

# Young Vincentian News

Shrewsbury Diocese



Issue 2 • Spring 2024

## “Make a Ruckus!”

“A better world can be built also as a result of [young people’s] efforts. Make your voice heard...” Pope Francis

Welcome to this our second issue of the Shrewsbury Young Vincentian News.

2024 marks 180 years of the St Vincent de Paul Society in England and Wales.

Our Founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam told us, “Yours will be a work of love, of kindness. You must give your time, your talents, yourselves.”

The content of this newsletter is proof that with a formula of “See, Think, Do” groups of young Vincentians, with the support of their Vincentian Coordinators are putting their love, kindness, time, talents and selves into action to support people around them.

Here are examples of creativity, resourcefulness, energy, and enthusiasm as our young people take part in social action. Each act of kindness is an act of hope.

As Pope Francis continuously says in his message to young people, **“Make a Ruckus!”**

Have a blessed 2024.

**Janet, Colette, Bernadette, Marjorie & Mike**

Young Vincentian Development Officers

## Stockport & Hyde SVP District Youth Mass

On the 8th November 2023, the Stockport & Hyde SVP District Council invited their Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP schools to gather to celebrate Mass together in Our Lady and the Apostles Church, Stockport.



It was a wonderful occasion that involved 116 MV/YSVP members plus staff, SVP guests and parishioners. Reverend Fr Martin Onuoha officiated assisted by Rev Moses and William. Fr Martin’s homily was positive and celebratory, and stressed the importance of every act of kindness.

The Mass started with a procession of school banners to accompany the clergy to the altar. The children read beautifully and were a credit to their schools/college and to the Society, its youth programmes and mission. Their singing was wonderful, accompanied by a guitarist from the parish and from Aquinas 6F College.

After Mass, Aquinas College Chaplain, Laetitia and her wonderful YSVP students led activities. They gave it their all! It was a lovely fun way to end the day together with lots of laughter and sharing.

Thank you to all who attended especially students and staff from Aquinas 6F College, and St Benedict’s, St Bernadette’s, Cheadle Juniors, St James’, Our Lady’s, St Philip’s, and St Mary’s Primary Schools.



St Benedict's



St James'



Cheadle Juniors



St Bernadette's



Aquinas 6F College students at the Stockport & Hyde SVP District Youth Mass



## Aquinas Youth SVP – Faith in Action!

Chaplain Laetitia reported, “Our Youth SVP started this academic year with renewed zeal after a fantastic journey last academic year. We have welcomed enthusiastic new joiners from both year groups and together we continue to live out the Gospel and follow the mantra See – Think – Act.

- **SEE:** Our members have again elected to continue supporting the homeless in our local community and to show love and compassion to isolated groups particularly the elderly and the disabled and also people from minority groups in society.
- **THINK:** We opted to support the homeless by generating funds through fundraising events in college, a coffee morning in Advent to celebrate Christmas with the elderly from care homes in our local community, a Christmas fair fundraising event during the season of advent, and a cultural day to celebrate diversity in our college and to show love to every member of our community regardless of their cultural background. We also worked collaboratively with our local adult SVP conference to celebrate the Feast of St Vincent Paul together with the Mini Vinnies from schools in our diocese.

“ **The way your youth SVP members interacted with the younger children was a joy to see and in a lot of ways was ‘Faith in Action’.**”

- **ACT:** We had our first fundraising event, themed the “Halloween Fest” in October which raised over £180 through a bake sale, fancy dress contest and other activities. We have also participated in the joyful SVP Mass celebration with the Mini Vinnies on the 8th of November where our youth SVP stepped in to share their joy with our wonderful Mini Vinnies through great interactions and entertainment. Commenting on the impact of our Youth SVP on this event the SVP president for Stockport & Hyde District highlighted in his feedback: “The way your youth SVP members interacted with the younger children was a joy to see and in a lot of ways was ‘Faith in Action’... Your support and help turned this event from being a good one into being a great one and everyone attending including the Clergy were suitably impressed!” In another comment, one of our students who volunteered to share his great musical talent at this event said: “I would just like to ask what it is you normally do in the SVP? I had a great time today so I’m considering joining.”

