

Kolbe Prison Ministry

Kolbe Prison Ministry (KPM) began in August 2009 with the first "Prison ACTS" retreat held at the Connally Unit in Kenedy, Texas, in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. This is a three-day retreat in prison with a format very similar to a parish ACTS retreat. At request of ACTS Mission, the name was changed in January 2015 to Kolbe after St. Maximilian Kolbe, patron saint of the incarcerated. Leaders of the early retreats were predominantly from Fredericksburg, so Kolbe Prison Ministry was established there as a 501c3 in October 2015. The KPM group operates very similar to ACTS Mission in helping get Kolbe retreats started at the state prisons throughout Texas. There are 104 Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) units and Kolbe retreats have now been held in over 50 prisons. In the San Antonio Archdiocese, over 300 lay volunteers have served on a prison retreat. In many parishes, the ACTS volunteer base is large, but opportunities to serve are limited, so many will volunteer to be on a Kolbe retreat team. What do they find? Many who attend say Kolbe is like "ACTS on steroids" as inmate retreatants can have a major spiritual conversion in just three days. Also, blessings can be far greater for those who step out in faith to serve.

What is status of KPM in the Diocese of San Angelo? There are four TDCJ units in the diocese along with two others that belong to the Lubbock diocese, but are primarily served by volunteers in the Abilene area. The first Kolbe retreat was held in July 2015 at the Havins State Jail in Brownwood. There have been three further retreats at Havins with limited volunteers from the diocese. The Robertson Unit near Abilene had their first Kolbe retreat in March 2018 and one was just held in April 2019 at the Wallace Unit in Colorado City. These retreats were primarily led by volunteers from the Austin diocese and the San Antonio archdiocese. At the recent Wallace retreat, several volunteers from the ACTS community in Odessa stepped up to participate, were captivated by this ministry, and have a desire to see it grow in the diocese. A plan to develop a Kolbe core team would be a first step, just like a core team is assembled to lead parish ACTS retreats. If you would like to learn more about KPM and how you might get involved, please contact Doug Burns from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Odessa. He can be reached at 432-940-4699 (cell), 432-331-9764 (day time), or by email at douglasburns@att.net.

On this page is a flyer for a Statewide Kolbe Conference at St. Mark the Evangelist in San Antonio on Saturday, July 20. You can register for this free conference and learn more about KPM at: <https://www.kolbeprisonministries.com/2019-conference>.