

2019 – Bishop’s Christmas Message

The word *Christmas* has become so familiar that its original (early English) sense of *Christ’s Mass* has been largely lost in this ever more commercialised period and secularising age.

Yet that old word and its literal meaning have remained largely unchallenged and unchanged is no small miracle in itself.

New Age *new pagans* could have tried to claim it back as an earlier mid-winter feast which brightened the bleak Northern cold. Yet that has not happened. And it may not happen.

Christmas remains and retains its feeling of peacefulness and good-will among and across peoples.

There is something mystical and mysterious in the simple Gospel account of the Birth of Jesus: a child born of Mary – one of that poor couple away from the relative security and convenience of their usual home place – even though this may not have happened with the further inconvenience of a mid-winter’s night – as the shepherds were still out in the fields at night with their sheep (Lk 2:8)!

So amid the need for decorations, the gifts, the feasting and the carol singing, let us still hold on to *Christ’s Mass*.

+James Foley
Bishop of Cairns