We are currently actively preparing our next charity event, the most anticipated ‘Cultural Day’ which we hope, will be another opportunity for us to show compassion to those in need, giving others reasons to live and to hope, while living life to the full and celebrating our college diversity.

With such a great start to the year, we are positive about the journey ahead and determined to continue bringing our college mission statement to life, living our faith through charitable actions and acts of benevolence, showing love and compassion to the needy and giving people around us reasons to Live and to Hope.

## St Clement's spread Christmas cheer!



Mini Vinnies at St Clement's Runcorn decided to share their Christmas spirit right on their doorstep by making and delivering Christmas cards to their school neighbours.

They thought about people in their community who may find Christmas difficult or feel lonely. They decided that this would be a nice way to let them know they were thinking about them.

## Autumn madness at St Vincent's

Mini Vinnies at St Vincent's Knutsford have had an incredibly busy Autumn term.

They have visited their local nursing home to bring some Christmas cheer to the residents. The Mini Vinnies supported in the making of Christmas cards to be sold at the nursing home's Christmas Fair and all funds went to Age UK. They finished their visit with a few songs. They have also been supporting 'Just Drop In,' a charity which supports local people with mental health problems. Mini Vinnies have been busy selling raffle tickets in school and giving up part of their weekend to support the charity on their stall in the Christmas markets.

Finally, during Advent they arranged for each class to take part in the Reverse Advent Calendar so that provisions can be collected for their local foodbank.



## SS Peter & Paul bring festive joy to New Brighton



During the lead up to Christmas, Mini Vinnies at SS Peter & Paul New Brighton raised money to buy pyjamas for children in refuges.

By selling sweets at their Halloween disco they raised enough money to buy 36 pairs of pyjamas. These were collected by the adult conference to deliver to the refuge.

The Mini Vinnies visited a local residential home to sing carols and delivered handmade cards. They also delivered cards to local neighbours. Finally, they made and sold reindeer food to raise money for a group who provide play therapy for children in refugee camps.



## St Mary's go all out!

Our Mini Vinnies at St Mary's Middlewich have been very active this year so far. They encouraged all pupils to bring in items for a Harvest Festival which were donated to the Middlewich Food Bank.

They raised money for Caritas by holding a toy sale and lastly, they involved the classes in creating poppies that were displayed around the school grounds in preparation for Remembrance Sunday.



## The SVP Prison Group

**Recycling Christmas cards has been a popular SVP project involving Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP groups. The SVP Prisons Group helps those in prison by helping the Prison Chaplains.**

Recycled Christmas cards enable prisoners to hand a card to their families, particularly children when the families are making their pre-Christmas visits to the prisons.

This year recycled Christmas cards were delivered to Chaplains at the visiting centres at Berwyn (Wrexham) and Hindley (near Wigan) Prisons and other local prisons.

Vincentian Coordinators report that whilst recycling the cards the young people take the opportunity to talk about forgiveness and second chances.

## Hope and remembrance at Loreto Grammar

**The Youth SVP group at Loreto Grammar School Altrincham wanted to support those in their school community who were suffering the loss of a loved one during the month of Remembrance.**

Students from across the year groups helped Lay Chaplain Miss Egan to plan a special Mass of Hope and Remembrance which was optional to attend for all staff and students. YSVP came up with some great ideas to help attendees feel comforted,



including designing a 'comfort card' with a special message to hand out to all who came. Over 300 students came to the Mass and the YSVP groups learnt a lot about the importance of walking alongside people in need.

Later in the month they gathered lots of resources to create new Christmas cards for those in local prisons who may not have access to cards to send to their families this Christmas. This was an extremely popular event with nearly 50 students giving up their lunch time to create these special cards. Our Youth SVP talked about the importance of what they were doing and showed great maturity and empathy. Some were inspired to do more during Christmas and a small group of students organised a carol singalong at a local care home with one student playing the piano!

