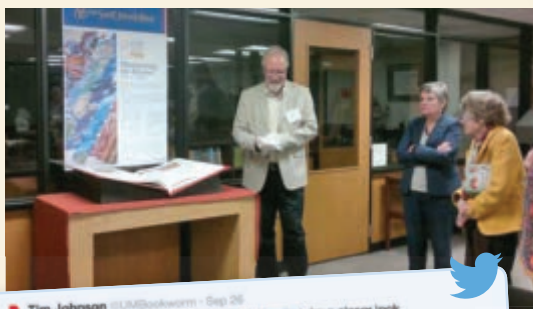


## *Illuminating the Mission* 7 Days • 7 Pages

"ILLUMINATING THE MISSION: 7 DAYS, 7 PAGES," WAS DESIGNED TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE POPE'S MISSION DURING HIS JOURNEY TO AMERICA. EACH DAY THAT WEEK, A NEW PAGE WAS TURNED SIMULTANEOUSLY AT THESE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

ACADEMY OF HOLY ANGELS - MN  
ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH - AZ  
ANDERSON UNIVERSITY - IN  
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE - MA  
AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY - CA  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY - VA  
BEREA COLLEGE - KY  
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY - UT  
CARSON NEWMAN COLLEGE - TN  
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN - NM  
CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE LIGHT - CA  
CHAMINADE UNIVERSITY - HI  
CLARK UNIVERSITY - IA  
COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT - MN  
COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY - NE  
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY - NE  
DUNHAM BIBLE MUSEUM - TX  
EDGEWOOD COLLEGE - WI  
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY - CT  
FRANCISCAN RENEWAL CENTER - AZ  
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY - OR  
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY - WA  
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE - MN  
HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL - MN  
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY - OH  
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY - KS





LA ROCHE COLLEGE - PA  
 LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY - CA  
 LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO - IL  
 LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND - MD  
 MALONE UNIVERSITY - OH  
 MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY - WI  
 MOLLOY COLLEGE - NY  
 MOUNT MARTY COLLEGE - SD  
 MOUNT SAINT MARY COLLEGE - NY  
 MOUNT ST. BENEDICT MONASTERY - MN  
 NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY - MD  
 PRESENTATION COLLEGE - SD  
 REGIS UNIVERSITY - CO  
 SAINT AGNES MEDICAL CENTER - CA  
 SAINT BENEDICT'S MONASTERY - MN  
 SAINT CATHERINE UNIVERSITY - MN  
 SAINT JOHN'S ABBEY - MN  
 SAINT JOHN'S CATHEDRAL - CO

SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY - MN  
 SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY - FL  
 SAINT MARTIN'S UNIVERSITY - WA  
 SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE - IN  
 SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY - NJ  
 SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH - KS  
 SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - CA  
 ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY - CANADA  
 ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY - TX  
 UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON - OH  
 UNIVERSITY OF MARY - ND  
 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - MN  
 UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND - OR  
 VISITATION HIGH SCHOOL - MN  
 WAYZATA COMMUNITY CHURCH - MN  
 XAVIER UNIVERSITY - OH  
 YALE DIVINITY LIBRARY - CT

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RECEIVES APOSTLES EDITION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the company of other famous bibles such as the Gutenberg and the Mainz volumes,” said Abbot John Klassen.

“That amazing goal came to fruition when university president Michael Hemesath and I were able to make that presentation in the presence of Pope Francis, after his personal blessing of the Bible... It was a graced moment.”

The Bible will join the Library of Congress’ collection of rare spiritual texts and was on public exhibition from Saturday, September 26, through Saturday, January 2, 2016.

“The Library of Congress is truly honored to receive this priceless work of human creativity and divine inspiration in honor of Pope Francis’ visit,” said Dr. Billington.

The Bible will be available to researchers for study as part of the Library’s extensive collection of bibles and religious texts from the world’s religions, including one of only three perfect copies in the world of the Gutenberg Bible. *The Saint John’s Bible* was first exhibited at the Library of Congress when the traveling exhibition, “Illuminating the Word: *The Saint John’s Bible*” was on display in 2006. Due to its popularity, the exhibit was extended that year through the Christmas season.

