

Press Contacts

Patrick Milliman
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org

Alanna Schindewolf
212.590.0311, aschindewolf@themorgan.org

**THE MORGAN CELEBRATES THE 2011 COMPLETION OF THE
MONUMENTAL SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE WITH THE DISPLAY OF A
VOLUME FROM THE APOSTLES EDITION**

*THE FULLY ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, COMMISSIONED BY
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY, WAS CREATED USING TRADITIONAL MATERIALS AND
TECHNIQUES ALONG WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY*

The Saint John's Bible
May 7–August 25, 2013



The Saint John's Bible. Apostles Edition
Collegeville, Minn: Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, 2007–2011
5 vols. (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Books, Psalms,
Prophets)
The Morgan Library & Museum, New York
Gift of Dr. William F. Hueg and Hella Mears Hueg, 2011
Photography: Graham S. Haber

New York, NY, April 18, 2013—In 1998 Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, commissioned calligrapher Donald Jackson to produce a fully illuminated luxury manuscript of the Bible. Working out of his scriptorium in Monmouth, Wales, Jackson and a team of calligraphers and artists used traditional techniques and modern technology to create a spectacular illuminated text of over 1,100 pages. Completed in May 2011, *The Saint John's Bible* ensures that the ancient art of illumination—so richly

represented in the Morgan Library & Museum's collections of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts—lives on into the twenty-first century.

To document Jackson's monumental achievement, Saint John's University has published several facsimiles of the manuscript, including the lavish seven-volume Apostles Edition, issued in only

twelve copies. In 2011, Dr. William F. Hueg and Mrs. Hella Mears Hueg presented to the Morgan a set of the Apostles Edition, five volumes of which have appeared to date.

From May 7–August 25, 2013, the Morgan will celebrate this generous gift with the display of the Prophets volume from the Apostles Edition, as well as one of Jackson’s preliminary studies for the Gospel of John frontispiece, on loan from the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. The Prophets volume, containing 232 pages and twenty illuminations, will be opened to reveal an illuminated depiction of the prophet Isaiah.

The presentation will be displayed in the Marble Hall of the Morgan’s 1928 Annex building. Visitors will have the opportunity to compare these modern illuminated works with their medieval origins when, beginning May 17, *Illuminating Faith: The Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art*, goes on view in an adjacent gallery.

“We are deeply grateful to William Hueg and Hella Mears Hueg for the generous gift of this extraordinary volume to the Morgan,” said William M. Griswold, the museum’s director. “Our collection of medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts ranks among the best in the world, and the Apostles Edition helps to bring the collection up to date. The intricate design and exquisite hand-painting in *The Saint John’s Bible* demonstrate the continuing vitality of script and scripture in the modern age.”

ORIGINS OF THE SAINT JOHN’S BIBLE

In 1995 Donald Jackson expressed his lifelong dream of creating a hand-written, illuminated Bible to Eric Hollas, OSB, a monk at Saint John’s Abbey and then-director of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. Between 1996 and 1997, Saint John’s University explored the feasibility of the Bible project, Jackson created preliminary samples, and theologians developed the illumination schema. *The Saint John’s Bible* was officially commissioned in 1998.



Artist Donald Jackson used a wide range of materials to illuminate *The Saint Johns Bible*, including red vermillion pigment from the 1870s used for bullets and footnotes. Copyright © Michael Freeman, Michael Freeman Photography, London, England

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Jackson and his team relied on computers to size the *Bible*'s text and define line breaks, allowing the calligraphers to work on pages simultaneously. The manuscript's pages are made of calfskin vellum, and soaked in lime, dried, scraped, and sanded smooth, in the traditional manner.

The script—designed by Jackson—was written in lamp black ink from nineteenth-century Chinese ink sticks. It was applied using quills hand-cut by the scribes; goose quills were used for the main body of text, and turkey and swan quills for heavier letterforms. The manuscript's vibrant colors were derived from vermilion, lapis lazuli, and other pigments. These materials were mixed with egg yolk and water to create a thick paint, which was then loaded onto the quills using brushes. Artists applied gold leaf by blowing through bamboo tubes, activating the binding agent in gesso until it bonded with the leaf. Burnishing tools and brushes were then used to finish the gilded images.

TEXT AND IMAGERY

The Saint John's Bible uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation of the Bible, the version officially authorized for use by most Christian Churches. In addition to traditional biblical imagery, the *Bible* also features depictions of modern events and scientific discoveries: strands of DNA are woven into the illumination of the "Genealogy of Christ;" the Twin Towers appear in the illumination of Luke's parables; and photos from the Hubble telescope were used to depict Creation.

THE APOSTLES EDITION

In 2011 Dr. William F. Hueg and Mrs. Hella Mears Hueg presented to the Morgan the first five volumes of the Apostles Edition of the *Bible* (Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Books, Psalms, and Prophets). When completed, the Apostles Edition will comprise seven folio volumes containing more than one thousand pages and 160 illuminations. Each page measures 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, extending to 2 x 3 feet when opened.

ABOUT DONALD JACKSON



Donald Jackson on May 9, 2011 shortly after penning the final word of *The Saint John's Bible*

Image Courtesy of Donald Jackson

Jackson is one of the world's foremost Western calligraphers. As a scribe to Queen Elizabeth II, he was responsible for the creation of official state documents. Jackson is an elected Fellow and past Chairman of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators and, in 1997, was named Master of the 600-year-old Guild of Scriveners of the city of London. He and his wife, Mabel, live and work in Monmouth, Wales.

ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP

This presentation of *The Saint John's Bible* was organized by John Bidwell, Astor Curator and Head of the Department of Printed Books and Bindings at the Morgan.



The programs of The Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

The Morgan Library & Museum

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405
212.685.0008
www.themorgan.org
Just a short walk from Grand Central and Penn Station

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

Admission

\$15 for adults; \$10 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.