

Our Blessed Voices

St. Vincent de Paul

by Bob Haller

For more than 23 years, members of Blessed Sacrament have gathered after the 8:30 Mass on Saturday morning as the parish's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVdP).

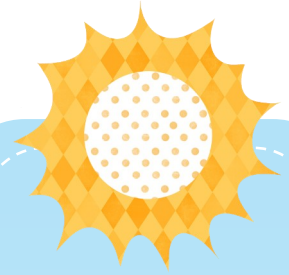
A meeting starts with an opening prayer, in which we petition our founders and ask that the Spirit of Vincentian Friendship be with us during the meeting.

The minutes record the number of persons at the previous meeting and the major topics of discussion. The treasurer's report lists receipts: our weekly "silent collection" to which we all contribute; from the poor box in the back of the Church; twice yearly parish collections (Ash Wednesday and Assumption), and sometimes an "anonymous donation" or, unhappily, funds in memory of a deceased member (most recently, Frank Frost). It reflects the money spent on our callers for rent and rent deposits, utility bills, car gas, furniture, clothing and household goods, bus tickets, prescriptions, food, and whatever other necessities we try to cover.

Next, a spiritual reflection, usually focused on the gospel for the next day, interpreted for its application to the Vincentian mission, not always easy to find, but a challenge which often leads to a surprising interaction of the text with our Vincentian experience. We seek to find in Scripture the essentials of our faith as manifested in our work.

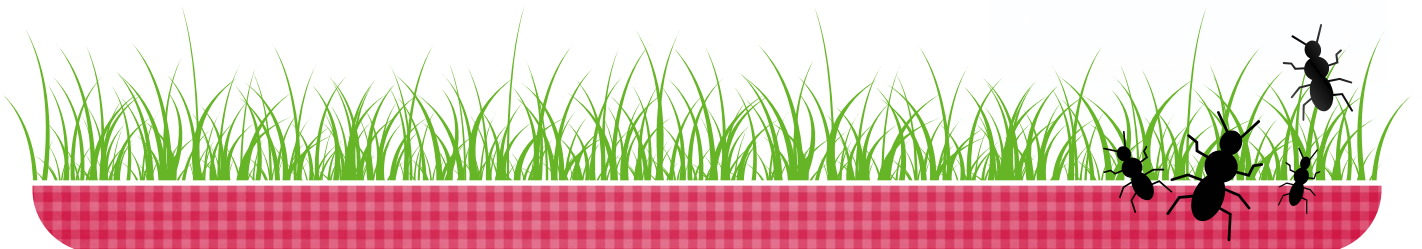
Discussion of our cases follows the spiritual reflection. The Lincoln Council of SVdP has a "help line" with an answering machine that takes the first ten calls each weekday. Blessed Sacrament's Conference takes these calls two days a month, assigns them to members, and puts them in a data base kept by the Lincoln Council.

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St Vincent de Paul *cont'd...*

Our primary purpose is to answer the request through a home visit. We go, two by two to the caller, explaining that we are neither social workers nor clergy, but want on a personal basis to offer what help we



can give to serve the immediate needs of the person or couple or family which is temporarily in trouble. Our financial resources are limited (we usually do not spend more than \$75 or \$100 per call), but we have access to food, some furniture and household goods, some clothing, cleaning products or whatever is the most pressing need. We also have experience enough to suggest ways of handling problems before they become a crisis, and suggestions about the importance of a church or other support group.

It is surprising how our discussion of cases gives us insight into the problems of life in our time and city, and how our various jobs and experiences contribute to the consensus we achieve (usually) about the way we handled the calls.

Not all our calls are from the help line. We have a family and some individuals in the parish whose conditions we follow and help. Some-

times the Blessed Sacrament Clergy will refer someone who has knocked on the Rectory door or otherwise come to their attention.