**GHR foundation** applies entrepreneurial creativity and universal Catholic values in the areas of health, education, and global development. Started in 1965 by Gerald (Gerry) A. and Henrietta (Hanky) Rauenhurst, founders of the Opus companies, the Foundation seeks transformational change in health, education, and global development, and partners with the world’s experts to achieve impact. 🏡

*[The St. Peter’s Apostles Edition is beautifully bound in seven volumes. To date, four of the 12 Apostles Editions have been acquired. Besides the edition at the Library of Congress, one set is at the Vatican, one is at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City, and the fourth is owned by a family.]*

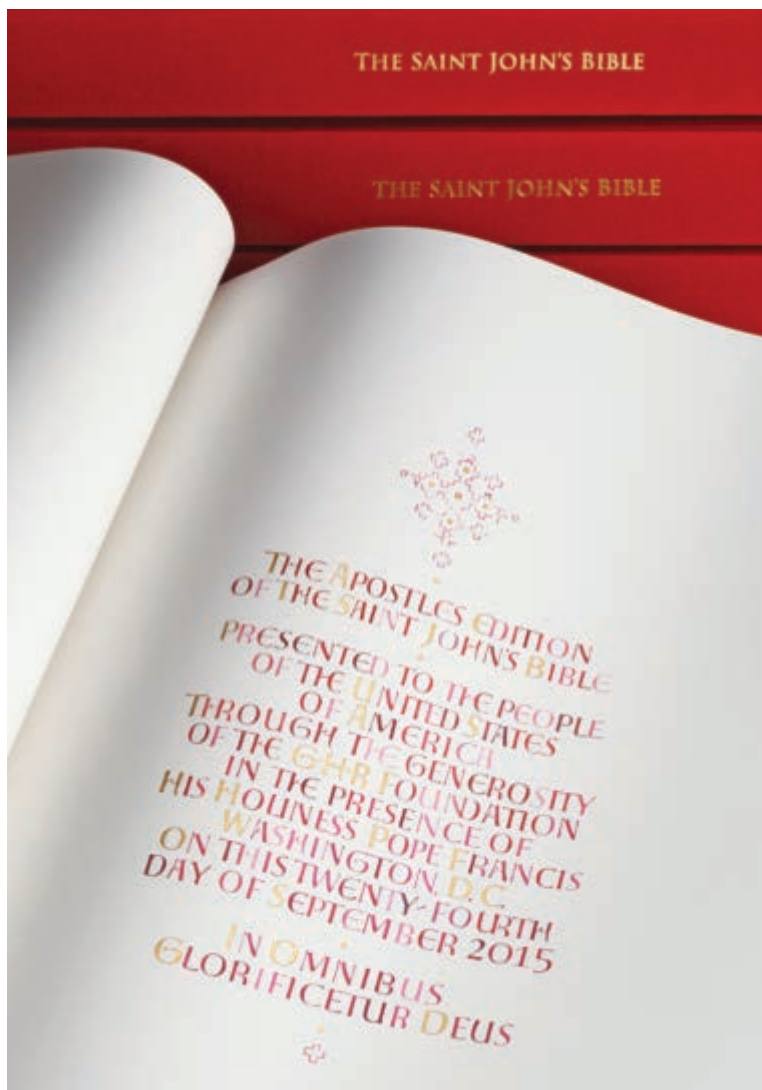


Photo: Wayne Torborg, 2015



*The dedication page of  
The Saint John’s Bible Apostles Edition  
is made out to His Holiness Pope Francis in  
honor of his visit to the United States of America  
this past September.*





# Perspectives

By Fr. Wilfred Theisen, OSB


## MAGDALENE

For nearly two thousand years Mary Magdalene had an identity crisis. This, despite the numerous references to her in the gospels that indicate she was a person of some significance and a close associate of Jesus. Nevertheless, biblical scholars could not decide if she should be identified with the unnamed penitent woman who washed Jesus' feet and anointed them with precious oil (depicted in "Dinner at the Pharisee's House"), or with Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus (depicted in "Luke's Anthology"). It was just a few decades ago that scholars finally agreed that Mary Magdalene could not be identified with either of these women.

It took two millennia for the scholars to remove the stigma of 'prostitute' from Mary. Since it took so long for the commentators to clear Mary, the iconographic history of Mary Magdalene illustrates her identity crisis. For most of the Middle Ages she was portrayed as the "sinner" of Luke's gospel.

Second only to her portrayal as a prostitute are the icons of Mary encountering Jesus in the garden after the Resurrection. In these portrayals Mary is always shown kneeling on the ground, sometimes reaching out to Jesus from a short distance, sometimes grabbing his feet. Jesus is always shown with his arm extended, and his hand in a gesture that indicates that Mary should remain at a distance from him. This portrayal is the artists' interpretation of Jesus' command, "Do not touch [*aptou*] me." In Giotto's fresco, Jesus' body is ethereal, heavenly, therefore untouchable. But Mary's body, clothed in a semi-transparent, red, sensual robe, is very earthy. What is not indicated is any sense of physical intimacy between Mary and Jesus.

The Greek word used in the Gospel account, *aptou*, can be translated "to touch" but also "to embrace." Consider the fact that the gospels explicitly state that Mary Magdalene was at the Crucifixion, that she was at the tomb after Jesus was buried, and that all four gospels record that she was the first person to whom Jesus appeared after the Resurrection. Clearly, there was a very special relationship between them. Is it too much to claim it included embraces? Would physical intimacy with a woman still be in keeping with his dual nature? Would Jesus, like us in all respects except sin, reject an intimate friendship with a woman?

