

# Kolbe Prison Ministries ANNUAL REPORT 2024



*No one in the world can change Truth. What we can do and  
should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it.  
St. Maximillian Kolbe*

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WWW.KOLBEPRISONMINISTRIES.ORG**

### **Prisoner's Intercessory Prayer to St. Maximillian Kolbe**

Introduce me to Mary, the Immaculata, Mother of God.  
She prayed for Jesus in a Jerusalem jail.  
She prayed for you in a Nazi prison camp.  
Ask her to comfort me in my confinement. May she teach  
me always to be good.

If I am lonely, may she say, "God is here."  
If I feel hate, may she say, "God is love."  
If I am tempted, may she say, "God is pure."  
If I sin, may she say, "God is mercy."  
If I am in darkness, may she say, "God is light."  
If I am unjustly condemned, may she say, "God is truth."  
If I have pain in soul or body, may she say, "God is peace."  
If I lose hope, may she say: "God is with you all days, and  
so am I."

Amen.



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What man among you,  
if he has a hundred sheep  
and has lost one of them,  
does not leave the *other* ninety-nine.  
in the open pasture  
*and go after the one that is lost,*  
until he finds it?  
And when he found it,  
he puts it on his shoulders,  
***rejoicing.***

Luke 15:4-5

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

January 2025

Dear Friends of Kolbe Prison Ministries,

On behalf of Kolbe Prison Ministries (KPM) and our Board of Directors, I would like to thank our most merciful Savior Jesus, our Blessed Mother, our Core Teams, clergy, volunteers, donors, and those who faithfully pray for and advocate for our ministry. Our all-volunteer team continues to answer Jesus' call where He said in Matthew 25:36: "I was in prison, and you visited me." We will persevere in spreading our wings to new states, to new prisons and to reach many more of the incarcerated for Christ. I am happy to recap our 2024 activities and share some highlights with you.

## ***Strategic Highlights***

As you might be aware, we are reaching out and growing! As noted in our annual report last year, the KPM Board of Directors restructured a mostly homogenous board into five separate working committees in order to assign and clarify responsibilities and better focus Board member and volunteer activities toward accomplishing our mission. The committees created included: Governance, Core Teams, Missions, Formation, and Communications and Development. If you have a skill and/or have experience that could support one or more of these committees, we encourage you to consider reaching out to the KPM Board using the "Contact Us" form on the KPM website at [kolbeprisonministries.org](http://kolbeprisonministries.org).

The KPM Board of Directors developed and implemented a comprehensive 3-year Strategic Plan for 2025-2027. This blueprint is designed to manage our growth into new states, assist us in being good stewards of our financial and material resources, maintain a mission-driven vision, and plan for the future. The annual 2025 budget, derived from the Strategic Plan, will provide financial information needed to prepare and submit more grant applications in 2025. KPM received approval for a U.S. trademark on the name of the organization as Kolbe Prison Ministries. In addition to the logo copyright held by KPM, this will enable us to protect our organization and our many proprietary operations and guidance materials.

## ***Financial Highlights***

We were blessed in 2024 with significant grants from the Adult Catechetical Teaching Aids (ACTA) Foundation and the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma. Also noteworthy was the financial support from other individuals, family foundations and organizations, including the Knights of Columbus. These grants and donations will enable us to purchase bibles, catechisms, and many other educational publications. Additional expenditures occurred on equipment inventory and supplies needed by new Mission Core Teams. The KPM Board has decided that the organization needs to increase support, as well as financially and materially assist, new Mission Core Teams. This level of support will make it important to ramp up fundraising efforts for 2025 and beyond.

## ***Operating Highlights***

The Galveston-Houston North Core Team and volunteers from the North Houston area took a leadership role for our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, held in July 2024 at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in The Woodlands, Texas. This conference was made extra special by having a





unique opportunity to view and venerate over 60 amazing saint relics in the adjoining Our Lady of the Angels chapel. Photos and videos from this Conference can be viewed at the KPM website.

Also in the Houston area, a special retreat was held at the Ferguson Unit where the retreat was simulcasted to inmates in administrative segregation (“ad seg” or solitary confinement). This was probably the first time in any U.S. prison where a spiritual activity has been performed in parallel with general population and ad seg inmates. The KPM retreat team at the Ferguson Unit included **Jeff Cavins and Fr. Mitch Pacwa**.

In 2024, we held our first mission retreats in the states of Oklahoma and Kansas. The Oklahoma men’s mission retreat was held in February 2024 at the Great Plains Correctional Center, located about an hour west of Oklahoma City. The volunteers and inmate retreatants were especially blessed as **Archbishop Paul Coakley** of the Oklahoma City Archdiocese presided over a Mass at the retreat.

We have also had great interest from Catholic bishops and other leaders to expand KPM retreat and formation activities in other locales especially across the northern half of Florida. We expect multiple mission retreats to take place in Florida in 2025. In this report, we share impressive statistics regarding the impact of our 2024 retreats. Photos from these retreats can be viewed on KPM’s website. You can also learn more about these mission retreats and other 2024 activities by viewing several Diocesan and other Catholic Media news articles linked on the KPM website. Finally, we cordially invite you to join us for our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at the Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 26th, 2025. Go to our website [kolbeprisonministries.org](http://kolbeprisonministries.org) for details.

