

St. Charles to Host Biblical Exhibit

Prints from Saint John's Bible To be on Display

An exhibit of art from the first illuminated Bible to be published in 500 years is coming to St. Charles Center later this summer.

St. Charles will host the exhibit of art from *The Saint John's Bible* from August 22 through September 10, 2010. The 25 prints will be exhibited in the Gaspar Room.

The show will open Sunday, August 22, with a 3 p.m. Scripture service led by Fr. James Seibert, C.P.P.S., and an exhibit introduction by Fr. Al Naseman, C.P.P.S.

In 1998, Saint John's Abbey and St. John's University commissioned renowned calligrapher Donald Jackson to produce a hand-written, hand-illuminated Bible. The Benedictine monks authorized Jackson and a team of artists, calligraphers and theologians to use the ancient techniques of calligraphy and illumination with an ecumenical Christian approach to the Bible rooted in Benedictine spirituality. The result is a breathtaking work of art and spirituality. Approximately 160 illuminations are included in the completed work, which is kept in Collegeville, Minn. Examples of the art can be seen at www.saintjohnsbible.org

The exhibit is coming to St. Charles through the efforts of Sr. Martha Bertke, C.P.P.S., the manager of Saint Charles Senior Living Community. Sr. Martha read about the Saint

John's Bible and traveled to the Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, Penn., where art from the Bible was on display.

"I was amazed by the exhibit—it's not like looking at photos," she said. "The artwork is beautiful but it also has a spiritual depth that raises it to a richer level. It is biblical and inspirational, spiritual and artistic. It touches not only the intellect but also the soul."

Sr. Martha launched the effort to bring the exhibit to St. Charles, and Fr. James Seibert, C.P.P.S., the director of St. Charles, was an enthusiastic supporter from the beginning. "When Sr. Martha brought up the idea to me, I jumped at it," he said. "A cultural event like this would be an excellent way for St. Charles to touch the lives of those who appreciate art and sacred Scripture. We also hope to share the art we have in our Chapel of the Assumption at St. Charles with those who come to the exhibit."

St. Charles regularly hosts events for the C.P.P.S., the St. Marys deanery and the surrounding communities, and its capable staff and flexible residents often welcome visitors. But the art exhibit is something new, and requires a great deal of research and planning, said Sr. Martha, who has set up a committee to help her prepare for the exhibit.

"We hope to bring many people to St. Charles to see the exhibit," she said. "We think it will appeal to art lovers, people of all faiths and anyone who wants to learn more about



Sr. Martha Bertke and Fr. Jim Seibert talk over the details of an exhibit of biblical artwork coming to St. Charles later this year. (Photo by Jean Giesige)

the process that brought this wonderful work of art into being."

Organizers hope the exhibit also helps introduce St. Charles to the public. "For many years, St. Charles has been somewhat closed to the public," Fr. Seibert said. "The Missionaries of the Precious Blood have opened the doors of St. Charles to lay people, not only to come here for a visit or attend a religious service, program or workshop, but we have invited them to live with us (at Saint Charles Senior Living Community). The art exhibit just seemed like the right fit. We hope people of all faiths will come and enjoy the exhibit."

Exhibit hours will be Monday through Saturday, 9:30–11 a.m. and 1–4 p.m. (additional evening hours Wednesday 6:30–8:30 p.m.); and Sunday 1–4 p.m. Admission is free, though donations will be accepted. For more information visit www.st-charles-cpps.org.