The Youth SVP at Loreto Grammar School are now busy planning for this year's Lenten appeal, "Make Poverty a Priority."

## Mini Vinnies support Christmas cards for prisons project



Kevin McKenna, SVP Prison Group visited **St Werburgh's Birkenhead** to collect recycled Christmas cards. The Mini Vinnies really enjoyed making the new cards to support this project.

### Mini Vinnies at St Augustine's Warrington

enjoyed working on the Christmas cards for prisoners project.



### The Mini Vinnie group at St Benedict's RC Primary School

**Handforth** have embraced their See-Think-Do mission wholeheartedly in their preparation for Christmas. In response to a request from Kevin McKenna, SVP Prison group, they considered the request to re-make used Christmas cards into new cards for prisoners to give to their families. Their appreciation of what it is like for children and families to "suffer their sentence on the outside" was sensitive and kind. They had so much fun choosing the images, selecting the matching card and singing the Mini Vinnie song as over 100 cards were made. Everyone agreed that helping others gives them a good feeling inside and makes them happy.



# Youth SVP at All Hallows Catholic College, Macclesfield

This term the group have met several times and were involved in judging the Harvest Hampers which the entire college collected. Some of the hampers were given to the weekly collection run by the SVP at St Benedict's RC Church, Handforth as well as to college families and local food banks.

YSVP also bought pens and stationery to contribute towards resources which the Year 12 and 13 students took to India in October. All Hallows has funded the running of a school and clinic in Varasanadu for 12 years, and the YSVP were happy to play their part.

The group wrote Christmas cards in collaboration with St Alban's RC Primary School. The card was designed in college by a student. The cards will be sent to those visited by SVP St Alban's RC Church, Macclesfield.

The Youth SVP helped gather and load the toys the entire college collected for the Caritas Toy Appeal. This is an appeal which All Hallows has participated in for many years, and the Youth SVP were happy to help.



## Foodbank Saviours!

Mini Vinnies at St Saviour's Ellesmere Port organised a project to support the West Cheshire Foodbank as part of Harvest Festival.

The children introduced this in an assembly and spoke to their school about what everyone could do to help. They were amazed with how many contributions they had! West Cheshire Foodbank were very grateful for the donations.

## Mini Vinnie hands make light work

Mini Vinnies from St Winefride's Cheshire were proud to meet Dave and Barry from West Cheshire Foodbank and helped to load their van with all of the kind donations which have been brought into school. Thank you!



# St Bede's 'turn concerns into action'

**St Bede's Weaverham Year 6 Mini Vinnies have worked hard during the autumn term to achieve their aims and 'turning concerns into action'.**

They organised a foodbank collection in September for the families of Mid-Cheshire. They prepared a whole school Harvest liturgical prayer in October. In November they made over fifty Christmas cards for prisoners to send a festive greeting to their family and friends, and finally they led the Advent prayer trail for pupils, parents, and parishioners in December. The Mini Vinnies have also served refreshments at a parish SVP musical fundraiser and organised the very special St Bede's Crib Festival, where over eighty Nativity scenes, made by the pupils and their families, were displayed on every available surface around St Bede's Church.

The whole Mini Vinnie team have 'made a difference' which they pledged to do when they said 'YES' to enrolling as a Mini Vinnie this year. We are looking forward to more positive actions in the months ahead, putting service at the heart of our doing.



# St Joseph's Winsford Mini Vinnies are one big family

**During the Autumn term Mini Vinnies at St Joseph's Winsford promoted harvest donations and they received an amazing response from their school family.**



The children also took part in their Harvest Festival by doing readings and hosted a coffee afternoon for the school community.

During November Mini Vinnies created a beautiful piece of art as they thought about those who have died in war and thought about what peace means to them.



