

# Men's ACTS Retreat

Organized by the men of St. William's  
September 14 -17, 2006

ACTS is an acronym for Adoration, Community, Theology and Service. The goals of an ACTS retreat are to strengthen our faith and its application in our daily lives, to renew ourselves spiritually and to build lasting friendships. Lay men present the retreat with spiritual direction provided by clergy. All Christian men age 21 or older are welcome.

The retreat will begin Thursday evening September 14 and check-in will be between 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM at St. Williams Church in Tewksbury, MA and transportation will be provided to the Espousal Retreat Center in Waltham, MA. for arrival at 7:30 PM. We will all return to St. William's on Sunday, September 17 for the 11:30 a.m. Mass, with a reception following in the school hall.

The total cost of the retreat is \$175. A deposit of \$50 made payable to "St. William's ACTS" should be submitted with this form. The remaining balance of \$125 will be due at the Thursday evening check-in. **Please Note: Financial difficulties should not prevent anyone from attending the retreat. If you have financial concerns, arrangements can be made by contacting one of the people listed below.**

You will receive a letter 10 to 14 days prior to the retreat describing the necessities you should bring with you. If you need further information or have any questions please contact one of the persons listed below.

**Please send your completed registration form and registration fee to:**

Sam Krikorian,  
c/o Men's ACTS Retreat`  
9 Hillcrest Road  
Tewksbury, MA. 01876

**Or drop at St. William's Rectory, 1350 Main Street, Tewksbury, during business hours.  
Questions and inquiries, please contact;**

Sam Krikorian (978) 851-5198 (home)  
Dave Murphy (978) 815-6335 (cell)  
Mike Farley (978) 815-8788 (cell)

**God Bless**

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Please return this section with your deposit for the St. William's Men's ACTS Retreat  
September 14 - 17, 2006

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as you want it to appear on your nametag: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Hm. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Wk. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse or other emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special physical or dietary needs? \_\_\_\_\_

## History of the ACTS Movement

The ACTS movement came to birth from the Cursillo Movement through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. ACTS started in 1987 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Selma, Texas, a small suburb of San Antonio.

*"Three men who were formerly involved with Cursillo, Ed Courtney and Joe Hays of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Selma, and Dr. Marty Sablik of St Luke's parish, met in the spring of 1987 at a local restaurant and discussed the possibilities of starting a retreat program that would concentrate more on parish life and community.*

*The proposed retreat program was approved by Joe Hayes' pastor, Father Patrick Cronin, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, his pastoral council and Archbishop Patrick Flores. The men received the blessings to form a committee to develop a retreat weekend with a goal of having a men's retreat in July 1987 and a women's retreat in the fall of 1987. Archbishop Flores asked that the committee be sure to allow non-Catholics to attend as part of the community.*

*With Joe Hayes as chairman, 10 committee members began developing talks, sacramentals, meditations and schedules for the weekends. The committee met each week while forming the retreat program and discussed choosing a name for the retreat but there was never a consensus among them. One day Wallace Vaughn, one of the committee members, had a dream in which the Holy Spirit encouraged him to read Chapter 2, verses 42-47 of the Acts of the Apostles. This selection from Acts describes what the committee wanted to achieve on a retreat weekend. He also felt the Holy Spirit wanted the retreats to be called 'ACTS,' and thus the name was born. The acronym of ACTS came to mean Adoration, Community, Theology and Service, which is today the precept of these retreats. Nearly all who have experienced an ACTS retreat feel truly blessed by God through the guidance of the Holy Spirit." 1*

The Cursillo Retreat is a wonderful weekend experience and true to its name is a remarkable "Short Course" in the Catholic faith. Although the ACTS retreat was modeled after Cursillo, there are some major differences, most notably in focus and in emphasis. Cursillo Retreats are strictly for Catholics, and always reach out to the general population to form team and recruit retreatants. ACTS Retreats are open to all faiths and generally are directed primarily to those within a parish.