*The Saint John's Bible*, in its depiction of Mary in "The Resurrection," does not think so. Donald Jackson's illumination shows Mary standing close to Jesus, their robes melding together. Mary gazes intently at him. One can imagine that they are about to embrace one another. It is a strong image of their relationship, albeit transfigured by the Resurrection event. 

[Fr. Wilfred Theisen, OSB, is professor emeritus in physics from Saint John's University and a monk of Saint John's Abbey. He retired this fall as official liaison between the abbey and the Collegeville Institute.]



*Giotto di Bondone, Noli me tangere, from "Scenes from the Life of Mary Magdalene," fresco, 1320s. Courtesy of Wikimedia commons.*



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

# First Person

Christopher Calderhead



**Christopher Calderhead** is a lettering artist, writer, and educator. He is the editor and designer of *Letter Arts Review*, an international quarterly magazine dedicated to all aspects of original lettering. His books include *Illuminating the Word: The Making of The Saint John's Bible*, *Calligraphy Studio*, and (with co-author Holly Cohen) *The World Encyclopedia of Calligraphy*. He teaches at the Pratt Institute and at Bronx Community College.

**Q:** Do you have a favorite story from the production period of *The Saint John's Bible*?

**A:** I wrote the original chapters for the first edition of *Illuminating the Word: The Making of The Saint John's Bible* over a period of several years. I was living in England at the time, so I had the good fortune to be able to travel to Donald Jackson's scriptorium in Wales every few months.

One of my favorite moments from those early days concerns a mistake that was made. One of the large vellum sheets had been ruled up on both sides, in preparation for writing. But once the first column was written, it became apparent that the columns on either side of the sheet were out of register. (It's easy to see this because vellum is slightly translucent, so you can see the shadow of what's on the other side of a sheet). There was consternation in the scriptorium: how had this happened?

The ruling up was done using a professional drafting table with a built-in parallel ruler. In theory, this would produce perfectly straight and regular ruling up. But vellum is made from calfskin — it's supple and slightly irregular. It's also very sensitive to humidity. In higher humidity, it relaxes and stretches a few millimeters. In low humidity, it shrinks and becomes stiffer.

Watching Donald and his team try to trouble-shoot this problem with the ruling-up, I saw how closely they worked together to solve problems. And for the first time I became acutely aware of the unique challenges of producing a major manuscript book in our era.

**Q:** As a fellow calligrapher, what most impresses you about *The Saint John's Bible*?

**A:** Something I have not written about much is the use of the quill. In my book, I describe how quills were prepared and used in the writing, but I've never really written about the place of quills in contemporary calligraphy.

There's a great deal of fetishization of tools in the calligraphy world — there's a natural fascination with traditional tools and materials, which can often shade into a kind of arcane nostalgia

for the Middle Ages. But Donald Jackson has always used the quill as his preferred tool, not because he wants to live in the past, but because that tool has remarkable properties that cannot be replicated by more contemporary writing implements.

A well-cured goose quill, expertly cut, can make marks that no other tool can. The writing tip — the nib — can be cut to any width one desires. In the hands of an expert writer, the quill produces clean, sharp writing. But it is also a flexible tool, so the calligrapher can use pressure to gently expand the thickness of the strokes, or turn the tool on its corner to produce fine, thin lines. At the end of a thick stroke, the slight curvature of the barrel of the quill produces a gentle arc, unlike the ramrod-straight termination made by a metal nib. The ink flow — if you get the knack of it — is also much more free than that of a metal nib.

So one thing that really impresses me is that Donald made his team of scribes master the use of the quill. It's something he has always insisted on with his assistants. For some of the calligraphers involved, it was a steep learning curve. The tool is not easy to master, and each quill, since it comes from an actual, living bird, is unique. Some quills are wonderful, others, less so.

I, myself, have written with quills, but I haven't had regular experience using them, so for me they can be rather hit-or-miss. Many of the calligraphers who worked with Donald on the manuscript would now hardly consider using a different tool. Once you've come to know the quill and developed a sensitivity to its unique characteristics, it's hard to go back to a stiff metal nib. The quill is one of the things that gives the Bible scripts so much of their character.

**Q:** What do you think *The Saint John's Bible* has contributed to Christian iconography?

**A:** This can only be told with time — will the symbolism and imagery of this Bible begin to find their way into the art of other artists working on religious commissions? Will the images Donald has created resonate in the wider world of religious art?

What I can say is that Donald Jackson clearly didn't want to fall back on the safety of traditional imagery. Working with the



Committee on Illumination and Text, he devised many new ways of representing the religious significance of the Bible text. And as he went along, the motifs he used began to reappear in different parts of *The Saint John's Bible*. So I suppose we could say that, if you follow the development of the manuscript over the years it took to produce, you can trace a growing body of new motifs that began to be used within the book.

