

St Andrew's marks 200th anniversary

Glasgow: One of Scotland's most famous churches recently marked its 200th birthday. St Andrew's Cathedral is the mother church of the Catholic community throughout west central Scotland.

The first Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral on 22nd December 1816 and 200 years on, the current Archbishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia will offer Mass to mark the anniversary on St Andrew's Day.

Originally built as 'St Andrew's Chapel' to serve the growing numbers of highland Catholics coming to Glasgow during the Industrial Revolution, the church was a welcome sight and comforting presence decades later as hundreds of thousands of Irish people disembarked on the banks of the Clyde, fleeing from the Irish Famine.

In 1878 the church was elevated to cathedral status when Pope Leo XIII restored the Scottish hierarchy, naming an Englishman, Charles Eyre, as the first archbishop of the newly restored Archdiocese of Glasgow.

The Cathedral was successfully restored and the adjoining Cloister Garden built in 2011 under the guidance of Archbishop Mario Conti, and today it is one of Glasgow's most visited landmarks.

It continues to serve as a busy city centre parish with daily confessions and Masses.

In a letter to mark the anniversary Archbishop Tartaglia wrote: 'Fittingly for a great Metropolitan Cathedral, St Andrew's draws its congregations from Glasgow, from Scotland, and from the nations of the world, but, in a typically Glasgow way, still creates a sense of family and community at the liturgies which are celebrated here.'

Finn brings a little balm to people on the streets

Anya Tobin

Whitstable: A schoolboy from Whitstable in Kent has found a way to bring a little comfort to homeless people sleeping on the streets during the coldest months of the year.

Finn Collins, 11, was looking through some cold weather packs – known as Vinnie Packs – which his mother was distributing to the homeless and noticed that something was missing.

"I had really dry lips at the time" he says "and it was making me really uncomfortable. I thought about homeless people who must get really sore lips as they are outside all the time and decided it would be nice if the Vinnie Packs had lip balms in them."

Finn decided that he would try to raise £100 so he could add lip balms to the packs. He set up a JustGiving page, and collected money from school, from friends, from his local church and he even did a radio interview to tell people about his idea.

Before long, he had more than doubled his target and raised £250.

He says: "I was really pleased. I didn't think I would raise that much."

But it didn't stop there. When DDD, the manufacturers of lip balm Blistex, heard what Finn had done, they decided to donate 6000 units of lip care products.

Vinnie Packs have been produced by volunteers from the charity, the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) since 2011. Each pack contains cold weather essentials including a thermal hat and gloves, socks, a toothbrush and toothpaste, pen and information sheet.

This year 12,000 of the packs will be distributed to homeless people



Charity worker Finn has made a YouTube video about homelessness

across England and Wales.

SVP member Siobhan Garibaldi who came up with the idea for the Vinnie Packs says what Finn has done is fantastic.

"There's been a lot of doom and gloom in the press recently so to hear a story of a young lad who of his own volition decided to raise money for a good cause was very touching."

She says his actions show that "with some determination and a kind heart we can achieve a lot."

Finn's mum Angela says her son suffers from anxiety because he has Asperger syndrome.

But she says doing this has really boosted his confidence and helped him realise he can help to change other people's lives. "I'm a very proud

mother", she says. Siobhan Garibaldi says "as word spreads that we are handing out lip balms because of an 11-year-old boy, his love will touch the hearts of those in need."

And it seems word has already spread. When Finn joined his mother one evening at work, two people who were sleeping rough in Whitstable said to him – "you're the boy who organised lip balm for us."

Finn hopes to continue his good work and do more fundraising. He has already made a YouTube video about homelessness.

To donate to Vinnie Packs text: VINP33 and the £[amount] to 70070, or you can donate online at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/svpvinniepacks>



Singing with Tenebrae

Somerset: Downside pupils were thrilled to be able to sing alongside the world-famous chamber choir, Tenebrae, last Sunday.

Under the direction of internationally acclaimed conductor, Nigel Short, the pupils, (pictured left) pushed themselves to a new level of performance after a rehearsal with the renowned singers.

The late-autumnal setting of the Abbey Church was made particularly magical, with performers singing in different candlelit spaces around the church. The pro-

gramme featured pieces for chamber choir including works by Bax, Byrd, Bruckner and Palestrina.

Described as "phenomenal" (*Times*) and "devastatingly beautiful" (*Gramophone*), award-winning choir Tenebrae is one of the world's leading vocal ensembles renowned for its passion and precision.

The audience were absolutely delighted to hear this renowned ensemble in the rich acoustic of Downside Abbey Church.