

Pupils join service to pay tribute

by **John Ripley**

ABERDEEN residents turned out in their hundreds yesterday to share their grief and pay tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales, at a special memorial service in St Machar's Cathedral.

Extra seats had to be brought into the packed cathedral to cope with the crowds of people who came to pay their respects.

Parties of schoolchildren from St Machar Academy and St Peter's RC Primary School were among those who mourned the passing of the Princess and gave thanks for her life.

The feelings of many were summed up in a simple message, attached to one of many bouquets left at the cathedral, which said: "We hope you find peace and happiness in your place of rest — we miss you deeply."

The Rev Richard Frazer said Diana's life was a mixture of charm, vulnerability, approachability, glamour, compassion and steely determination which had touched the hearts of millions.

He said: "The media frenzy which stole away her life continues to fuel our grief."

But he added that people had a "sense of shared responsibility" for Diana's tragic death, saying: "It was our curiosity for pictures and intimate details which encouraged the media frenzy."

Mr Frazer asked those attending the service to remember God's sustaining comfort and compassion, and ask for that strength to be given to the young princes, William and Harry, and their

father, Prince Charles. He appealed for people to take away from the tragedy a small part of Diana's compassion, saying: "Let us ask that somehow by a slow conversion to that tenderness we might become better people and make the world a better place for people like Diana, whose will was to love, to serve and to show compassion."

Mr Frazer also quoted from a poem by the English poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, dedicated to another tragic royal figure — Mary, Queen of Scots.

Bowing his head in prayer, Mr Frazer then said: "We give thanks for the life of Diana, Princess of Wales. We remember with gratitude her dedication as a mother to her boys."

"Remember also the family of Dodi Fayed and the driver of the car and give prayers for the life of this community, for Aberdeen and for the nation to be brave enough to follow its hearts as Diana did."

As the sombre congregation slowly filed out of the cathedral, Lord Provost Margaret Farquhar said: "This was a very poignant moment. It was such a waste of life."

Helen Graham, of Hardgate, said: "It was very moving. Absolutely everything said was just exactly what was in my own heart."

Carol Littlejohn, of Leslie Road, said: "It was a lovely service, a really nice gesture. It was very, very sad."

Anne Charles, a 16-year-old pupil of St Machar Academy, said: "It was very good, it was a fitting tribute to Diana."