Respectfully yours in Christ,



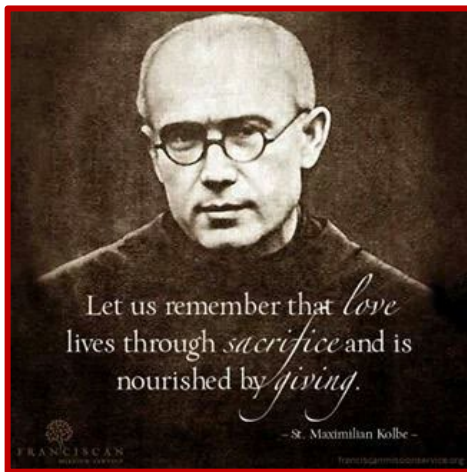
Kerry Johnston  
President  
Kolbe Prison Ministries



## BOARD of DIRECTORS

Kerry Johnston, (President)  
 Daniel Reyes, John Panariello,  
 Dr. Don Duplan, Fr. Tom Edelen,  
 Dcn. Adrian Cepeda, Kathleen McDonald Tong,  
 John Errante, Keven Birck, Jimmy Reno,  
 Jim Murphy, Jerry Krimbill, Andy Cash,  
 Lisa Lambert, Val Browning, Gerald Villaver.

*Retirements:* Larry Reeh, Gerald Gaenslen,  
 Jeremy Itz, Hermes Silva.



### KPM Committee Members

- **Governance**
  - Kerry Johnston
  - Jerry Krimbill
- **Mission**
  - John Panariello,
  - Val Browning
  - Andy Cash
  - Gerald Gaenslen
  - Jeremy Itz
  - Kerry Johnston
  - Lisa Lambert
  - Daniel Reyes
- **Core Team**
  - Daniel Reyes
  - Val Browning
  - Dr. Don Duplan
  - John Panariello
  - Larry Reeh
- **Communication & Development**
  - Kerry Johnston
  - Brooke Dodd
  - Fr. Tom Edelen
  - Jeremy Itz
  - Jim Murphy
  - Jimmy Reno
  - Richard Reyna
  - Kathleen McDonald Tong
  - Gerald Villaver
- **Formation**
  - Kathleen McDonald Tong
  - Dcn. Alvin Lovelady
  - Brynne Cook
  - Dr. Don Duplan
  - Fr. Tom Edelen
  - John Errante
  - Jorge Lavastida
  - Dcn. Alan Mikell
- **Resource Management (new)**
  - Jim Murphy
  - Jerry Zeller
  - Joe Shea

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

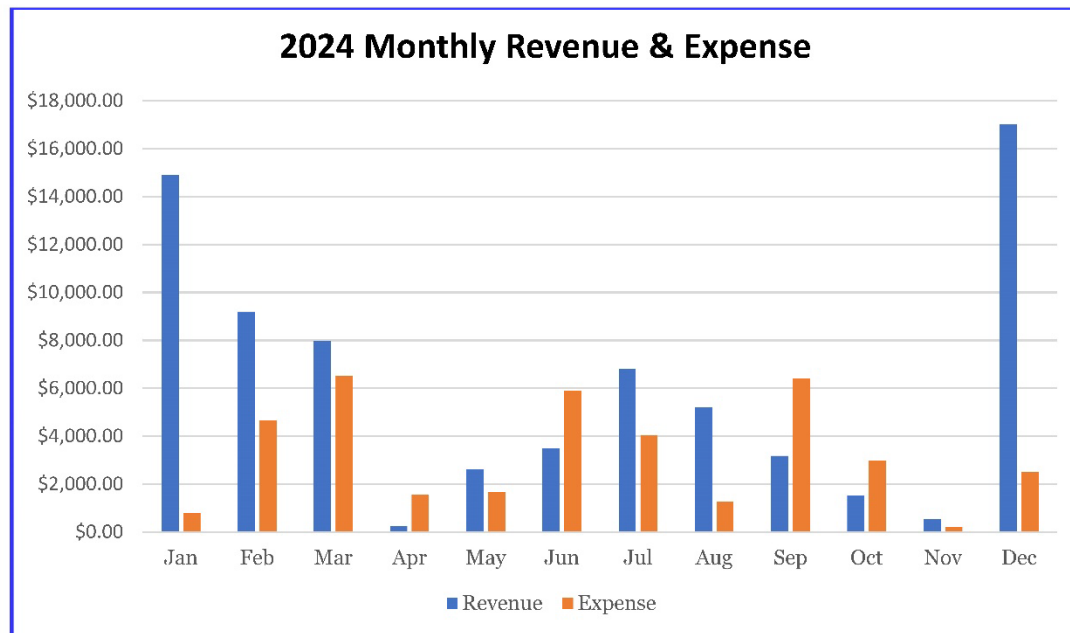
The Kolbe Prison Ministries' Board of Directors establishes procedures and govern operations for the overall ministry. However, from a financial perspective, operations are managed independently by the Board and 18 active Core Teams in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Oklahoma and Kansas. The data included in this section of the Annual Report pertains only to the Board's financial activity for 2024.

From a tax reporting standpoint, 11 of the Core Teams operate under the Board's federal tax identification number. Each of these 11 Core Teams provide a financial summary at the end of each year to the Board's treasurer for inclusion in the corporation's annual tax form. The other Core Teams direct report through their (arch) diocese.

