



INFO SHEET FOR KOLBE OUTSIDE TEAM MEMBERS

Kolbe Prison Retreat at the Briscoe Unit in Dilley, TX – November 3-5, 2016

The Kolbe Prison Ministry (KPM) offers weekend ACTS-type retreats for men (and separately women) who are incarcerated in Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) prisons. Originally designed as ACTS retreats, the Kolbe retreats are now offered through a separate Catholic organization. This organization is named after St. Maximilian Kolbe who died a martyr in a Nazi prison camp during WWII.

A Kolbe Prison retreat is very similar to an ACTS retreat but is held entirely within the confines of the Dolph Briscoe Unit prison in Dilley, Texas (about 88 miles south of San Antonio via IH-35). The retreat takes place entirely within the prison gymnasium. A typical Kolbe Prison retreat for men includes about 66 inmate retreatants, 40 inmate team members (inside team) and about 25 or so outside (non-inmate) team members. These inmate retreatants and inside team members have demonstrated a desire to explore and/or grow in Christian faith and many are involved in Bible studies, worship services and even RCIA. The retreatants and inside team members are hand-picked by the Prison Chaplain and many reside in a separate faith-based cell block. Most are truly seeking to become better people and still better men of faith. Many of these men have not had a positive male role model or a godly father figure in their lives to give them love, attention, direction and advice. That's where we come in.

The following pages contain more info about what team members will need to know and do to have a fruitful retreat experience.

God bless you for serving the needs of our brothers in prison.

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Frequently Asked Questions

for Kolbe Prison Retreat Outside Team Members

- **What in general does an outside team member do?**

Basically, the outside team members help in the following areas: (i) praying for the retreatants and inside team members, (ii) welcoming the retreatants into the retreat (a hug fest), (iii) acting as table discussion leaders or facilitators (usually in pairs), (iv) assisting as needed with the performance of the various ministries (stations, foot washing, etc.), and (v) spending time getting to know the retreatants and inside team members; showing them love, attention and examples of faith-filled men. All outside team members will also prepare love letters. A few of the outside team members also handle other tasks such as leading the praying of the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet. The inside team members do most of the heavy lifting in the ministries and serving, and also one (or sometimes two) will serve as additional table leaders at each table.

- **Are there team meetings and what do they involve?**

The Kolbe Prison Ministry is far more flexible in regards to outside team meetings compared to ACTS retreats. KPM suggests that teams schedule as few as zero meetings to as many as five team meetings in preparation for the retreat. For the November 2016 retreat, we have scheduled four team meetings on Monday evenings in October. It is possible that the number of meetings could change depending on circumstances beyond our control. A handful of outside team members have indicated some or all of the team meeting dates conflict with their other previous obligations. It is requested that outside team members attend as many of the team meetings as reasonably possible. All pre-retreat team meetings will be held at St. Mark parish (Christopher Hall – Room 201). A Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet will be led by one of the team members. There will be a simple meal served at each team meeting purchased / prepared by 2-3 volunteers. The cost of these meals is not reimbursable to the meal volunteers. A volunteer sign-up sheet for leading of the prayer and for providing meals will be circulated at the early meetings.

- **What is the team member retreat fee and what is it used for?**

Each outside team member is asked to contribute \$100 as a retreat fee. The fees are used primarily to cover the cost of the Agape food and supplies (retreat folders, name badges, meal serving supplies, etc.), plus covering the cost of the donuts and cookies for all of the subsequent (monthly) retreat reunions. If you feel compelled and able to chip in additional funds above the \$100, please do so. In the event that payment of the entire fee presents a financial hardship for any team member, they should contact one of the retreat directors to discuss the situation.

- **What about the meals during the retreat?**

Breakfast meals will be typically eaten in the meeting room building on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church (114 East Frio Street Dilley, TX 78017). See attached map and

photo. There is a kitchen available there. Other meals (lunch and dinner) will be served in the prison by meal service volunteers secured by the retreat leaders.