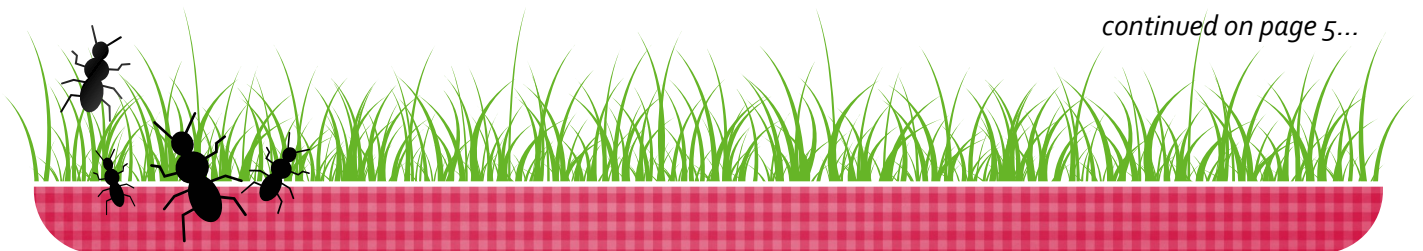
When there is time, we consider other Vincentian business: reports of the Lincoln Council meeting, regional and national conventions, and our own relation to our parish

Right now, at the front of our minds is the transition to a new way of doing our business which involves a new relationship with Catholic Social Services CSS).

Up until March of this year, SVdP had a store on R Street in a building where we also leased space to

Matt Talbot Kitchen. Assurity bought the site for their corporate office, and instead of opening a new store, we are setting up an Outreach Center on N Street, behind the current CSS building.

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Blessed Sacrament Bible Study

by Dave Essay

Who is your greatest friend? And how do you speak with and listen to your friends? As Catholics, we believe that the summit of our lives is the Eucharist. We need to reject everything else as idolatry. We would not want to receive the Eucharist and forget during the week the meaning of what we are in the Body and Blood of Christ, even though there are many forces wanting us to forget. We prepare for the Eucharist by listening to the Word of God. And this too is not just a single event, but we must allow the Word to take root in us. Reading the Bible is a form of prayer. It is in the scriptures that we come to know the mind of Christ.

You are called to find the meaning of your life in the reading of the Bible. It is a fundamental gift of God to us as His children. And we are living an empty life not to be listening to the words of our greatest friend. We need to understand what

the Bible is saying to us and use it in prayer. It is sacramental in that it is an occasion of grace. "However, unlike the seven sacraments, it does not work of itself to give grace, but it is dependant upon our use of it" (Peter Kreeft, [You Can Understand the Bible](#)).

The Catholic Bible Study meets every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament School meeting room to read and discuss the scriptures. If you cannot make it to the meetings I can provide you with notes from the meetings and answer any questions you might have, maybe not instantly but eventually. I would also be able to help you set up a study method suited to you individually. Today there are an amazing amount of studies and tools available for a Catholic to study the Bible.

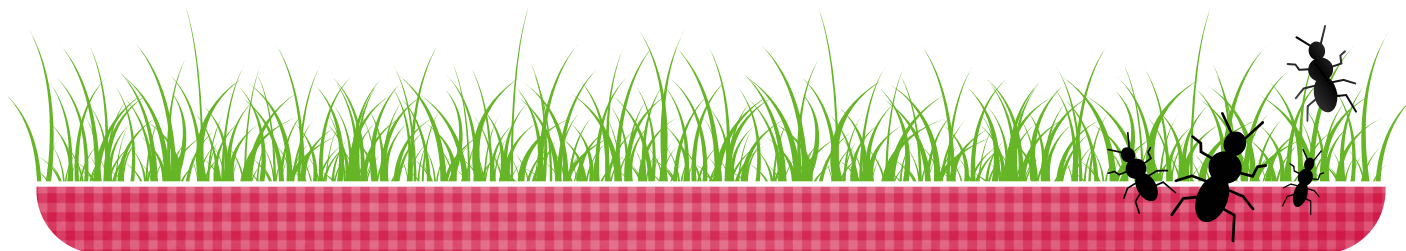
My email is daveessay@windstream.net

"Cultivate a special devotion to God's Word, whether studied privately or in public, always listen to it with attention and reverence, strive to profit by it, and do not let it fall to the ground, but receive it within your heart as a precious balm" St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) Doctor of the Church.

Early Bird CCD Registration & CCD Teachers

Early bird registration for the upcoming CCD classes is **August 1st** and **August 8th**. Watch the Church bulletin for more information.

There is also a need this year for some more volunteers to help teach the CCD classes. Materials and guidance will be provided. Please consider this rewarding endeavor, you won't regret having a direct impact on the Catholic education of our young parishoners. Contact Fr Kelly at the Rectory if you are interested.



