

Collectors Piece

Individually cast, hand painted figure of an 11th century:
Christian Knight of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem
To commemorate
Pope Benedict XVI visit to Great Britain
Sent direct to you from The Vatican City



Coat of arms of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem



Coat of arms of the State of the Vatican City

Unique gift or personal possession to commemorate this historic Papal visit.

Approximately 12 inches (30cm) high including base; resin cast from an original sculpture©.

Each knight will be individually cast in the UK by skilled craftsmen and hand painted in superb detail by talented artists. Free standing on a recessed veneered mahogany base the knight's angle of display can be adjusted to suit your personal preference. Simultaneously enabling the plaque, bearing the inscription: *Cor ad cor loquitur* (Heart speaks unto heart), the theme of the Papal visit, to always face the observer. The knight has the *Cross Crosslet* on his chest and each quarter of the shield features the coat of arms of the four British cities the Holy Father will visit during his stay (top left to bottom right):

Edinburgh – Birmingham – London – Glasgow
With the Coat of Arms of the Vatican City in the Centre

When complete, each packaged Knight will be wrapped in fine parchment paper with your name and address hand scripted. We will then take the individual packages to Rome where, using the arrangements we have in place, it will be:

Posted direct to you from The Vatican Post Office in the Vatican City
Bearing Vatican City stamps.

The packaging will be wrapped in such a way that it will enable you to cut out and frame the part of packaging displaying your name and address with its unique *Vatican stamps* to keep as a special souvenir. Our knight will also bring a little piece of *St Peter's* and *The Vatican City* closer to you and be a very special memento of the Holy Father's visit.

Price, including all postage & packing: £274.00.

To place an order or for further information: e-mail us at:
info@sculpturedcrafts.co.uk or telephone on: (+44) 01604 867320

Funds raised from the sale of this Christian Knight will assist towards the cost of our project to create employment for the Christian minority in Palestine with the blessing of the *Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem*.

Scroll down for details

Holy Land Project

By James Miller Wilkins, founder of Sculptured Crafts Scotland.

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One may be wondering how a Scottish sculpture studio became involved in the *Holy Land* in general and *Christian* crafts workers in particular.

Towards the end of last year and the beginning of this one, when the Arctic weather conditions that hit the UK forced the closure of our studio for a while, I decided to use the time available to look at adding another category to our product range. Our present products are *Heraldic*, *Scottish* and *Highland Clan* in nature and it was my intention to add a fourth category: *Christian*.

Rather than design and have sculpted a completely new set of figures, from which moulds could be made and then cast, I would buy the figures in from the Holy Land. Unfortunately I could not find any; there seemed to be no producers of our type of figures in the entire region of the Holy Land.

As it has transpired, as has happened in so much as the rest of the figurine market, the majority of religious figures available for sale today are made in the Far East.

Even researching the figures for sale in gift shops in Rome, in the vicinity of the Vatican City, the story is the same, they are mainly Chinese made. I asked friends to research the gift shops in Jerusalem and they came up with the same results.

Being a craftsman and formally a marketing man, it seemed a ridiculous situation that in the birthplace of Christianity it is Far Eastern made figures that dominate the market.

However, my research did draw my attention to the plight of the Christian craft workers in the Holy Land; and having a craft company myself, I set about formulating plans to use my manufacturing and marketing experience to try to help them.

I set about turning an idea into reality by planning to open a production facility in The Holy Land and employ local Christian labour to cast and paint the figures.

We are not a large company; but with our specialist manufacturing and marketing expertise we had the knowledge to set up a production facility, which would provide stable employment for some of the diminishing Christian community in this region. I could then use my sales and marketing experience and contacts to sell them worldwide.

Having been in sales & marketing for over 30 years prior to opening *Sculptured Crafts*, I decided to see if I could also use my marketing experience to try and help the existing Christian workshops to expand their businesses.

To this end I started back on the research trail to ascertain why the Christian artisans were in such dire straits when they produced such superb products. I read up on everything I could find regarding the political and cultural situation and that gave me an insight into their difficulties.

I read report after report on a diminishing population, poor education, sub-standard housing, lack of employment opportunities and workshop closures. A United Nation report states that some 240 workshops have closed in the Bethlehem area in the last 10 years.

Having read everything I could, the conclusion that I arrived at was that the problem lay (apart from the political situation) in that their sales and marketing efforts is concentrated on tourists and pilgrims visiting Holy sites. With such a narrow sales base, any political upheaval, however minor, would have a catastrophic effect on their businesses.