- **What is the schedule of events on the retreat?**

A detailed retreat schedule will be provided to each outside team member prior to the retreat. The essential points in time are:

- 5:15am – gather at the meeting room building on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Dilley for breakfast and any retreat info or updates
- 6:00am – meet at the entrance to the Briscoe Unit
- 6:30pm to 7:45pm – leave the Briscoe Unit (followed by brief team meeting)

Any changes of the schedule will be communicated in advance by the retreat leaders.

- **Will there be a commissioning Mass?**

All outside team members are asked (if available) to attend a Mass on Wednesday, November 2, at 6:00pm at St. Joseph Catholic Church. A special blessing for the team will be offered by the priest (typically at the conclusion of the Mass). Then all team members are invited to dine together at a local restaurant (location to be determined).

- **Where will we stay overnight?**

When the Kolbe prison retreats through St. Mark parish started in 2012, the oil business in the immediate area was very active and tied up most or all of the motel rooms near the Briscoe prison (and even if you got one, the cost per day was exorbitant). That meant staying overnight in a meeting room building on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Dilley. Fortunately for retreat lodging purposes, the situation has reversed completely and local motel rooms are available at very reasonable prices. For more recent Kolbe retreats, outside team members have had the option, at their own choice, to either stay overnight in a meeting room building on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Dilley or stay at a local motel. Over the last couple of retreats, team members have overwhelmingly chosen to stay at a motel as the accommodations at St. Joseph are subpar (eg. the showers didn't work at all during the February 2016 retreat). On top of that, the pastor at St. Joseph is now expecting team members who stay at the church to make a cash donation (amount not stated). It is anticipated that all or nearly all of the team members will choose to stay at a local motel (at a cost of about \$45-50/night). The directors will evaluate the rates offered by local motels and make recommendations to the team. Nonetheless, each team member can decide for themselves where they would prefer to stay.

- **What about can be said about staying in the St. Joseph Meeting Room Building?**

There are no amenities in the meeting room building (except for bathrooms and a kitchen. This is open space, barracks-style quarters. You will need to bring a cot or blow up mattress along with sheets, blanket (or sleeping bag) and pillow. Also, bring a towel and any personal toiletries. If you use a C-PAP machine for sleeping (or bring other electronics), there will be outlets available. If you do not enjoy the sound of men snoring at night, you should bring ear plugs. And just beware... the plumbing is iffy.

- **Will there be team meetings during the retreat?**

We will typically use the meeting room building on the grounds of St. Joseph Catholic Church as a rendezvous point for morning breakfast gatherings and for evening team meetings. The evening meetings will involve a brief recap of the day's events, discussion of any problems encountered, and a look at events for the next day. The Friday evening team meeting will also involve preparation of the Agape food (cut up meat and cheese). The directors will confirm the meeting times and places each day during the retreat.

- **What personal items can/should we bring and not bring into the prison?**

Basically any inappropriate items that could make their way into the hands of the inmates must not be brought into the prison. This includes weapons, objects that could be converted into weapons, cell phones, tobacco or vaping products, alcohol, narcotics, and medications (unless pre-authorized). You should leave your wallet or purse locked carefully in your car. It is inadvisable to bring in paper or coin money since it is unnecessary. You can bring in a bible, folders, ACTS bracelet, watch, and rosary. If you do bring in a container for supplies and/or materials, it is highly recommended that the container have a see-through side or lid on it. About the only things you really need to have in your pockets are your car keys (if you drove) and your driver's license. **DO NOT FORGET TO BRING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE OR YOU WILL NOT BE GRANTED ENTRANCE INTO THE UNIT. NO EXCEPTIONS!** See the attached Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers from the TDCJ for more info.