The Altar Society

by Jennifer Tinsley

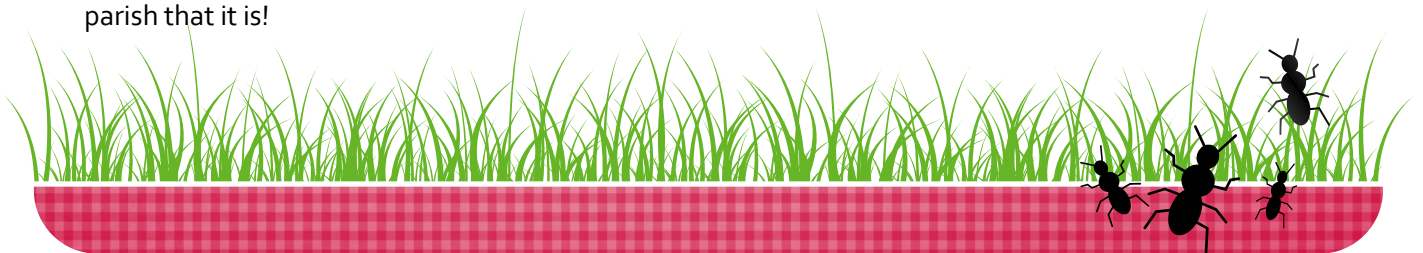
What would we do without an Altar Society at Blessed Sacrament? Many of us probably do not have an answer to that question due to not knowing exactly what it is the organization does. I know I was not aware of the many things they are responsible for until recently when I became an active member. So many things in our parish that I have always taken for granted or never even thought of, are done by the Altar Society. Some of these tasks include: the care and replacement of the altar linens; purchase of candles; clean and repair of altar server vestments and purchase of the priest's vestments. These things are all very important in keeping our altar looking its best, but I never actually thought about someone having to do them, let alone who it was! That isn't all we do, either! The organization is also responsible for organizing and serving all funeral luncheons, assisting the diocese in bed making after retreats held at the Retreat House in Waverly, and raising funds to contribute to various organizations both within our own parish as well as outside of the parish, such as Birthright and paying for the monthly cleaning of the Church. We also collaborate with Father Sullivan each year in choosing special projects to focus on and raise money for. Currently, the benches in the choir loft are getting new cushions and in the past, funds were raised to purchase the beautiful painting of Jesus that is displayed by the Baptismal Font in the Church.

In the short period of time I have served as Treasurer, I've come to realize what a very important asset the Altar Society is to our parish community. The women who dedicate their time by currently serving as active members do a wonderful job in providing these "behind the scenes" services and deserve our heartfelt gratitude. Unfortunately, many of these long-time members are becoming few in number and/or reaching a point where they are no longer able to serve, including the officers. We are in desperate need of new and younger members to ensure the continuation of our organization and ask that all women of the parish prayerfully consider bringing fresh ideas by joining us as an active member (or even an officer!). The more members we get, the less of a time commitment it would be for each individual. Meetings are currently scheduled on the second Wednesday evening of each month, with the day and time open to change. No meetings or activities are scheduled during the summer months. The organization is very open to new ideas and would welcome any input/suggestions you might have.

Current activities the Altar Society sponsors include:

- Serve donuts after masses four Sundays a year
- Fest Quest cake walk
- Holiday Extravaganza, which includes a soup supper, bake sale and brunch
- Celebration of priests' birthdays
- Birthright baby shower
- Chocolate Lovers Affair, which includes brunch and a bake sale
- Sell desserts at Fish Fry (at least two) -- Confirmation reception
- Spring brunch -- Carnations for Birthright

What would we do without an Altar Society at Blessed Sacrament? I hope we do not have to find out. Please, ladies of the parish, consider a time commitment and join us for an opportunity for fellowship by meeting other women of our parish as we work together to keep Blessed Sacrament the wonderful parish that it is!



St Vincent de Paul *cont'd...*

We will store some goods there to help our callers, but we will supply the larger goods—furniture, appliances, and some household goods—from the warehouse inventory of St. Louise Thrift Shop. Donations to SVdP will go directly to CSS, but our operation will be separate from the mission of CSS: a direct meeting of concerned Catholic Christians with the poor of the city of Lincoln.

The other change is that we now have an Executive Director (ED), charged with the development of Conference activity, the creation of a stronger presence in the community, and improvement in the effectiveness of the Society. The new ED, Mary Martha (“Marty”) Allen, comes to us from Healdsburg, California but has roots in Lincoln, even two years as a student at Blessed Sacrament School. It is the hope of the Lincoln Council that she can help us direct our efforts so as to fulfill the Vincentian mission in Lincoln and deepen our own commitment to this mission.