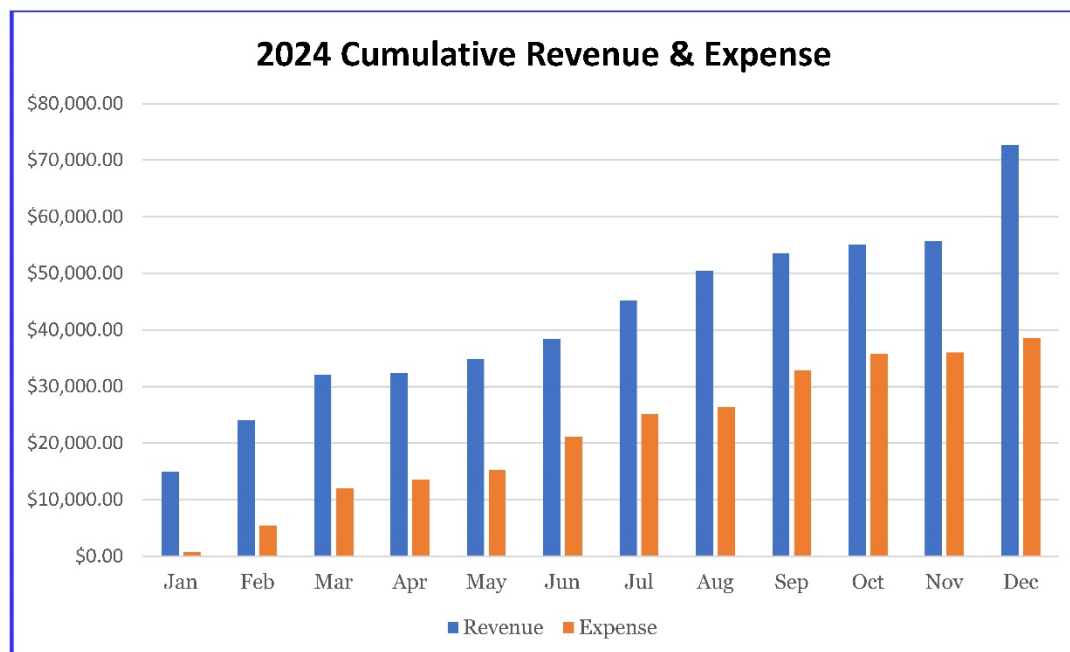
The 2024 financials for the Board (excluding Core Team reporting) are summarized below. For the 12-month period ending 12/31/2024, we had an income of **\$72,684.14** and expenses of **\$38,525.43**, which generated a net gain of **\$34,158.71** for the year. Our total investment balance as of 12/31/2024 was Checking and Savings **\$66,715.39**, inventory **\$21,050.05**, receivables, **\$3,969.45**, furniture and equipment **\$10,390.00** and accumulated depreciation, **\$7,960.80** making net fixed assets **\$2,429.20**, reflecting a total investment of **\$94,164.09**.



Figure 1 below depicts our revenue and expenses on a monthly basis, and Figure 2 shows our cumulative revenue and expenses throughout the year.



**Figure 1: 2024 Monthly Revenue & Expense**



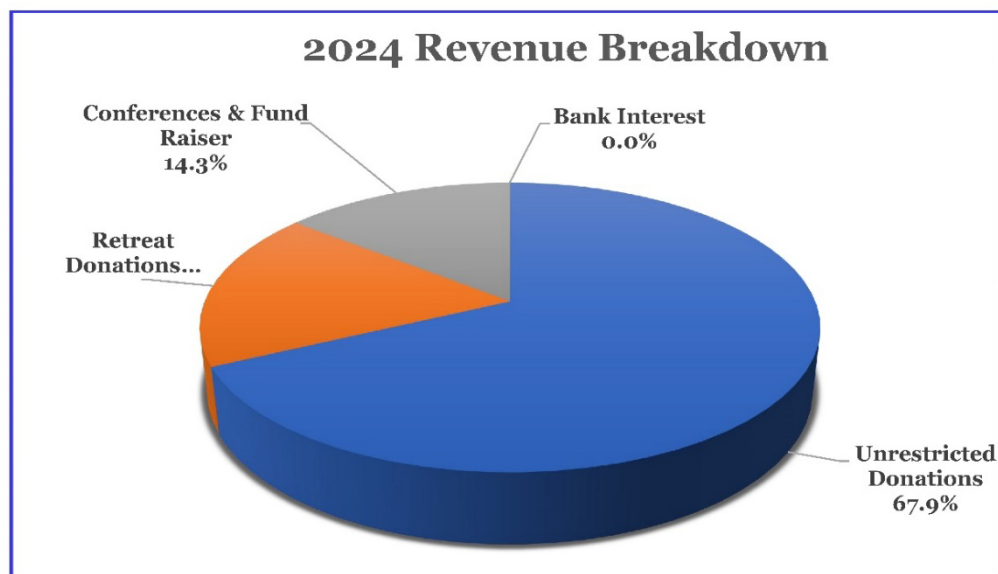
**Figure 2: 2024 Cumulative Revenue & Expense**



Table 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 provide a breakdown of revenue sources in 2024.