*Peace is a symbol of respect and love  
Peace is kindness  
Peace is playing sports  
Peace is sharing a smile  
I feel peace in my bedroom  
I feel peace at school  
I feel peace at home*





## Ellesmere Port Youth SVP show community spirit

**It has been a busy term at Ellesmere Port Catholic High School. Following a YVDO presentation to Y12 and Y13 in November Chaplain Angela was pleased with the response.**

She reported, "I was delighted that the students were approaching me with ideas of what they would like to do. They were very keen to visit a care home so a group of us met one Friday lunchtime and decided on a plan of action."

She describes their first actions, "On 13th December a group walked to Vale Court Care Home in Ellesmere Port and what a wonderful afternoon we had!! We sang Christmas Carols with the residents and some of our younger students performed a song from 'Matilda' that had been their school show in the summer. George played 'Happy Birthday' on the trumpet for David, one of the

residents whose birthday it was, and he cried with tears of joy. After the singing we had cakes and distributed Christmas cards that the Year 8 students had made. The residents were really pleased with the cards. Everyone involved had a great time and we have even been invited back! We are hoping to go and sing some Irish Songs around St Patrick's Day.

During Advent we have also been collecting food and making hampers for our adult SVP to support families in our local parishes. I am sure they will brighten up the day for some families and make a difference over the holiday period.

It has been a privilege to work with these young people who are ready and willing to share the Gospel values in their everyday lives."

Today we delivered the last car full of shoes boxes to One Project for their shoebox appeal. They will begin their journey to Ukraine next week. Between @CheadleRCInfScl and @CheadleRCJnr over 400 shoe boxes have been donated. Thank you!



Today @ChelwoodFBplus came to collect the items donated to our harvest appeal. Thank you to our Mini Vinnies for arranging the collection. #charity



**Cheadle Catholic Juniors are top of the tweets!**

Thank you to the Year 5 and 6 children who have committed to being Mini Vinnies this year and try to make a difference to the lives of others where they can. [cheadle-jun.stockport.sch.uk/page/?title=Mi...](http://cheadle-jun.stockport.sch.uk/page/?title=Mi...)



# St Patrick's welcomes Shropshire MP

**Mark Pritchard, Conservative MP for The Wrekin Shropshire met Mini Vinnies at St Patrick's Primary Wellington.**

They had prepared excellent questions around local and national issues that concerned them, such as

- My parents have a shop and everything is going up, but they do not want to ask their customers for more. What is the Government doing about this?
- What is the Government doing about sewage in our rivers?
- What is the Government doing about keeping us safe on the streets?
- What is the Government doing about the poor people overseas?
- What is the Government doing about the increases in energy cost?
- What is your biggest achievement as an MP?

Bernadette, a local YVDO, reported that the children were terrific. They were confident and engaged.

Mini Vinnies also presented a cheque for £157.00 to train a teacher and to educate children in India, and to support the Sudan SVP Baby Feeding Station. Money had been raised from a MUFTI DAY.

These busy Mini Vinnies also served teas and coffee at their coffee morning for the elderly of the parish. They were assigned one to each table so were able to chat to the parishioners as they served refreshments. And, they have organised a food collection for their local foodbank!



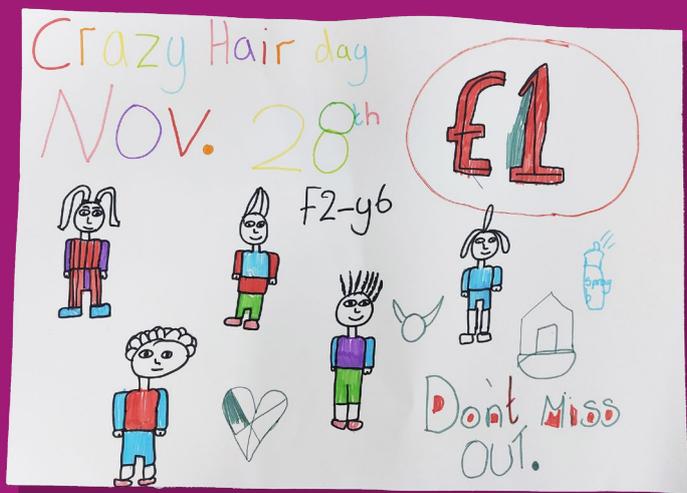
## St Alban's continue to support their community