Turning my attention to the export potential, I could find no real concentrated effort to create an international market for these products. Which, at first, I found surprising, however when you consider that there is no government funded export department actively working on their behalf. You can then well understand the difficulties that they face.

The main export market seems to be driven by three factors;

- Church, religious groups and individuals throughout the world who hold sales of these products in their locality.
- Workshops owners who have relatives abroad who can market their products for them.
- Individual web sites promoting and selling these products.

Therefore, if one wants to secure a long-term future for the surviving Christians artisans in the Holy Land, the answer lies in establishing a sustainable export market for their products.

The first question I asked myself was: *How do you give Holy Land products an international appeal?*

The answer I came up with is to merge three International Christian identities into one marketing brand:

Holy Land - Rome - Vatican City

I called it: The Christian Triangle.



The Christian Triangle

Genuine

Christian Crafts – Christian Made - From the *Holy Land*

The Christian Triangle is a new commercial entity with a *social and cultural mission* and two fold aims:

1. Marketing of existing Christian made products.
2. Production in the Holy Land of Christian figures.

Marketing

During my research regarding Christian made products from the Holy Land, it quickly became apparent that there was a lack of branding of these products. Without a brand that people can identify with, each time a new initiative is launched you are required to build product awareness anew. There is no continuity of loyalty, or emotional attachment, to a brand or range of products.

When you wish to establish a product in a particular market, you need a brand and logo that lingers in people minds; that builds an emotional attachment, and that will immediately evoke consciousness of what the brand stands for the minute they see it.

I feel that the *Christian Triangle* trademark can meet this branding need and become the international symbol for Christian made Holy Land products.

Production

The most popular material for producing figures is using a mixture of unsaturated polyester resins and calcium carbonate, reacted with an organic peroxide catalyst (polyresin) cast from a silicone rubber mould. The castings are made by a vacuum process; with the filled mould being placed in a vacuum-degassing chamber to remove all of the air. The casting can then be painted employing a variety of techniques using acrylic or enamel paints to produce the finished product.

The polyresin figurine market is vast; with world wide sales worth many tens of millions of dollars per annum; and, as said previously, is dominated by Far Eastern manufacturers. This also applies to the Christian religious figures currently available for sale in Christian souvenir shops worldwide (including Rome and Jerusalem) and through high street and on-line retailers.

From my research, and having contacted scores of individuals and organisations, I can say with all certainty, there are no manufacturers of polyresin products, religious or otherwise, in the Holy Land. The processes are completely unknown in the region.

To redress this situation we began looking at ways of initiating a production facility in Palestine to produce polyresin Christian figures and employing Christian workers. In conjunction with the Holy Land Co-operative Society we have secured a location in Beit Sahour to open a production facility. We have purchased an 18-inch (450 mm) vacuum degassing chamber and vacuum pump and other equipment, which we are organising to ship out to Palestine. We are researching the availability of British and EU grants; however, one has to be careful in any application as current regulations means that grant applications must be secular.

We are currently applying for the necessary permits and visas to not only open and run a production facility, but also to have a permanent member of staff living and working in Palestine managing the facility. The *Christian Triangle* is a registered company and a website is under development.

This then is the basis of the project I have initiated and the reasoning behind it.

Many people have contributed to turning this project into a reality and special thanks must be given to the following people and organisations.

Without belittling the efforts of others, I would like to make a special mention of Rev Msgr Hans Brouwers of *The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem* and the *Vatican Post Office*. These were the first two organisations to support this project and without them we would not be where we are today.

From Palestine, Fr. Human Khzouz, of the *Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, Mr. Hazaboun, *Director of Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce* and George Rishmawi, *International Relations Director of the Holy Land Handicraft Cooperative Society*

From America, Sir Rateb Rabie (KHS), *President of The Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation* and also William Preecher from the same.

From Italy the Marquise Enrico Manfredi Luserne d'Angrogne of the *Catholic Sacred Military Constantinian Order of St George* and through them the, *Brandenburg Bailiwick of the Chivalric Order of Saint John of the Hospital at Jerusalem*.

British Embassy to the Holy See as well as the *British Embassy in Jerusalem* and the *British Consolute General to Palastine*.

Many other individuals and organisations, too many to mention, from countries around the world, have come forward in support of our project. Though they may not be mentioned here by name

they are not forgotten.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

My very best regards and God bless.

James

**James M. Wilkins
Founder**