- **What should we wear and not wear while at the prison?**

The inmates all wear white cotton pullover shirts tucked into white elastic pants. So you should not wear white clothing. You should wear comfortable clothing for the weather conditions (the gym is not heated in the winter nor air conditioned in the summer). Basically, it is best that you wear long pants or slacks, socks and shoes, and collared shirt. For the retreat, outside team members will wear Blue shirts on Thursday, Red shirts on Friday and Green shirts on Saturday. **DO NOT WEAR 'ACTS' SHIRTS!** No t-shirts, shorts, sandals should be worn. Jackets, sweaters and hats are permitted. See the attached Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers from the TDCJ for more info.

- **Where is the prison located?**

The Briscoe Unit is located within the city limits of Dilley, Texas. The city of Dilley is located about 88 miles south of San Antonio on Interstate 35 (distance measured from the 281 & 1604 interchange). The entrance to the Briscoe Unit is located about 0.5 miles west of IH-35 on Hwy 85. See the attached google map and entrance road photo on a later page.

- **Where do we park at the Briscoe prison?**

There is ample free parking adjacent to the Briscoe Unit. See the attached aerial view of the Briscoe Unit for a visual location.

- **Where do we enter the prison?**

The main entrance to the Briscoe Unit is immediately south of the parking lot. See the attached aerial view of the Briscoe Unit for a visual location.

- **What are the procedures or protocols for entering the prison?**

Before going into the main entrance, it is necessary for every team member to first walk over to the adjacent guard tower (about 100 feet to the right of the main entrance). The guard in the tower will ask you (or the group) why you have come to the prison and you will tell him you are on the team for the Kolbe Prison Retreat. You will then place your driver's license in a bucket lowered down by the tower guard so he can record the names and IDs of each person entering the facility. Once he has verified the information (confirmed that names are on his Kolbe team list), he will return your driver's license to you (via the bucket). You can then go into the main entrance. You will normally be carefully searched upon entering the main entrance. The search by the prison guards is not unlike that by the TSA at the airport but is a bit more involved. You will need to empty the contents of your pockets, remove your jacket, hat, shoes and belt, and be subjected to an electric wand inspection and perhaps a pat search (not always the same routine). Other items carried in (folders, etc.) may also be searched and inspected. The search and inspection protocol may vary somewhat each day. After that you will be escorted (or allowed to walk unescorted) to the main office building. There is a bathroom available to you in the main office building if needed. In the main office building, you will hand over your driver's license to the guard behind a glass enclosure (down the hallway). After the guard verifies your identity, you will be given a visitor identification badge on a chain to wear around your neck. Then you will be escorted from the main office building to the gym where the retreat is being held.

- **In general, what should we do and not do while in the prison?**

Your best judgment and common sense will tell you what kind of conduct and behavior in the Unit is appropriate. You should, of course, be cordial and kind, not combative or argumentative. You should follow the instructions of the prison personnel. Also, there are certain prohibited actions that you should be aware of and avoid (such as giving anything to or accepting anything from the inmates). See the attached Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers from the TDCJ for more info.

- **How should a table leader conduct discussion?**

Nearly all outside team members will be involved at the retreat as table leaders. Being a table leader is perhaps their single most important and moving job. It is often in the small groups at the tables where the Holy Spirit does His greatest work on the hearts, minds and souls of the retreatants. See the separate document "Kolbe Retreat Table Leader Guide" for more info and tips.

- **Is it safe for Outside team members to be in the prison and near inmates?**

While anyone's safety cannot be absolutely guaranteed, whether inside a prison or elsewhere in the outside world, there have not been any notable safety issues or injuries incurred by any of the Kolbe volunteers. Past Kolbe volunteers and team members have found the inmates to be well behaved, cordial, and truly appreciative of the efforts of the volunteers. You may want to consider washing your hands before retreat meals and after each day of the retreat as a simple precaution due to being exposed to a different and large pool of germs.

- **What are the procedures or protocols for exiting the prison?**

At the conclusion of each day of the retreat, you will be escorted back to the main office building where you will turn in the visitor identification badge and receive back your driver's license. You will then be escorted (or allowed to walk unescorted) to the main entrance and then leave through the exterior door. The tower guard may call you over again for you to show him your driver's license (but this is not always the case).