**The Mini Vinnies at St Alban's Wallasey have had a successful first 2 terms back in school.**

They have:

- Helped restock the school's Foodbank shelves.
- Written letters to introduce themselves to residents at a local care home.
- Organised and advertised their own fundraiser in school: "CRAZY HAIR DAY", which raised over £150 for a local charity, Stick 'n' Step.
- Created 69 Christmas cards for prisoners to send to their loved ones.
- Created Christmas cards for residents in care homes.
- Took part in a reverse advent calendar, preparing 3 large boxes of food goods / art / toiletries for families in their school community.
- Made paper chains for the parish Christmas party.

They received an advent calendar and chocolate treats from the "older Vinnies" in their parish.





## St Vincent's Altrincham

**Mini Vinnie Trafford School's mass at St Hugh's Timperley:** The Mini Vinnies were invited to attend the Trafford schools' Mini Vinnie Mass and took the tram to save on costs and always thinking about the environment. It was a wonderful introduction for the new Mini Vinnies to be welcomed into their new roles.

**Macmillan Coffee morning:** The ever busy Mini Vinnie group have kick-started the new school year by turning their concern into action. They hosted a very popular Macmillan coffee morning in September, raising over £500 for this invaluable charity.

**Month of the Rosary:** In October the group promoted and sold beautiful olive wood rosary beads from Bethlehem, to raise money for their chosen charity The Marist Trust, who support humanitarian work on behalf of displaced people, especially refugees and asylum seekers in Senegal.

**Befriending:** They have made a very strong connection with a local charity Cyril Flint Befriender. This may be someone who lives alone who has little or no contact from friends and family with limited community support. Knowing someone is popping in once a week can make a huge difference. The Mini Vinnies made Christmas cards, Easter cards, hosted a Bake-off challenge which raised over £500 for the charity and had a wonderful visit from Beryl who has benefited from this wonderful befriending service over the years.

**Christmas:** The Mini Vinnies spread their Christmas cheer in the community by singing carols, performing Irish dancing and playing instruments at their local Parish beneficiaries' Christmas lunch and also at a local Rest home - Woodend. They also hosted their first ever Christmas stall at their school fair which was purely to raise money for a local Children's hospice Francis House. All the goods were handmade by the children.

**November Remembrance Poppy Appeal:** The Mini Vinnies made posters to promote and sell poppies and accessories to raise vital funds for this exceptional charity, which provides recovery and rehabilitation support to currently serving and ex-service personnel who are wounded, injured and sick.

**Harvest Appeal:** They collected donations for their Harvest festival and helped to deliver to Cornerstone Homeless shelter in Manchester and the local foodbank.



## St Mary's Youth SVP are non-stop this year!

**St Mary's Wallasey YSVP group have been busy. They created a display for Remembrance Day for which the whole school wrote prayers and messages of "Thanks."**

They also presented an Advent play and made and sold Christmas decorations. Money raised from these, and a Christmas raffle will provide funds for students to attend the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in the Summer term. They have also made food hampers and boxes of cheer to go out to the St Mary's community.

The group supported the churches in the community Nativity evening by leading the Nativity procession, serving drinks and mince pies, and supporting the College Carol Concert.

The YSVP group also took an active role in the whole school Mass as readers for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. A very busy half term.

Lisa, their Community Chaplain, and Vincentian Coordinator was also cajoled by her group to take part in an outdoor Santa Dash swim on the 2nd December when it was -3.5 degrees outside and 2.6 degrees in the water! Lots of fun and laughter had by all.



# St Luke's Action Plan

**The Mini Vinnies at St Luke's Trench have lots of ideas to put their faith into action in school and in the local community.**

An assembly was organised and led by the Mini Vinnies explaining the history of the SVP and a presentation on the key figures who inspired its development - members took their MV pledge and were presented with certificates

Within school Mini Vinnies have a rota to help the Reception children during lunch breaks - this involves helping children dress for outside play and organising play activities.