Another example of difference is that the Cursillo Retreat is very structured and provides very little flexibility. The ACTS Retreat, on the other hand, represents the wishes of the Director and team in selection of presentations. No two ACTS retreats are exactly alike. There are certain events that are required but each retreat is unique because of the individuality of each team.

The ACTS and The Cursillo Retreats do the work of the Holy Spirit and both are needed. The ACTS Movement shall always be grateful to the Cursillo Movement for its beginnings and its foundation. The ACTS retreat has gradually become a Parish Weekend Retreat patterned after the description of the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles (ACTS 2:42-47); breaking bread together, worshipping together, receiving instruction together, sharing in common, and reaching out in loving service.

After the Weekend, participants are encouraged to reach out to parish activities. ACTS does not want to be thought of as a "Group", but as parishioners that have been on a special retreat and now have a greater interest in parish ministry involvement. Many men and women too numerous to mention here have added much and continue to add to the ACTS Movement through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS Missions was founded in 1997 to take the ACTS Retreat to new Parishes all over the world so that the ACTS Community would be alive in all parishes. ACTS has grown much since 1987, and is now in Alaska, California, Connecticut and Missouri, as well as all over Texas.

## **What is ACTS Missions?**

ACTS Missions is a non-profit corporation with a board of directors composed of religious and lay men and women. Its mission statement reads: "ACTS MISSIONS spreads the Gospel of Jesus Christ among Catholic communities by promoting, consulting in, facilitating and sponsoring ACTS retreats."

## **What is an ACTS Retreat?**

An ACTS retreat is a three day and three night Catholic lay retreat presented by fellow parishioners. The retreat begins on Thursday evening and ends the following Sunday at a Mass celebrated with the parish community. Retreats for men and retreats for women are given separately. Talks and activities during the retreat focus on Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service, from which the ACTS acronym is derived. Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are the guides for the retreats. The retreat takes on the traditions and atmosphere of the parish community sponsoring it. The retreat facilitates the attainment of a new or deeper relationship with the Lord through:

**Adoration** - the call by, acceptance of, and response to God

**Community** - the love and caring of each other

**Theology** - the study of God through scripture and the Catholic Faith

**Service** - to God and his people.

Each retreat is conducted by a retreat "team" composed of 20-30 individuals who have attended prior ACTS retreats. Chosen by the retreat Director, the team organizes the retreat, conducts the retreat talks and activities, and ministers to the needs of the retreatants during the retreat weekend.

## **What is the purpose of the ACTS retreat?**

An ACTS weekend is designed to help the retreatants enter into a new or deeper relationship with our Lord and fellow parishioners. This is accomplished through Adoration and daily prayer, the call to Community in one's parish as a member of the Body of Christ, and Theology in encouraging the study of scripture and our Catholic Faith. All of which emphasize and encourage the virtue of Service to our Lord, our parish, and one another.

## **What is the goal of the ACTS retreat?**

A parish ACTS retreat strives to achieve the directives of Vatican II and goals of the Revised Code of Canon Law of 1983 which emphasize "community and pastoral care" within a parish. The weekend allows the retreatants to experience God's love and joy. They return to their parish with a deeper love for each other and a desire to become more involved in their parish faith community.

## **Why conduct an ACTS retreat?**

The weekend is a powerful and enduring personal conversion experience. Talks, which draw from the personal experiences of team members, focus on Adoration, the need for prayer and meditation on the word of God, Community, the importance of community built on faith and love, Theology, the need to read and understand scripture and our Catholic Faith, and Service, the need to answer Christ's call to servanthood. Activities conducted during the weekend give retreatants a better understanding of the significance and importance of prayer, liturgy, the sacraments, scripture, community, and service. Retreatants are also given guidance to help them in their faith journey.

It is a powerful community building experience. The ACTS weekend brings the retreatants to a better understanding of God's love for them, and also develops their need to share that love with others through their involvement in a faith-centered parish community.