- **What is the TDCJ Volunteer training all about?**

Men who are on a Kolbe retreat team are allowed to enter the prison as "guests". However, guests are allowed into prison no more than four times before they are required to complete a TDCJ training and orientation course. A single Kolbe retreat is considered a one-time entrance (even though it covers parts of 3 days). TDCJ training and orientation courses are offered at various locations around the state and at different times. The online schedule of training courses can be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/je3mxhx>. Once the TDCJ training course is completed and the TDCJ has approved the volunteer (could take 2 months), the trained volunteer is good for two years before re-training is necessary. Info on retraining can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/jruvnoh>

- **How / where can I get more info if I am interested in learning about additional prison volunteer opportunities?**

You can find out more online through the TDCJ website and elsewhere. Here are a few links to informative resources:

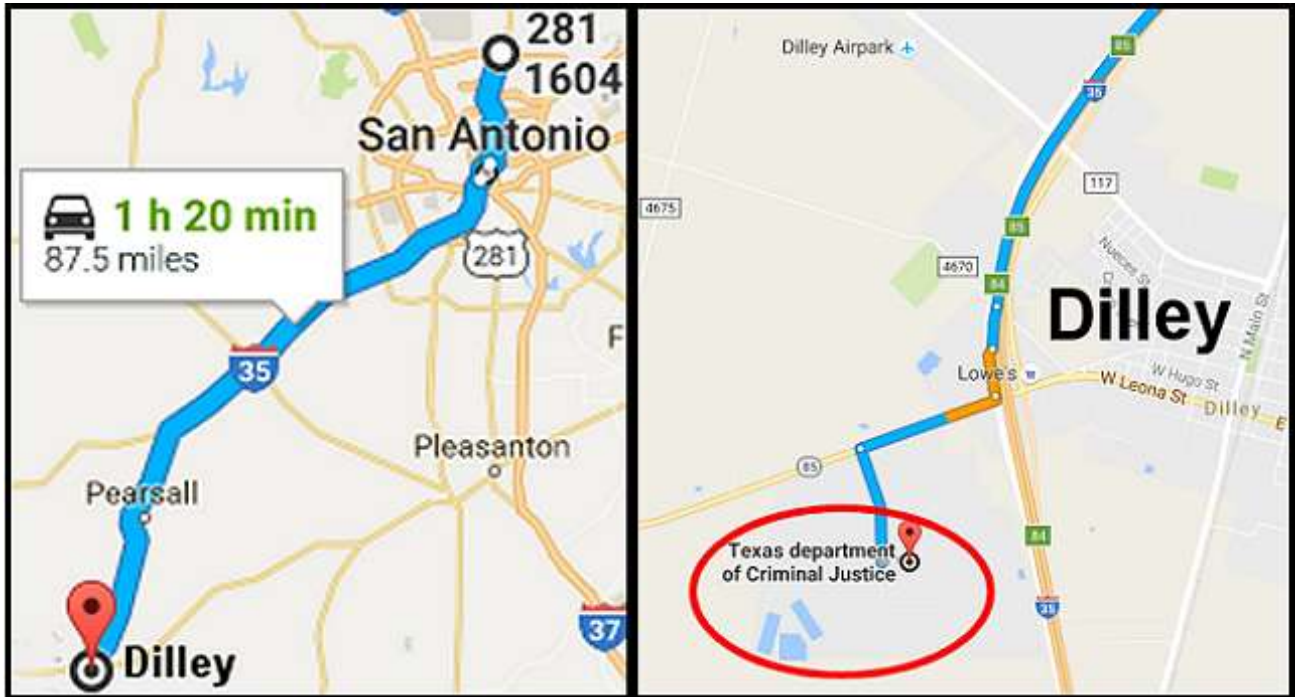
- TDCJ Volunteer Service Program: <http://tinyurl.com/hzbkaq5>
- TDCJ Volunteer Handbook: <http://tinyurl.com/gvhp288>
- TDCJ Volunteer Application: <http://tinyurl.com/zb7kq7z>
- TDCJ Volunteer Training/Orientation Schedule: <http://tinyurl.com/je3mxhx>
- TDCJ General FAQ: <http://tinyurl.com/d3ozhgh>

- **Where can I get more info on the Kolbe Prison Ministries?**

Visit KPM on the web at www.kolbepisonministries.com and/or talk with any of the retreat leaders listed on the first page.