The group helped to prepare the church for Christmas which included decorating the Christmas tree. Mini Vinnies also volunteered for altar serving.

A class 'coin line' competition in support of a local charity called 'The Christmas Smile Project' was also organised by the Mini Vinnies. Children were asked to bring in coins (of any denomination) and the class with the longest line won. The funds raised were donated to the charity which works with local Social Services to ensure children in families they support have Christmas gifts.

In July, the Mini Vinnies also invited Conservative MP, Lucy Allan to meet with them to discuss issues that concerned them.



# Care and share with Cardinal Newman Youth SVP

**During Advent, the YSVP group had a wonderful opportunity to work with their local care home. They visited each week and enjoyed some festive fun.**

They started their visits with a meet and greet which provided the opportunity to hear stories from the residents, and to share their news and achievements.

Following visits involved helping with the Christmas panto and a Christmas quiz where the students teamed with the residents to win prizes.

Before the Christmas holiday they invited the school choir to join them and had a wonderful Christmas sing along.

The YSVP also took part in the SVP Prison project by recycling Christmas cards.

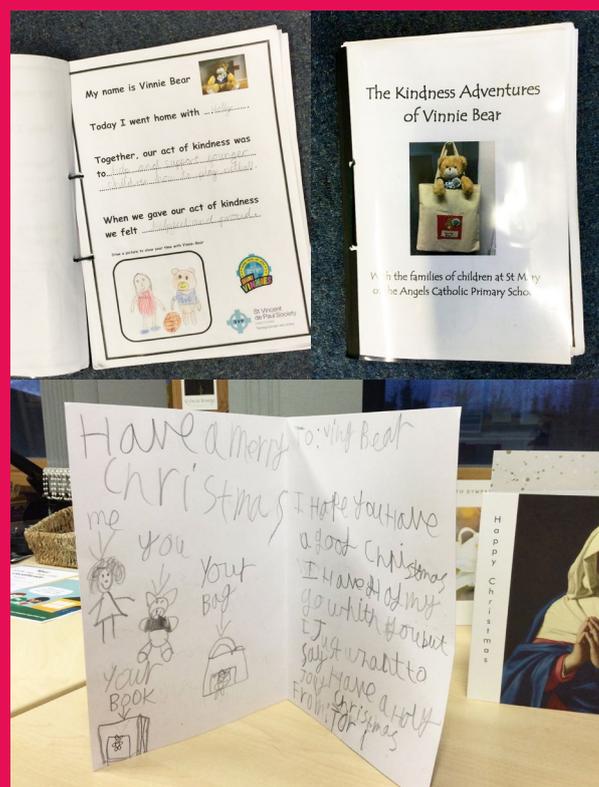


# A popular Vinnie Bear at St Mary of the Angels!

**Vinnie Bear received a selection of his own homemade Christmas cards in December. Here is one he received from a child who has a particular connection to him.**

Vinnie Bear travels around in a bag specially made for him. It also contains his book that is completed each day with Vinnie's daily act of kindness. The book has now become so full that a second diary has been started that journals Vinnie Bear's Daily Acts of Kindness.

He has become such a popular part of the Mini Vinnies programme at St Mary of the Angels Ellesmere Port.



## Welcome to the family!

- ✦ St Vincent's Primary Penketh, Warrington
- ✦ Ellesmere Port Catholic High School
- ✦ St Peter's Primary Warrington
- ✦ Sacred Heart Wirral
- ✦ Also, welcome to new VCs and Headteachers