What exactly is this mission?

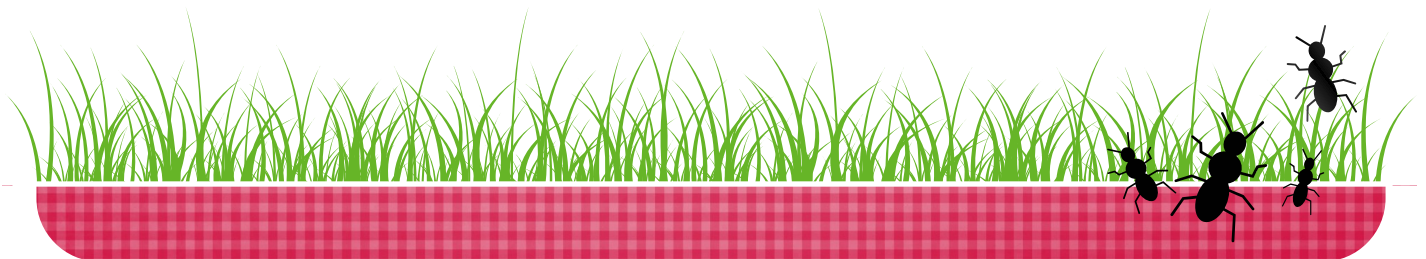
The Society was founded in 1833 by University of Paris student Frederic Ozanam who found himself called to live a Christian life to the fullest, in service to the poor, and in friendship with other laypersons, each pursuing a secular occupation and an independent layperson’s life.

The “conferences” of the Society were to focus equally on service and the spirituality which arose from this service. The central activity was to be the “home visit”: two members of the society coming to a poor household and out of their own resources providing whatever help and encouragement they could.

Ozanam learned how to do a “home visit” from Rosalie Rendu, the leader of the Daughters of Charity in a poor neighborhood near the Sorbonne. He named the Society for the 17th-century St Vincent de Paul, founder of the Congregation of the Mission, priests and brothers dedicated to the poor. He worked with Louise de Marillac to create the Daughters of Charity and Servants of the Sick Poor. SVdP is still part of the “Vincentian family,” consisting of the Congregation of the Mission (4,500 men throughout the world), the Daughters of Charity (over 18,000 world-wide), and 51,000 Conferences of SVdP, with over 700,000 members in 142 nations.

At the center of the life in the society is the Rule, hardly changed since the founding. The Rule requires us to be lay and autonomous—no clergy leadership, a cooperative but not integrated relationship with the official Catholic Church. All full members must be Catholics (others may be associate members) and must pledge themselves to the basic principles: service to all the poor in the form of personal visits, regardless of their religion or lack of religion; no accumulation of resources not directly allocated to the needs of the poor; and a commitment to the Conference and to advocacy for the poor.

We invite all members of Blessed Sacrament to find spiritual growth through the Vincentian way. Come to a Saturday morning meeting or contact one of us to find out more.



Pro-Life Issues Confronting Volunteers

by Julie Schmit-Albin

Most of what the Parish Pro-Life Committee implements comes from the Bishop's office. Some, usually the citizen action activity involving elections, is directed by Nebraska Right to Life (NRL). This has easily been one of the busiest 8 or 9 months for pro-life activity. It started last summer with the healthcare reform debate which reached its pinnacle of involvement by Nebraska Right to Life in November and December, meetings with Senator Ben Nelson last July, and frequent contact with his office through December. Of course the disappointing abandonment of Sen. Nelson regarding the pro-life language resulted in NRL PAC's statement that our ties with Sen. Nelson were cut and we would not entertain any circumstance where we could ever endorse him in the future. While healthcare debates were going on, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents embryonic stem cell policy issue was heating up at their October and November meetings with again, the disappointing abandonment of principle by Regent Jim McClurg and again, another elected official whom NRL PAC will not support in the future. But NRL organized pickets of two Regents' meetings last fall and testimony. January brought the legislative session and the remarkable openness of Speaker Mike Flood to the idea of LB 1103, the 20 week fetal pain ban, as his priority bill. This was a huge boost after the disappointments we had endured with Nelson and McClurg.