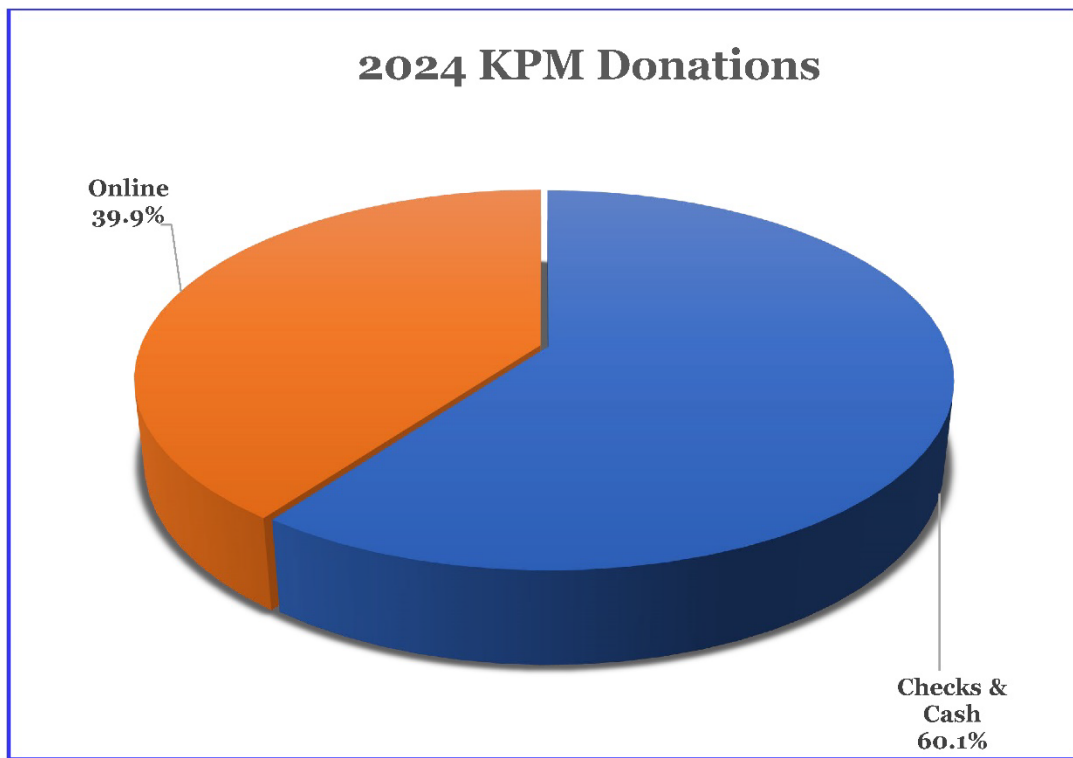
**Table 1: 2024 Revenue Breakdown**

Revenue	Amount
General Donations (unrestricted)	\$49,347
Retreat Donations	\$12,957
Conferences & Fundraiser	\$10,374
Bank Interest	\$5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$72,683</b>



**Figure 3: 2024 Revenue Breakdown**





**Figure 4: 2024 KPM Donations**

Table 3, Figure 5, and Figure 6 provide a breakdown of expenses in 2024.

**Table 2: 2024 Expense Breakdown**

Expense	Amount
Conferences	\$5,174
Retreats	\$20,360
OCIA	\$4,355
G&A	\$8,637
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,525</b>

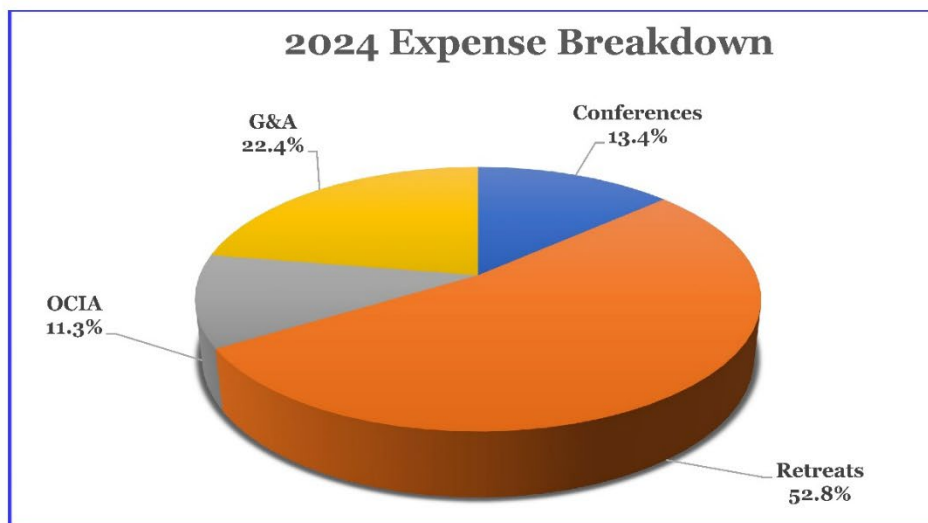


Figure 5: 2024 Expense Breakdown

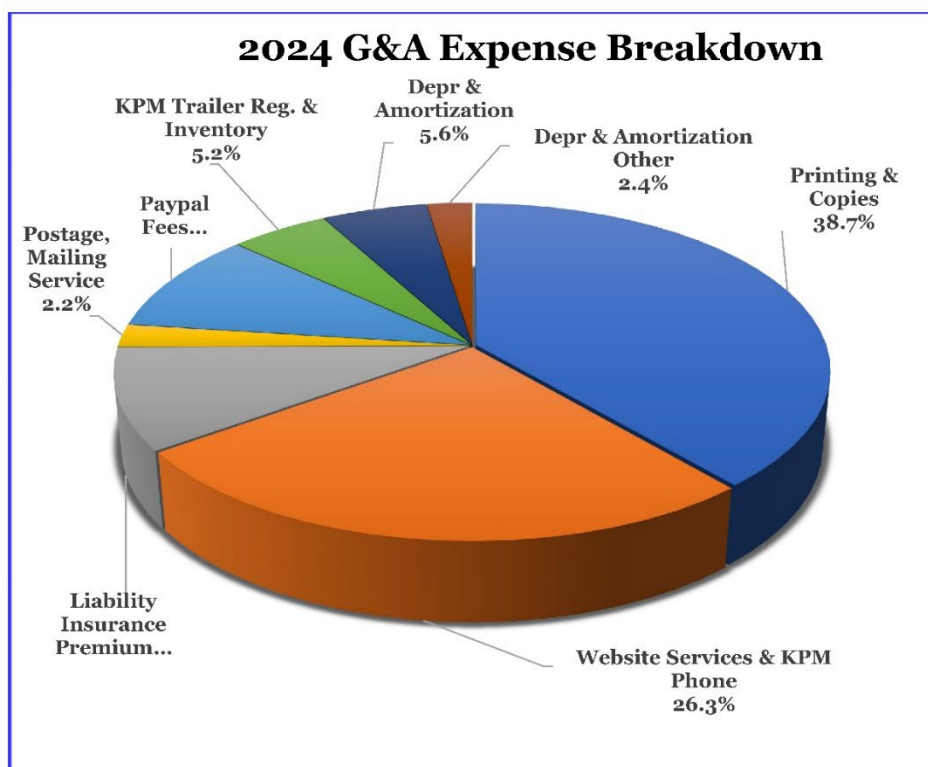


Figure 6: 2024 G&A Expense Breakdown



The 2024 KPM Balance Sheet is included in Figure 7 and the Income Statement is included in Figure 8.

