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“Seven Days with Pope Francis and The Saint John’s Bible”

Paul N. Anderson

In celebrating the historic mission of Pope Francis to America, a special look at the powerful artwork of The Saint John’s Bible will be featured. Organized by leaders of the Saint John’s University and Abby in Minnesota, seven pieces of art, selected among the 160 in its seven volumes, will be discussed and expanded upon over seven days, from September 21-27.

As the visit of Pope Francis is called “A Mission of Love,” this week with The Saint John’s Bible has been featured as “Illuminating the Mission” by the leadership of Saint John’s University. The paintings and texts to be discussed include:

- Monday (9/21) Creation (Pentateuch vol. – Genesis 1:1-2:4a)
- Tuesday (9/22) Abraham and Sarah (Pentateuch vol. – Genesis 15:1-7; 17:1-22)
- Wednesday (9/23) Ten Commandments (Pentateuch vol. – Exodus 20:1-26)
- Thursday (9/24) Peter’s Confession (Gospels & Acts vol. – Matthew 16:13-23)
- Friday (9/25) Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes (Gospels & Acts vol. – Mark 6:33-44; 8:1-10)
- Saturday (9/26) Two Cures (Gospels & Acts vol. – Mark 5:25-43)

Joining over forty universities, churches, and organizations around the nation, George Fox University will participate this project in three particular ways. First, Paul Anderson will make a PowerPoint presentation to Friendsview Retirement Community (http://www.friendsview.org/) on Sunday (9/20) at 4:00 on “The Illumination of the Word—The Artistry and Impact of The Saint John’s Bible). Second, Anderson will contribute a paragraph or two on each of the paintings each of the days (9/21-28), while also pointing to the essay contributed by the Saint John’s community (https://georgefox.academia.edu/PaulAnderson). Third, Paul will also feature the artistry and text for the day at noon this week (Monday through Friday in the Murdock Learning Resource Center at George Fox University, 9/21-26), concluding with “The Turning of the Page” and a personal viewing of Volume 6: The Gospels and Acts on Friday at 4:00. All are welcome.

If the seven days of creation inspire reflection on God’s handiwork and love for the world, focusing on the artwork of The Saint John’s Bible can inspire an embrace of the mission of love that is celebrated this week. In addition to being heard, sometimes the Word of God deserves to be seen. After all, it is not only the embossed gold and platinum
leaf on the artwork of the page that represents the divine presence, but wherever God’s truth and love are conveyed and received, illumination genuinely happens…in our lives.

That is a reality worth celebrating and embracing; indeed, it is Good News for the world!

*Creation. Artist: Donald Jackson, Copyright 2003, The Saint John’s Bible, Saint John’s University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Used by permission.*