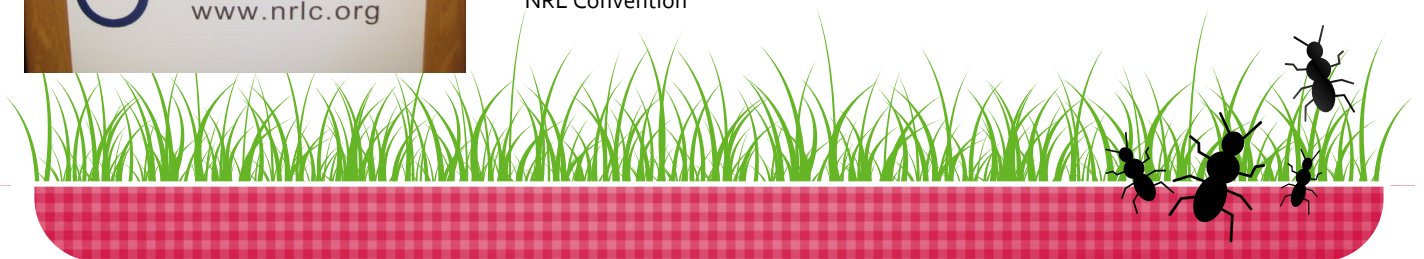
Two major events hosted by NRL, the Walk for Life on January 30th and the Pro-Life Legislative Day on February 25th; took a lot of organizing and volunteer help. The hearing for LB 1103 on February 25th meant hosting a press conference for the doctors and constitutional law professor procured for our testimony. While the Legislature was still going and the many meetings and negotiations that that entails, the Primary Election was upon us and we had to get NRL PAC surveys out to candidates. The NRL Board met in January and March and revisited its PAC endorsement policy. The PAC Voter Guide lit drop had to be coordinated and shipped to volunteers across the State.



For more information about LB 1103, the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, and other pro-life issues visit the Nebraska Right to Life website, www.nerighttolife.org.

They are on Facebook too. Search for *Nebraska Right to Life: State Affiliate to National Right to Life* .

Left: Julie Schmit-Albin at the 2010 NRL Convention



Blessed Sacrament Pro-Life Activities

by *Melissa Zierke & Judy Kerkman*

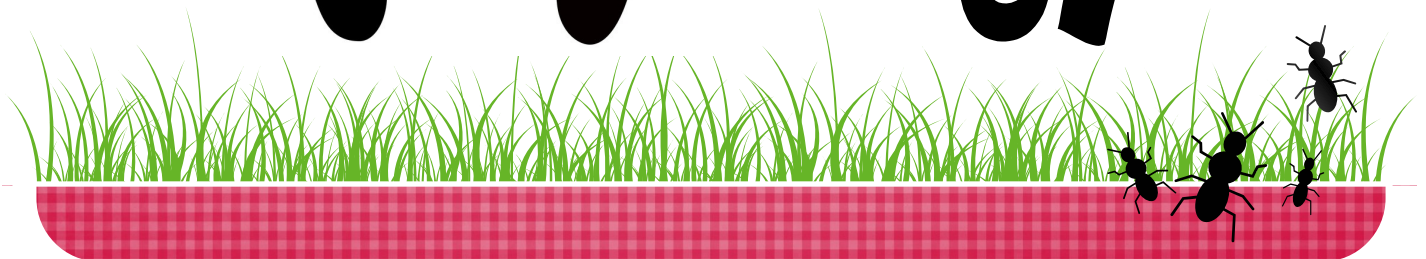
The goal of each parish Pro-Life coordinator is to educate and promote parish awareness of life issues concerning local and state laws. Some of these issues include restriction laws on abortion, parental notification acts and laws concerning adult stem cell and embryonic stem cell research. Promoting Pro-Life work doesn't always start and end with political action. It also calls on all of us to put forth an effort to end the "culture of death" and spread "a Culture of Life". (Pope John Paul II) The spread of a 'Culture of Life' starts with prayer. People may want to be involved in Pro-Life work but might be intimidated by thinking most of the work is done in the public eye. But what we want to let everyone know is that the most important part of Pro Life work is PRAYER. Everyone can take part in prayer.