# KPM Balance Sheet

## (2019-2024)

Incorporated October 27, 2015

		12/31/2024	12/31/2023	12/31/2022	12/31/2021	12/31/2020	12/31/2019
<b>ASSETS</b>							
Cash-Checking Operating		19,150.97	8,117.07	13,454.54	8,023.63	23,675.41	21,690.96
Savings Operating		47,563.25	28,558.27	30,506.57	31,100.83	12,559.01	15,037.89
CD Operating		-	-	-	4,039.50	4,031.70	-
Petty Cash		-	-	-	-	-	-
Accounts Receivable		3,969.45	-	-	-	-	-
Inventory: Sales Items		-	-	-	- a	465.00	465.00
Inventory: OCIA Supplies		-	-	-	- a	5,136.37	5,136.37
Inventory: Retreat Supplies		-	-	-	- a	146.81	146.81
Inventory: AP Bible Study Materials		21,050.05 d	20,275.80 d	205,960.64 d	- a	146.81	146.81
Fixed Assets	MACRS (yrs) Salvage Value						
Trailer:	6 \$ 1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,765.33	2,530.66	3,296.00
Tables:	10 \$ -	1,179.20	1,534.00	1,888.80	2,243.60	2,598.40 b	2,953.20
Durable goods:	10 \$ -	250.00	375.00	500.00	625.00	750.00	875.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>94,162.92</b>	<b>59,860.14</b>	<b>253,310.55</b>	<b>47,797.89</b>	<b>52,040.17</b>	<b>49,748.04</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>							
Trust Funds							
Accounts Payable		145.24	279.97	6,000.00	-	- c	7,229.61
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>145.24</b>	<b>279.97</b>	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,229.61</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>							
General		94,017.68	59,580.17	247,310.55	47,797.89	52,040.17	42,518.43

KPM operates on a cash basis

- a - Inventory supplies were disbursed during the July 2021 KPM conference and December 2021 Price Daniel Retreat
- b - In 2018, 12 additional tables purchased at cost of: \$2,348.00
- c - All earmarked funds disbursed in 2020 per KPM Board decision
- d - Balance of 2022 Ascension Press property donations, which consisted of \$335,330 Bible Timeline Study materials (2/17/22) and \$2,600 Bible Tabs (8/26/22)

04/14/2025

**Figure 7: Balance Sheet**



**KPM Income Statement**  
(2019-2024)



Incorporated October 27, 2015

	12/31/2024	12/31/2023	12/31/2022	12/31/2021	12/31/2020	12/31/2019
<b>Revenue</b>						
Retreat Collections	12,956.81	11,085.12	4,000.00	1,700.00	1,740.92	10,090.00 a
Donations	49,347.07	21,813.08	18,107.85 a	12,893.70	13,322.79	17,137.00
Conference	10,374.11					
Interest	4.98	51.70	48.13	57.75	69.91	50.50
Sales (Shirts, Patches, Decals, etc)	-	1,198.01	-	-	276.00	8,413.42
Fundraiser	-	168.94	209.44	247.35	141.17	138.99
	<u>72,682.97</u>	<u>34,316.85</u>	<u>22,365.42</u>	<u>14,898.80</u>	<u>15,550.79</u>	<u>35,829.91</u>
<b>Expense</b>						
General & Administrative	8,157.32	16,686.63	12,206.31	10,447.18	1,648.71	1,514.19
Retreat Supplies	20,359.46	14,955.55	4,939.58	1,497.73	1,530.08	4,596.15
Conference	5,173.54					
OCIA Supplies	4,355.31	6,887.20	4,422.38	56.05	8,216.73	6,265.45
Cost of Goods Sold	-	1,066.00	-	-	618.00	9,916.75
Depreciation Expense	479.80	1,724.93	1,245.13	1,245.13	1,245.13	1,245.13 b
	<u>38,525.43</u>	<u>41,320.31</u>	<u>22,813.40</u>	<u>13,246.09</u>	<u>13,258.65</u>	<u>23,537.67</u>

**Notes**

Sales Net:	-	132.01	-	-	(342.00)	(1,503.33)
Retreat Net:	(7,402.65)	(3,870.43)	(939.58)	202.27	210.84	5,493.85

KPM operates on a cash basis

a - Portion of revenue earmarked for future retreats: \$6,000.00 in 2022; \$3,600.00 in 2019; \$3,168.11 in 2018; \$3,100.00 in 2017

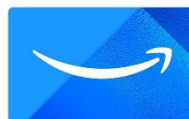
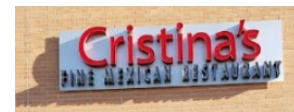
b - In 2018, 12 additional tables purchased at cost of: \$2,348.00

04/14/2025

**Figure 8: Income Statement**

## Corporate Donors

We are grateful for all of our donors, both corporations, Knights of Columbus Councils, as well as those donating food and other supplies. Our donors provide continual financial, material, and/or advocacy support making it possible to minister to the incarcerated. Due to the nature of the ministry and the desired privacy of our donors, most prefer to remain anonymous and protect their personal information. KPM is blessed with many contributors who supply materials for catechesis, literature, the OCIA process, and food for our retreats and special programs. KPM recognizes the generosity of those who sustain the ministry behind the walls:



The Ware Foundation – Amarillo National Banks

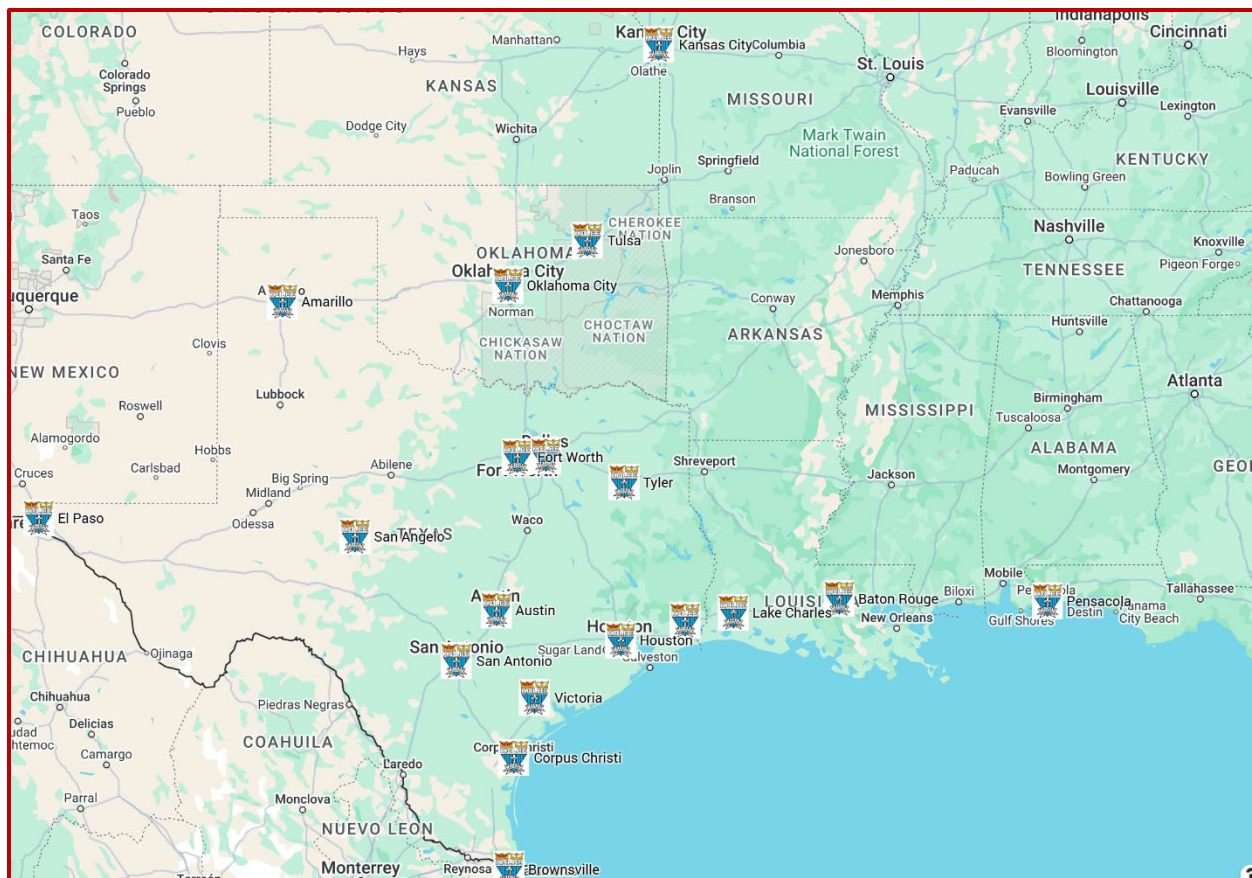


## Donors of Merit

Knights of Columbus Councils Texas, Kansas, Louisiana	Catholic Daughters of America St Peter the Apostle, Court 2690, Boerne, TX
Henry Uriegas San Antonio, TX	Charlie Mireur Houston, TX
Morningstar Storage – Boerne, TX	KPM South Catholic Daughter Diocese Service Fund (Curtis Bagwell) Houston, TX
Kiwanis Club of Dumas, TX	Etienne Beaulieu Chapel Hill, TX
Heavy's BBQ Hondo, TX	Mayetta Ladies of Topeka, KS
Eddie's Taco House San Antonio, TX	St. Therese Catholic Church, Port Acres, TX
Longhorn Hamburgers, San Antonio, TX	St. Henry Catholic Church. Bridge City, TX
Mama Margie's San Antonio, TX	St. Anne's Catholic Church, Beaumont, TX
Paul Vance San Antonio, TX	Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Lenexa, KS
Nguyet Ngo Richmond, TX	Most Blessed Sacrament Church, Baton Rouge, LA
Mary Brentnall Boerne, TX	St. George Catholic Church, Baton Rouge, LA
Mission Council – St Peter the Apostle Boerne, TX	St. Mark's Catholic Church Women's Guild – San Antonio, TX
Whitefield Family Fund- Houston, TX	Best Bakery Houston, TX
Jon K. Holcomb (Kip) Crockett, TX	Foundation for Adult Catechetical
Timothy Roberts Traverse City, MI	Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma
Roman Catholic Diocese of Tulsa	Chuck Jansen – Overland Park, KS
Patrick Webber Austin, Texas	Gerald Gaenslen San Antonio TX



## Core Team Reports

**Core Team Locations****2024 RETREAT STATISTICS**

Retreats	61
Retreatants	3,257
Volunteers	1,569
Meals Served	25,699
Volunteer Miles Traveled	188,280
Volunteer Hours	62,760







**Amarillo** – The Kolbe Prison Ministries team for the Diocese of Amarillo, TX kept a full schedule in 2024. We held retreats at five units in the Texas Panhandle under the Diocese of Amarillo. We

kicked off the year with a Reunion/Gathering at the Clements Unit on Saturday January 13. We held our fifth retreat at the Dalhart Unit in Dalhart, TX February 8-10. The Dalhart team then held a Reunion/Gathering at the Dalhart Unit on Saturday April 20th. We held retreat # 4 at the Jordan Unit in Pampa TX June 20-22. The team went to the Clements Unit in Amarillo, TX and held retreat # 8 on August 8-10, on Saturday August 17th the team held a Reunion/Gathering at the Jordan Unit in Pampa, TX.

