



# The Church of Ireland GAZETTE

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## Historic royal 'steps' captured on canvas

**T**he ecumenical aspect of last year's Royal visit to Enniskillen is the subject of a recently unveiled and striking painting.

On 26th June 2012, at the start of a historic, two-day, Royal visit to Northern Ireland, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended an ecumenical service of thanksgiving in St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen, to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Following the service, the Queen and Prince Philip crossed Church Street from the cathedral to St Michael's Roman Catholic church, where they were welcomed by the Very Revd Peter O'Reilly, the parish priest of St Michael's, and met with representatives of a wide range of cross-community organisations.

It was said that this groundbreaking event was of such significance that no photograph could adequately portray it and only a painting could capture and retain the moment.

Consequently, Canon O'Reilly commissioned the established artist, the Hon. Hector McDonnell - the youngest son of the 13th Earl and Countess of Antrim - to paint the scene.

Raised in Glenarm, Co. Antrim, he studied painting and sculpture in Munich and Vienna and has exhibited widely throughout Europe.

The focus of the enormous painting - which measures 6' by 5' - is the two churches and Church Street itself.

It was there, said Canon



O'Reilly and the Dean of Clogher, the Very Revd Kenneth Hall, that, "without a word, the Queen made a connection for all to see ... enabling us to feel powerfully that we were one people under God and one people together".

There is notable symbolism in the painting. The young person is looking out of the lower right of the painting towards the viewer, almost appealing to the viewer to turn the Queen's small steps into major strides towards breaking down barriers

and divisions.

The reddish orange colour in the trees by the doorway to St Michael's church refers to the rowan tree that is traditionally associated with St Macartin, the first Bishop of Clogher.

Before his conversion to Christianity, the future saint was known by the name, Aidus, 'the son of Caerthen' ('son of the rowan tree'); hence his later name - Macartin.

The bird high up in the sky (centre) is a suggestion of the presence of the Holy Spirit

hovering over a historic scene.

The painting hung in the Lough Erne Golf Resort during the G8 Summit and it will be on display in the future in museums in both Belfast and Enniskillen, as well as in St Macartin's Cathedral and St Michael's church.

• Bishop John McDowell writes about the service in Westminster Abbey earlier this month marking the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation, page 10.