



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Bill Sullivan of Imperial was one of three Nebraskans to receive the 2012 Gospel of Life Award Friday during the annual Nebraska Bishops' Pro Life Conference in Lincoln.

Each year, one person from each of the three Catholic dioceses in Nebraska is presented with the award, which includes a papal blessing. It recognizes their pro-life leadership.

The award was initiated in 2007 by the state office of the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro Life Activities to recognize Catholic individuals for exemplary efforts to promote the Gospel of Life in their parish and community.

But, Sullivan was quick to point out that the award should have been given to he and wife, Marianne, as a couple because she is involved in all of the activities, often "getting roped in," he said, when he has another conflicting commitment.

Sullivan is no stranger to the promotion of pro-life activities at St. Patrick Catholic Church or in the community.

He has served as the parish's pro-life coordinator for 10 years, and is the liaison with the state office for activities and information to distribute locally.

Earlier this month, he again organized the annual Life Chain in Imperial, a silent prayerful protest against abortion, that was attended by more than 50 people from several local churches. He not only promotes it each year in his own church, but makes sure the word gets out to other churches in Imperial.

Each year at the Chase County Fair, when hundreds pass by St. Patrick's a block from the fairgrounds, Sullivan sets up a table outside the church with free pro-life literature to distribute. He is also instrumental in hanging the large pro-life banner in front of the church.

He is also largely involved with youth in the community including many pro-life efforts.

Each year, he coordinates parish youths' attendance at the "Steubenville of the Rockies," conference in Denver at which there is a component emphasizing pro-life awareness and promotion.

The Sullivans have served as Godparent teachers since 2000 in St. Patrick's Catholic education program, meeting with high school students Wednesday nights in the home for weekly instruction.

In that capacity, Sullivan also coordinates the Southwest Nebraska Catechism Kick-off for youths in area parishes. More than 100 youths attended this year's program Oct. 10 when noted national speaker and author, Chris Stefanick, gave the talk on relativism.

Nearly three years ago, he was hired by Catholic Social Services as director of the St. Isidore Gift and Thrift store in Imperial that assists many struggling families in the area. The store will celebrate its third anniversary in March 2013.

Sullivan also conducts an adult bible study at the Imperial Manor so the elderly are able to attend, and he and Marianne coordinate the parish prayer chain.

Twenty family and friends were in Lincoln for the presentation Friday night, including wife

Marianne and two of their three children, Tom and Rose.

Bill's dad, Bill Sullivan of Wallace, and sisters Mary Carey, and Lori Beals (and husband Doug) were in attendance in addition to several friends from St. Patrick's.