## St Mary's show support to SVP Indian Students

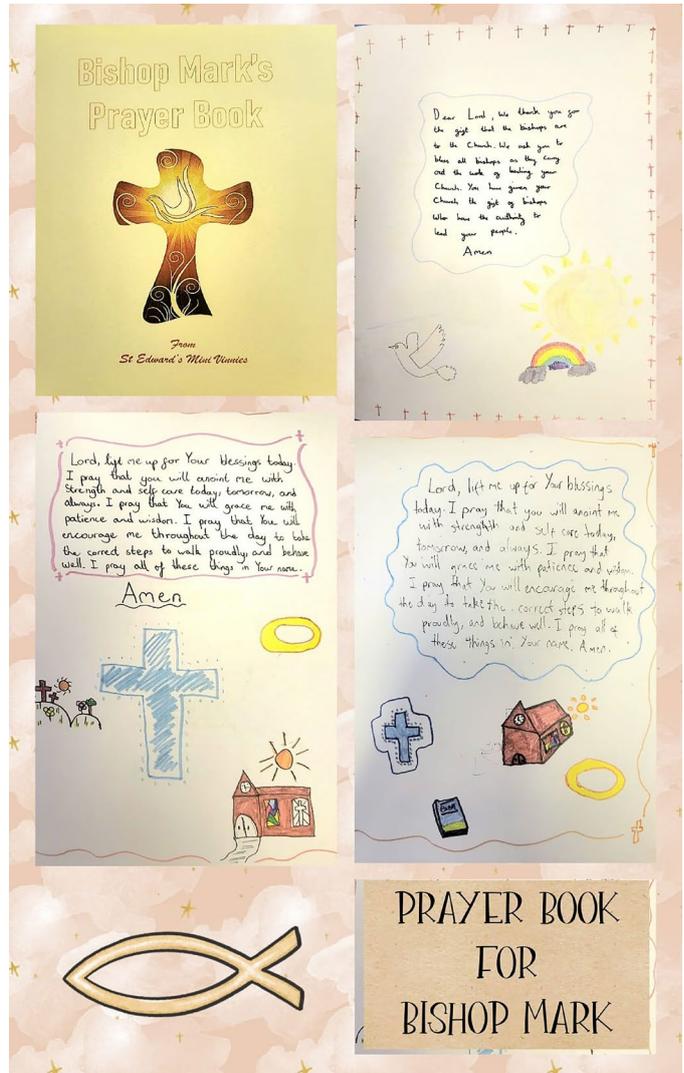
Mini Vinnies at **St Mary's Madeley** presented £193.27 to their adult SVP Conference to support the SVP Indian Student Scheme. The money had been donated at their Nativity play.

## Advent fundraising to help Chester's homeless

During Advent, Mini Vinnies from **St Werburgh's & St Columba's Chester** organised a fundraiser for Chester Aid to the Homeless. They did a 'Name the Teddy' competition and they sold tickets to win Entertainer vouchers and selection boxes. They raised £31 for Chester Aid to the Homeless.

## A Prayer for the Society and a Spirit of Youth

We thank you Father, for continuing to pour down blessings upon the Society. Grant to members of all ages the spirit of youth, with its enthusiasm, adaptability, creativity, and help us, like the young, to be willing to take risks for those living in poverty.



## Mini Vinnie prayer book for Bishop Mark

Following a visit from Bishop Mark, Mini Vinnies at **St Edward's Runcorn** made him a prayer book.



# All Saints spring into action to help homeless

Mini Vinnies at All Saints Sale have been busy writing to families asking for unwanted hats, scarves, and gloves.

They spent two weeks collecting these and then took them to Sale West Hub from where donations are collected by the action group "Don't Walk Past" to distribute to the homeless in and around Manchester.



Thank you all for everything you're doing.  
**You are amazing!**

Also, the Shrewsbury Young Vincentian Development Officers (YVDO) would like to shout out a big "THANK YOU!" to our WONDERFUL National Young Vincentian Team based in London.

Without their energy, enthusiasm, and talents we would not have the opportunity to work with schools and parishes to promote the work of the SVP through the Mini Vinnie and Youth SVP programmes and supported by such incredible resources.

So thank you Sarah, Katy, Julia, Charlie, Bethan, and Kezia.



## Young Vincentian News



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Find out more about the Mini Vinnies and Youth SVP:  
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