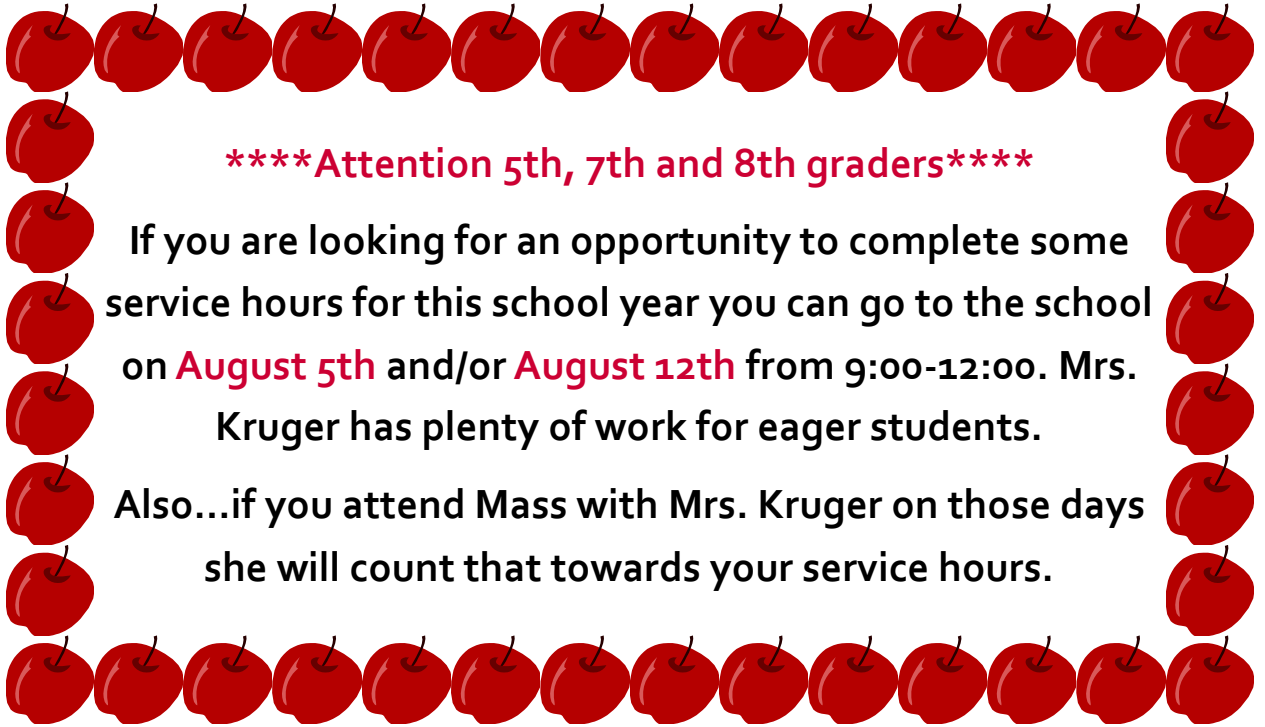
In our parish, we have three annual events. Each January, the state hosts Nebraska Walk For Life. On the first Sunday of October, the Life Chain takes place during the Nebraska Pro-Life Conference. These events are public stands for life. The Conference is an event that gives anyone an opportunity to inform themselves on how to provide an outreach to the 'Culture of Death' by state and nationally known speakers. The conference is a two day event, but attendees are welcome to come and go as needed.

The annual events are strong reminders to stand up for the defenseless. Sadly, there is a more frequent event just down the street from our parish. Each week, Planned Parenthood performs abortions, usually on Tuesdays and some Fridays. We know that everyone can't pray at the clinic whenever abortions are occurring, but you can pray for the mothers and fathers who have scheduled appointments at Planned Parenthood.

For those wanting to become involved, here are four simple things you can do:

- 1) Pray for those mothers and fathers who have appointments at Planned Parenthood
- 2) Learn about the effects of abortion in order to answer questions that could be asked by family members, co-workers and friends
- 3) Donate one or two packages of diapers at the fall diaper drive for Nebraska Right to Life
- 4) Pray for our elected officials to protect life from conception until natural death





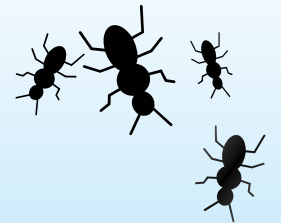
*****Attention 5th, 7th and 8th graders*****

If you are looking for an opportunity to complete some service hours for this school year you can go to the school on **August 5th** and/or **August 12th** from 9:00-12:00. Mrs. Kruger has plenty of work for eager students.

Also...if you attend Mass with Mrs. Kruger on those days she will count that towards your service hours.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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Asst Pastor: Rev Brendan Kelly
In Residence: Rev Casey Porada

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