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Press Contact: Jennifer Gavin (202) 707-1940, [jgav@loc.gov](mailto:jgav@loc.gov)

Public Contact: Michael Hemmesch, SJU (320) 363-2595, [mhemmesch@csbsju.edu](mailto:mhemmesch@csbsju.edu)

## **Rare Bible Given in Honor of Pope Francis' Visit on Exhibit at Library of Congress Beginning Saturday, Sept. 26**

### ***Apostles Edition of The Saint John's Bible Will Join Library's Collection of Rare Religious Texts***

The Library of Congress today received as a gift from Saint John's Abbey and University an Apostles Edition of *The Saint John's Bible*, a work of art with more than 1,130 pages and 160 illuminations that reflect life in the modern era, measuring 2 feet tall and 3 feet wide when open. It is the first handwritten and illuminated Bible commissioned by a monastery since the invention of the printing press, more than 500 years ago. The Library will place the rare edition on public exhibition beginning **Saturday, Sept. 26.**

The gift of this Apostles Edition, made possible by GHR Foundation, was made in the presence of Pope Francis, following his address to a joint meeting of Congress, in acknowledgement of the Pope's devotion to scripture; his concern for the poor, sick and 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.

The original manuscript of *The Saint John's Bible* is held at Saint John's Abbey and University in Minnesota, a Benedictine institution. There are only 12 sets of the Apostles Edition in existence, including the one donated to the Library. A separate set was presented to the Pope and is available to scholars at the Vatican Library.

*The Saint John's Bible* is an unprecedented combination of ancient methods and materials, with themes, images and technology of the 21st century. Saint John's Abbey and University partnered with world-renowned calligrapher Donald Jackson, senior scribe to Her Majesty the Queen's Crown Office at the House of Lords in London, England, to create this masterpiece.

The Apostles Edition of *The Saint John's Bible* will be displayed on the north side of the Great Hall of the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building, 10 First St., S.E., in Washington, D.C. **Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015 through Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016.** The Bible can be viewed Monday through Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

"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 all the world's religions, including one of only three perfect copies in the world of the Gutenberg Bible and the Library's Giant Bible of Mainz, a hand-illuminated Bible contemporaneous with the Gutenberg.

*The Saint John's Bible* and its limited fine art editions resulted from a long collaboration among scholars of scripture and theologians at Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota and a team of artists and calligraphers led by Donald Jackson in his scriptorium in Wales, in the United Kingdom. Under the direction of expert calligrapher Jackson, who served as senior scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Crown Office at the House of Lords, teams of illuminators created *The Saint John's Bible* entirely by hand using quills, illuminating it with precious metals and paints manually ground from precious minerals.

Illuminated Bibles throughout history have depicted the times and places in which they were created, and *The Saint John's Bible* is no exception. The illuminations bring to life familiar scriptural passages from a modern perspective, both in terms of conveying a multicultural humanity and representations of science, technology, and space exploration, in addition to other more contemporary historical events.

The Library of Congress, which collects books, manuscripts, photographs, films, sound recordings and knowledge in many other formats from around the globe in more than 470 languages, is the home of an extensive array of materials reflecting the world's broad and varied religious heritage. Its holdings range from the Gutenberg Bible and a collection of more than 1,500 other Bibles to Jewish Talmuds, Tibetan texts, ancient Buddhist scrolls and rare editions of the Qur'an.

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***Additional information:***

**Saint John's University:** Established in 1857, Saint John's University is one of the oldest institutions of education in the Midwest and is among the top-rated Catholic liberal arts colleges in the nation. Nationally recognized for its promotion of character and values development, Saint John's is a community committed to academic excellence, social justice and leadership. [www.csbsju.edu](http://www.csbsju.edu)

**GHR Foundation:** 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. [www.ghrfoundation.org](http://www.ghrfoundation.org)

**Library of Congress:** Founded in 1800, The Library of Congress is the nation's first-established federal cultural institution. The Library seeks to spark imagination and creativity and to further human understanding and wisdom by providing access to knowledge through its magnificent collections, publications, programs and exhibitions. Many of the Library's rich resources can be accessed through its website at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).