



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 14, 2018

Scottish Mall Relents on anti-Christmas Display as Christians Stage Live Nativity

Score one for the faithful. The managers of a shopping mall in Stirling, a thriving community 40 miles northwest of Edinburgh, Scotland, have thrown in the towel on their ban of a Christmas nativity after a group of local Christians protested the policy by staging their own live nativity scene among mall shoppers.

In early December, managers of Stirling's Thistles Shopping Centre announced that they would not allow a traditional nativity scene to be included in the mall's Christmas display, explaining that the mall "prides itself on being religious and politically neutral."

As reported by the [Scottish Daily Record](#), Scotland's Catholic Legion of Mary had requested permission to put up the nativity scene, but were rejected by mall managers with the terse explanation that such a religious display would not be "right" in the secularized shopping space.

In response, the Catholic Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh issued a statement saying: "At this time of year Christmas cribs [nativities] grace many public squares all across the British Isles, bringing joy to nearly all who encounter them, regardless of their religion. And so it seems just a wee bit, well, Grinch-like for the Thistles Shopping Centre to ban the Christmas crib, and in the true spirit of Christmas, we would certainly ask them to reconsider their decision."

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The Church of Scotland also weighed in on the policy, lamenting: "We find it very disappointing that the true meaning of Christmas has been completely lost here. When a shopping centre can focus purely on commercialism to the exclusion of the reason for the celebration of Christmas it is a sad day for all of us."

As it happened, however, the mall managers changed their minds after two local Scottish Catholics, John Mallon and Elena Feick, showed up at the mall dressed as Joseph and Mary, and began conversing with shoppers as to why the mall authorities would not allow the traditional manger holding the baby Jesus to be included in its Christmas display that year.

Mallon told LifeSiteNews.com that the effort was both fun and successful. "It was terrific to be there and share our faith," he said, adding that "the shoppers loved us."

Reported LifeSite: "Mallon and Feick wanted particularly to underscore that Christmas is about Christ because their Catholic Christian faith 'is undermined in the public sphere.' They also wanted to spread some authentic Christmas merriment."





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The quiet and gracious protest on the part of the duo had the desired impact on the mall's managers. As reported by the Scotsman newspaper, the mall announced that it had lifted its ban on the traditional "Christmas crib," saying in a statement, "We've listened carefully to everyone who contacted us about the installation and have decided to reverse our original decision."

A spokesman for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh applauded the decision, saying, "The management of the Thistles Centre ... are to be commended and congratulated for listening to the general public and responding with such generosity and inclusivity, recognising that contemporary Scotland should be a place that both respects and upholds religious liberty in the public square. We wish the management, staff, and shoppers at Thistles a very happy and very peaceful Christmas indeed."

Image: screenshot from [YouTube video](#) of Mallon and Feick at Thistles



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