We held the first KPM retreat at the Mechler Unit in Tulia, TX on September 13-14. On October 5, the team held the Reunion/Gathering at the Clements Unit in Amarillo, TX. The team went back to the Mechler Unit in Tulia, TX for our first Reunion/Gathering and celebrated with a talk and reflection for All Saints and All Souls Day. On November 14-16th the team held retreat # 5 at the Roach Unit in Childress, TX.

*We had one of our very special KPM volunteers who passed away on August 17, our Beloved **Deacon Andy Gonzalez**. He was a very key member of our core team, and was with us from the time we started the KPM retreats in the Amarillo Diocese. His love for the men he visited in the units and with the men who served with him was something very special that only Dcn. Andy could give. His love and passion for music brought so much joy, inspiration, and peace to during the retreats and our team meetings, he truly was a servant to all, and we miss him dearly.*



We recruited three new core team members in October and assigned leader positions. Over the year we were able to add to our core volunteer team, so we now have approx. fifty-six regular attending volunteers. For 2025, we have already planned for retreats in five units, along with gatherings/reunions in each of the units. We have various members of our Core Team and Ministry Team who go into the units to help lead OCIA, Bible Study and other faith and worship events throughout the year.

We are very blessed with a strong volunteer base, who love ministering to our brothers in white by showing them the love of Christ, and by sharing the message of the Gospel.



**Austin** – The San Saba unit has undergone quite a lot of change in the 18 months since being converted to a men's long-term unit. Though it still retains the name "Transfer Unit," the men imprisoned there are a more stable population than the women were previously. This has been both a help and a challenge to the ministry there. Due to the change from women to men, our team now is also all men, with our former women colleagues praying for us from home on our Tuesday evening visits. The long-term nature of the unit, however, has given the chaplain, Anderson Barkley, the opportunity to work to form the Catholic inmates into a true Catholic community within the walls, and he has enlisted our help



in this by asking us to focus our teaching ministry on matters of discipleship, community, and growth in holiness of life, both as a preparation for eventual release and while living inside.

Of tremendous help has been the assignment of a priest to attend our weekly sessions, to hear confessions and celebrate Mass for the men. This has helped them greatly and will bear fruit later in 2025 if we are able to schedule a Kolbe retreat at the unit.

Scheduling a retreat has been difficult due to the lack of a unit warden. Once a warden is in place, the chaplain and our team will meet with him to schedule a retreat for later this year, hopefully in the Fall.



**Baton Rouge** – We began with Core team formation in April of 2024. It was an all-out effort over a few months. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, it would have been impossible. God sent so many great volunteers

to help. The support of Danny Reyes and Bud Darbonne from Lake Charles and as well as the LC Core Team were important for our first men's retreat at Hunt Correctional Center, which was a huge success. That first retreat gave the KPM volunteers in Baton Rouge (BR) confidence to go forward with future retreats on their own.

Before the first men's retreat, we were able to get almost 130 men and 40 women to ask to be part of the KPM BR distribution list. The distribution list has since grown to 180 men and 61 women. For our first men's retreat we had 24 men from The Diocese of Baton Rouge, representing 8 church parishes. We had meals donated from local men's clubs or KC councils for the retreats and volunteers from the ACTS community provided baked goods. After the retreat, we had 3 retreatants get baptized and 7 get confirmed into the church.



After the men's retreat, we conducted a capital campaign and raised over \$30,000 to purchase a trailer and supplies to conduct the retreats. Additionally, we added 4 more people to the core team.

We then conducted our second men's retreat at the end of September, which was just as successful as the first one. For



this retreat, we had 48 retreatants, 18 inside team members and 42 outside team members, with 36 of them from the Diocese of Baton Rouge. After the retreat, two inside team members were confirmed into the church.

In the later part of 2024, a women's team was formed with 22 ladies from the Diocese of Baton Rouge and 24 ladies from the Diocese of Lake Charles. They will hold the third women's retreat at Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) in 2025, which will be the first women's retreat for the Baton Rouge Core Team, as the previous two retreats were done under the Lake Charles Core Team.

Additionally, KPM Baton Rouge sponsored the Catholic Christmas Party at Hunt and provided hygiene supplies to inmates at both Hunt and LCIW. We also secured a catholic bible study program for the ladies at LCIW through a donation from Ascension Press. Also, KPM has



been made part of the Diocese Prison Ministry Quarterly Chaplains Meeting, where we give updates on what KPM is doing.

We also supported the Frederick Douglas Project, which is run by the Louisiana Parole Project. As part of this program, people can visit a correctional facility and visit with inmates in hopes that it will change their view of the criminal justice system.

Finally, KPM brothers helped a local priest with a small parish do a fund raiser for his parish after he helped with Masses at the last KPM retreat.



**Beaumont** – The Diocese of Beaumont Kolbe Prison Ministries currently has about 300 active members. In 2024, we had 4 men's retreats and one women's retreat. The weekly Renew at Stiles and the monthly Renewals at Gib Lewis and Polunsky continue to keep the flame of the spirit alive for the brothers in white. Attendance has steadily increased especially after retreats, with 80-120 men joining faithfully each week/month. Once a month, Stiles celebrates with popcorn night at Renew.