That was exciting to watch as the Bible was being made. The illuminations in the first volume that was produced — *Gospels and Acts* — had to be created from scratch. But once the manuscript was underway, new illuminations began to quote motifs from earlier illuminations.

Some examples of these motifs are the use of rainbow colors to represent the divine presence, or the figure of the dark bird that appears in Genesis.

Donald's process of adapting contemporary images to evoke themes in the text reminds me of the early Christian Church taking motifs from late Roman society and adapting them to the new churches they were building around the empire. Some of these images had staying power, and became accepted standards for representing God and the saints in Christian art; some fell by the wayside.

Time will tell whether the imagery Donald created will have the same kind of impact on religious artists.

**Q:** Which motifs struck you as particularly successful for an illuminated Bible of the 21st century?

**A:** Hard question to answer. I can only really speak of things that personally appeal to me here. I think that as the production of the Bible progressed, Donald Jackson became more confident in his sense of scale. I prefer the boldest compositions, and there are more of these in the later volumes.

One of my personal favorites is "Wisdom Woman," which appears in Wisdom of Solomon. I find the striking photographic image of the wise old woman contrasts beautifully with the hand-work of the gilding and painting. And it's a very fresh take on this figure from the text. In a society that does not value old age, it's a powerful way of envisioning the wisdom of experience.

I'm also very struck by the "Vision of the New Temple" in Ezekiel. On one hand, the image of the temple plan seems so solid, yet it shimmers, suggesting the visionary quality of the text.

Having said I like bold images, I also love looking at the Song of Songs. Donald filled the margins with expressive marks — they look like rose petals scattered across the page. There's a sumptuousness to that treatment that goes perfectly with the imagery of the text. 🌹



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

## The Power of the Personal

by Karen Eifler

When the University of Portland received the extraordinary benefaction of the Heritage Edition, I dove heart-first into learning everything possible about it. Books and workshops facilitated by Jim Triggs and Susan Sink fired my imagination about ways to share this gem. My thinking began and ended with how to fill cavernous halls so that the entire Pacific Northwest (why not dream big?) could behold this pinnacle of human accomplishment.

The seats *have* filled. I've found that, given the invitation (and the occasional "Teacher Look"), middle schoolers can engage in contemplative silence as part of a Visio Divina, and that what they behold in the illuminations crackles with insight. A concert of original music inspired by *SJB* images of women was so popular that it has become an annual event. *Psalms*, paraded for three blocks from Temple Beth Israel to St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, is the anchor of our Nostra Aetate 50th anniversary commemoration. Portland's zealous calligraphy community filled the room for Fr. Eric Hollas' talk on "Humor and Whimsy in *The Saint John's Bible*," part of a university-wide project touting humor as a sideways weapon against the forces of darkness. So yes, I had the sense of "mission accomplished" regarding ambitions to build a huge audience.

Then I met Jill.

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To see a complete listing of  
*Saint John's Bible* events, visit:  
[saintjohnsbible.org](http://saintjohnsbible.org) and click on  
"See the Bible."

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.



## THE POWER OF THE PERSONAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

It was to be a routine field trip for *Gospels and Acts*, a reprise for a faith-sharing group of my standard presentation. Days before the event, Marcia, the woman who had made the arrangements, told me that her dear friends Jill and Dick, fresh converts to Catholicism and members of the group, had just received a devastating diagnosis of Jill's Stage 4 cancer. The talk was cancelled, as members marshaled their energies around Jill and her husband. But Marcia asked if I'd consider bringing *The Saint John's Bible* to Jill in the intensive care unit.

I packed it up one Sunday afternoon and found myself in a room that barely held four people. Alerted to Jill's low energy, fallout from chemo and pain, I focused on "The Crucifixion." Dick and Marcia held the enormous volume up to her so that Jill could trace the indentations of the gold leaf, absorbing

*"Dick and Marcia held the enormous volume  
up to her so that Jill could trace the indentations  
of the gold leaf, absorbing it all, and asking  
a few questions in the hushed tones of someone  
in the throes of wonder."*



it all, and asking a few questions in the hushed tones of someone in the throes of wonder. A nurse wandered in and was transfixed; the silence was the warm, gentle kind that marks Divine Presence. Words were superfluous.

Cancer claimed Jill not too long afterward. Their new faith sustained both her and Dick, as he shared at her funeral. But he also relayed the impact of Jill's single encounter with *The Saint John's Bible* and the light it shed on her spiritual journey in her final days. Filling an auditorium isn't the only way to ignite spiritual

imagination. Jill, Dick and Marcia convinced me that four is plenty. 

*[Karen Eifler is the Co-Director of the Garaventa Center for Catholic Intellectual Life and American Culture at the University of Portland.]*