The mission of The Saint John’s Bible is to ignite the spiritual imagination of people around the world of all faith journeys.
Led by Fr. Michael Patella, OSB, the Committee for Illumination and Text (CIT) selected which verses to illuminate and provided the theological oversight for The Saint John’s Bible.
The first words, “In the beginning …” were drawn by Donald Jackson on Ash Wednesday in 2000 in his Scriptorium in Wales.
The pages of *The Saint John's Bible* are made of calfskin vellum. The skins are soaked in lime, dried, scraped or "scrutched," and sanded smooth. The final product is nearly translucent, with a "hair side" and "smooth side."

Each piece of vellum holds four pages.
Rare Chinese black ink made in the 1890’s was used for all the calligraphy.

Photo by Michael Freeman
All the script is written using quills. Only the largest flight feathers, called "primaries," are used: goose quills for the main body of text, turkey and swan quills for heavier letterforms.

Six calligraphers, or scribes, completed the 1,150 pages.
Vermillion, lapis lazuli, and other cakes and powdered pigments are used for color. The materials are mixed with egg and water to make paint that is thicker than the black ink. The paint is then loaded onto the quills using brushes.

Six artists created the 160 major illuminations.
Gold leaf makes the manuscript truly illuminated. Using the moisture of breath imparted through a bamboo tube, the artist activates the glue binding agent in gesso until it bonds with the gold leaf. Burnishing tools and brushes finish the gilded image.