



Illuminating the Word: The Making of The Saint John's Bible

Christopher Calderhead

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2006 Catholic Press Association Award Winner!

In this companion volume to *The Saint John's Bible*, Christopher Calderhead takes us on a behind-the-scenes tour of this extraordinary project. Based on hundreds of hours of interviews, this book tells the story of the makers of the Bible and the community at Saint John's Abbey and University. The day-to-day struggles of such a monumental undertaking included challenges such as the selection and preparation of more than 250 calf skins, as well as forming a team of calligraphers accustomed to working independently and communicating the concerns of the advisory council in Minnesota with the artists in Wales.

Illuminating the Word: The Making of The Saint John's Bible explores a modern version of an age-old relationship between patron and sponsor, and the artistic director, scribes and artists producing this monumental artwork. It describes *lectio divina*, the unique method the Benedictine monks use to read the Bible, in which the Holy Scriptures come alive through the power of imagination. It explores the challenge of creating new images for ancient stories. It chronicles the artistic techniques, the tools and materials and the workshop practices Donald Jackson used to create his lifetime masterpiece. *Illuminating the Word* reveals the working process behind one of the greatest undertakings of our time and vividly brings to life its challenges and triumphs.

Christopher Calderhead is a visual artist and graphic designer who has exhibited his letter-based works in the United States and Great Britain. He graduated from Princeton with a bachelor's degree in Art History. His early interest in the English Arts and Crafts movement and formal pen lettering led him to the Roehampton Institute in London, where he studied calligraphy under Ann Camp. In 1988 he was elected to Fellowship in the Society of Scribes and Illuminators.

In 1998 he obtained a Master of Divinity degree from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. Ordained the same year, he has served parishes in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church USA.

He is editor of Alphabet, a journal of the lettering arts published by the Friends of Calligraphy. His series of short radio pieces, "Looking for Spirituality at Tate Modern," was broadcast on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire in 2002. His book, One Hundred Miracles, a collection of miracle paintings by the great masters, was published in 2004. He lives and works in New York City.

The Saint John's Bible and Illuminating the Word were commissioned by Saint John's Abbey and University as an expression of the Benedictine monks' daily focus on scripture and commitment to books, art and religious culture.

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