The retreat emphasizes our call to service, service to the parish community and to our world community. There results a new or renewed dedication to the life of the parish community and a new recognition of the needs of those around us and of our obligation, as followers of Christ, to help meet those needs.

## How can an ACTS retreat happen for my parish community?

Several methods have been employed to bring ACTS retreat to parishes.

One method allows individual parishioners to attend ACTS retreats given by other parishes. After a substantial number of parishioners have attended retreats and have been part of a retreat team in other parishes, the parish may form a team to conduct a retreat for their parish.

Another method calls for individual parishioners to attend retreats offered by other parishes. After a minimum of 10 individuals have attended a retreat and commit to serving on team, ACTS Missions will form a retreat team composed of those persons from your parish who have attended a retreat and persons from other parishes with team experience to conduct a retreat for your parish. This first retreat will be led by one of the experienced team members. The other experienced team members will mentor the parish team members. A second parish-sponsored retreat can then be given with a team comprised by a majority of parish members. ACTS Missions can provide several experienced team members, literature, and guidance for this second team. ACTS Missions will give your ACTS community literature and guidance to facilitate the continuation of the ACTS retreat movement in your parish. The same process is employed in facilitating both men's and women's retreats.

A third method calls for ACTS Missions to come into your parish with a complete retreat team and give an ACTS Retreat for your parish. The team will organize the retreat and recruit parish members to come to the retreat. ACTS Missions will then organize a second retreat, building the team with parishioners who attended the first retreat and several experienced team members. Future ACTS retreats may then be sponsored by your parish, with teams comprised of parishioners. ACTS Missions will give your ACTS community literature and guidance to facilitate the continuation of the ACTS retreat movement in your parish. The same process is employed in facilitating both men's and women's retreats.

In these last two methods, ACTS Missions will give your parish a two-year commitment. During this time it will organize and sponsor two men's retreats and two women's retreats and help select and start a Core group to support and organize the subsequent retreats.

## What is expected from my parish if we want an ACTS retreat?


The pastor's support is essential. His cooperation is important during the recruitment phase. He is usually the best recruiter for the first retreat. He can also facilitate connecting the team with other parish organizations for assistance in organizing different facets of the retreat.

Retreat facility costs make up the bulk of the retreat expense. Facility costs range from approximately \$75-\$150 per person for the three nights of the retreat. Additional expenses for literature, materials, postage and other ancillary items are approximately \$35 per person. The total cost of an ACTS retreat may be approximately \$110-\$185 per person. As you see, the cost is very reasonable; however, there are those who may not be able to afford the weekend. In order to make the retreat available to all those who desire to go, the parish must underwrite a portion of the total cost of the retreat. The amount to be underwritten will depend on the particular circumstances of the parish and the available retreat facilities.

There may also be other expenses when ACTS Missions is sponsoring the retreat for the parish. These might include travel, room and board for pre-retreat visits, and other miscellaneous expenses incurred by the participating team members.


## With whom might I speak about their experiences with ACTS Missions and ACTS retreats?

Here are some persons who have experience with ACTS retreats and ACTS Missions:

 **Msgr. Jim Henke** St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 4201 De Zavala Rd San Antonio TX 78249 (210)-492-4600

 **Sr. Frances Briseno, OSB** St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 4201 De Zavala Rd San Antonio TX 78249 (210)-492-4600

 **Fr. Marty Elsner, SJ** Our Lady of Guadalupe Church 1321 El Paso San Antonio TX 78207 (210)-226-4064

 **Fr. Ken Hannon, OMI** Oblate School of Theology 285 Oblate Drive San Antonio TX 78216 (210)-979-0240

The ACTS Missions office is located at the Oblate School of Theology. You may reach the Executive Director, **Tom Peterson**, or the Office Administrator, **Karen Conrow** at (210)-342-1077.