Map of route from San Antonio to Dilley

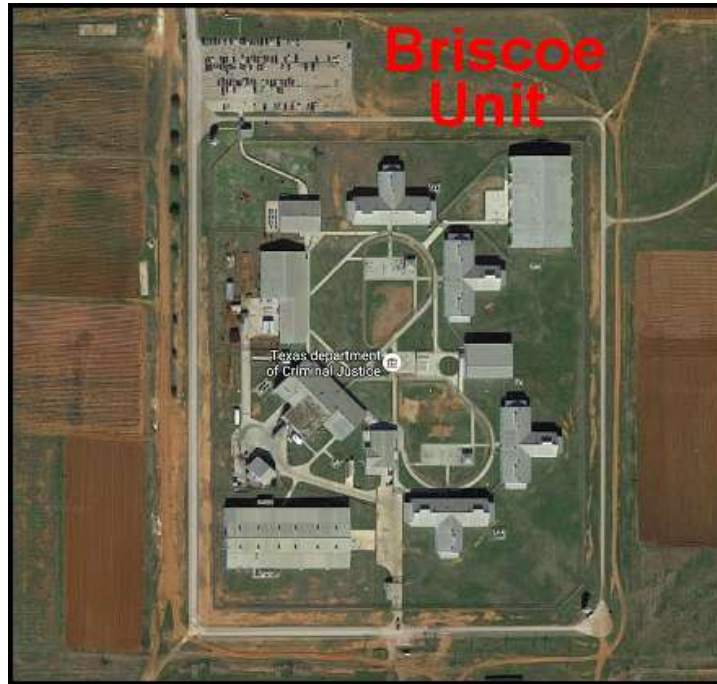
Location of Briscoe Unit in Dilley



View of entrance road into Briscoe Unit (off of Hwy 85)



Aerial view of entire Briscoe Unit



Aerial view of parking lot and main entrance for Briscoe Unit



Location of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Dilley



Photo of St. Joseph’s and entrance to Meeting Room Building (behind Church)





Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Brad Livingston
Executive Director

Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers

Dear Special Volunteer:

Welcome to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) volunteer program! Prior to service as a special volunteer with the TDCJ, you are required to read and become familiar with the following rules of conduct. These rules are not inclusive of all TDCJ policies, but will help ensure the safety and security of facility operations as well as the welfare of our volunteers, staff and offenders. Professional behavior and good common sense are essential to your participation. Because you have requested to participate in a system that promotes positive change in offender behavior, you are encouraged and expected to demonstrate integrity in everything you do. We hope that your experience is very rewarding.

RULES OF CONDUCT:

