

Famed sculptor plans largest St. Patrick statue in the world for County Mayo

Canadian artist wants a 100 foot tall Croagh Patrick statue as a gift from the U.S.



A Canadian sculptor plans to erect a bronze statue of Saint Patrick, over 100 feet in height, at the top of Croagh Patrick, in Mayo. The idea is that the giant representation of the patron saint of Ireland will be a gift to the Irish people from the people of North America.

Timothy Schmalz has recently finished a statue of St. Brigid for her home county of Kildare, and is also responsible for the largest statue of St. Patrick in existence in Ireland, at Our Lady of Knock, in Mayo. However, this statue is just a little larger than life-sized.

Schmalz, who focuses his work on Christian themes, said he couldn't believe something like this had not been thought of before. Living and working from his studio in China, he was struck by the scale of the sculpture he has witnessed across Asia.

He told IrishCentral, "The Asians create such massive Buddhas, they make my jaw drop, and I just thought "Why aren't we doing something like that here?"

"I just can't believe that no one has thought of doing this before"

The sculptor compares his idea of the Statue of Liberty, which was gifted by the people of France to the people of America in 1886. The robed figure looking out from New York's harbor is a symbol of freedom and a beacon to immigrants reaching America's shores. Schmalz's idea is that this giant statue of St. Patrick should be similar.

Although Schmalz has already established sponsorship for the statue he wants this gift to the Irish people to be paid for by the North American people, rather than the government.

He told IrishCentral, "I was always excited about the idea that the Statue of Liberty was given as a gift by the people of France to the people of America, and for the people that know this small fact it adds an extra dimension to the statue."

When Schmalz began to seriously consider the logistics and technicalities of this giant 100 foot tall statue he had to figure out where it would be erected.

He said "There was only one location it could go...Croagh Patrick."

It is believed St. Patrick spent 40 days fasting on the summit of the mountain and built a church there, in the 5th century. Legend has it that he threw a silver bell down the hill knocking the demon Corra from the sky and banishing snakes from Ireland.

Schmalz said when he visited Croagh Patrick he knew this was the right spot. He told IrishCentral, "If there's any more beautiful place in the world I don't know of it.

