



Christmas Day 1999

Strict Embargo : Christmas Day, 11.30 am.

**EXTRACT FROM CHRISTMAS SERMON OF
ARCHBISHOP ROBIN EAMES
IN ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, ARMAGH**

“As we thank Almighty God for the eternal message of love, joy and peace of the stable at Bethlehem we are conscious of the hopes of so many in Northern Ireland for the new year. Political developments have opened up opportunities to see some hope for a more stable future. But we must never forget that the pace of change has been so difficult for those who carry burdens of suffering and hurt from the past. They too must have a future and must never be forgotten. Equally, we must remember that political movement, important though it is, is only a part of the peace process. It is in the hearts and minds of people that new understanding must be found. You cannot legislate for reconciliation. You can encourage it and provide it with oxygen. In the end the message of Christmas is one of hope that we can look forward with new confidence in ourselves and in each other. The babe of Bethlehem is the source of that hope. May God grant us all confidence which assures that in the end good does triumph over evil and love is stronger than hatred ...”