- You cannot perform volunteer services on a facility where a relative, friend, victim or enemy is incarcerated or where an offender is assigned whose victim is your friend or relative.
- You or a representative from your group must submit a list of items you intend to bring into the facility to the facility administrator for approval prior to the event. Electronic musical devices (including PA systems/components) are allowed as well as lap top computers that are without broadband capability.
- The TDCJ has a zero tolerance policy for all contraband (cell phones, alcohol, tobacco products, narcotics or any other item prohibited or not approved). Do not bring more than \$25.00 in to the facility. All individuals entering a secure facility are subject to pat-down searches. Anyone found in possession of a prohibited item(s) will be referred for prosecution.
- Firearms, or other instruments designed/used as a dangerous weapon or having explosive substance, are not allowed on the TDCJ property. The exception is for those persons licensed to carry a handgun under Chapter 411, Subchapter H of the Texas Government Code to possess a handgun on the TDCJ property if the *un*-loaded gun is secured in the locked trunk of a vehicle, or locked compartment if the vehicle does not have a trunk, prior to entering the TDCJ property.
- You must be dressed in a manner appropriate for the occasion and service. Do not wear provocative/suggestive clothing or any attire that is of extreme design, revealing in nature, or any attire or haircut style that conveys messages of a derogatory or offensive nature through language, logos or symbols or jewelry on the facial area. Keep accessories simple and avoid wearing expensive jewelry. Wearing all white clothing on a secure facility is prohibited.
- Cold weather clothing, such as coats, gloves, scarves, hats, and boots shall be secured as determined by facility/department staff. Do not leave clothing or any other personal items unattended.
- If you have a prescription and/or non-prescription drug that you must take during your visit, you must provide a written statement to the appropriate staff beforehand indicating the name of the drug and prescribing health care provider and the possible side effects. You may only carry into the facility the amount needed during your visit and it must be in the original container.

Our mission is to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behavior, reintegrate offenders into society, and assist victims of crime.

Appendix I
March 2013

P.O. Box 99
Huntsville, Texas 77342-0099
936-437-3026
www.tdcj.state.tx.us

Letter of Orientation for Special Volunteers, continued

- All special volunteers/volunteer groups are under the direct oversight of the appropriate staff. You must stay with your group during your visit. Volunteers do not supervise offenders.
- Do not mail any items, correspondence, etc. for offenders. Do not carry messages from offender to offender or to the offender's family members.
- Do not give money to an offender or his family, either directly or indirectly. Do not deposit money into an offender's trust fund account.
- Do not accept personal gifts from or give personal gifts to offenders.
- Refer all offender requests to the department/division volunteer staff and/or facility/office staff.
- You are required to report (immediately) any misconduct that you witness or any information that is revealed to you by an offender that is criminal in nature.
- Do not disparage the faith of any offender, nor deliberately seek to influence a change in any offender's denomination. Religious programs will not be used to proselytize from any group.
- The TDCJ has a zero tolerance policy for sexual misconduct. Individuals who violate the rights of an offender or engage in sexual misconduct will be referred for prosecution. A volunteer with knowledge of any misconduct, either by personal detection or being confided in by an offender, shall be required to report the misconduct immediately.
- In the event you are taken hostage, the department will not bargain for your release. Also, the TDCJ will not be held liable and/or responsible in the case of personal injuries while you are on the facility.
- In the event that you are sued as a result of performing services, the State of Texas will not indemnify you and will not provide a defense to such litigation.
- Uniformed officers' orders are to be obeyed at all times. They are trained to protect and insure the safety of all individuals (visitors, staff and offenders) on the facility.
- Information gathered and maintained by the TDCJ in connection with the supervision of offenders is confidential and privileged by statute, and shall not be disclosed to anyone other than those persons entitled to receive such information under Texas law.
- Some information related to substance abuse treatment is further made confidential by federal law, and may not be disclosed to anyone except as provided by that law.
- You may not communicate business of the TDCJ to the media without prior approval.

If you have any question or concern regarding policy and procedure or if a situation arises about which you are in doubt, **ASK BEFORE YOU ACT!**

Thank you for your interest and participation in the TDCJ volunteer program. The investment of your time is a generous contribution. It provides valuable interaction between the criminal justice system and the community and is a key element in the rehabilitation process. Should you be interested in becoming an approved volunteer, you can find the volunteer application on-line at www.tdcj.state.tx.us. Go to Quick Links and click on the Volunteer Services Program. Please note that as a special volunteer you are allowed no more than four visits/events system-wide.

Sincerely,

Stacie Woods

Stacie Woods
Director of Volunteer Services
Rehabilitation Programs Division

Appendix I
March 2013