Many of the KPM brothers participated in the Christ in You men's conference in the diocese. The women also have a Christ in You conference with some of our KPM sisters attending. The conference is a day of renewal, speakers, and worship across the diocese. It has become a large annual gathering.

**Bishop Toups** has been very supportive of our incarcerated brothers and sisters. He had a part in the movie, **Jesus Thirsts**, highlighting the men at the Stiles Unit and how the Eucharist has brought them such peace. He frequently celebrates Mass at the units.

In April 2024, **Fr. Ron Foshage** received the Restorative Justice Award from TDCJ at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards ceremony in Austin, TX. **Fr. Ron** has served at the Goodman and Gib Lewis Units since 2004 by celebrating weekly Masses at both units, all while managing 2 parishes and 3 mission parishes. He is active in the Woodville and Jasper communities, bringing healing and presence in tough times. We will miss him as he retires this coming summer. He leaves some big shoes to fill in that community as well as at the two prison units. We are so grateful for his 20+ years of faithful service to the incarcerated.

We welcomed 12 new Catholics into our faith through the OCIA program with several more preparing to receive sacraments this coming Easter season. We want to extend a heartfelt Thank You to Peter Peltier who leads OCIA in Woodville at Gib Lewis and to **Deacon Steve Sellers** who facilitated at both Stiles in Beaumont and Polunsky in Livingston. We now have an OCIA team at the Stiles Unit that has worked well in facilitating the sessions. Outreach continues with our 300 active volunteers to help with these programs. These two men are resolute and willing to be involved in this ministry. We currently use a combination of Invitation by Paulist Press and the Catholic Faith, Life, and Creed by Mary Birmingham. Lessons are coordinated with these two programs to allow the catechists to use DVDs and Symbolon as needed to support the lessons.

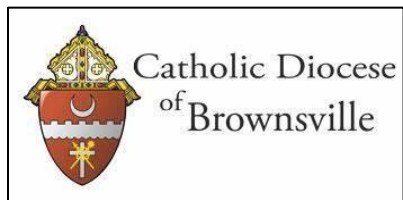
In March, the Criminal Justice Office collected hygiene supplies for the indigent offenders at our units. Many of these supplies go to those units with a KPM community. Hygiene supplies as well as parole clothing are collected throughout the year as diverse groups have a service project that is distributed to the units in need. This has become a well-known project throughout the diocese, parishes, schools, and religious education classes.

We are grateful for the outpouring of God's love to the men and women that we serve. The Diocese is blessed to have so many faithful priests and deacons who so willingly serve our brothers





and sisters. In spite of their parish commitments and needs, they find time to offer the sacraments to the incarcerated. This ministry couldn't do this without their dedicated service! We continue to invite new volunteers into our fold and look forward to how the Spirit will move us in 2025.



**Brownsville** – We held a Kolbe Prison Ministry retreat at Segovia Unit in Edinburg, Texas in October. We had 28 retreaters and 5 inside inmates. Additional retreats are scheduled for the Lopez Unit and Segovia Unit in 2025. We are blessed with some deacons in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of formation that are supporting our efforts in these units. The Lopez Unit prays for the Holy

Rosary on Wednesday and holds a prayer service and mediation of the Sunday readings each Sunday. Our chaplain and priest, our supporter, **Fr. George Gonzalez**. He has been ill and unable to be active in retreats or in the unit. We continue to pray for his recovery. Two priests assisted with the Lopez Unit retreat in March. We thank **Fr. Patrick Seitz and Fr. Jose Garza Hernandez**.



**Corpus Christi** – Two KPM retreats were scheduled in the Diocese of Corpus Christi. One took place at Garza West in November 2024 and the second was rescheduled from February 2025 to May 1-3, 2025, due to scheduling conflicts at the McConnell Unit. KPM reunions

were conducted at the McConnell Unit on a monthly basis. Coffee, sweets, and accessories are brought in for each reunion. Between 100-120 brothers who have previously attended a KPM retreat in the past join us. Only half of the dorms attend on an alternating monthly basis.

The Beeville Trustee Unit remains closed. There have been discussions about it reopening but at this time it remains closed.

Garza East, which had been closed, but opened back up for Catholic services in May of 2024. Unfortunately, Mass is only permitted once a month on the third Sunday because of insufficient staffing. However, we have only had Mass there twice. We are trying to change the days and hours in the hope that we can provide Mass more frequently now that they have their own chaplain.

Garza West had Mass almost every Sunday except during regular semiannual lockdowns. Mass is canceled frequently because of insufficient staffing. Volunteers provide OCIA classes on a weekly basis.



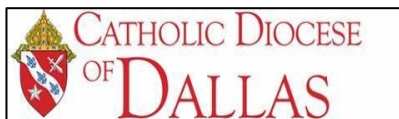
Glossbrenner Unit has weekly Mass and Catechism classes on a regular basis. Two deacons alternate classes at this unit.

McConnell Unit has weekly Mass except when on semiannual lockdowns. OCIA classes are conducted weekly by brothers in white and monitored by a deacon. The bishop celebrated Christmas Mass in December as he does every year. Confessions and Eucharistic sacraments are conducted in Ad Seg once a month.

Bibles, rosaries, prayer cards, information pamphlets and authorized items are sent in to all units as requested.







**Dallas** – The Dallas Kolbe Prison Ministries have been serving the imprisoned within the Diocese with KPM retreats, OCIA, weekly visitations and Mass since 2015. This coming year, *2025 marks the ten-year anniversary* since the formation

of Dallas Kolbe Prison Ministries, who have proclaimed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to those in prison.

We are grateful for the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit who together with Jesus Christ and our Father God Almighty have led our ministry these past ten years. The joy filled grace that is being imparted to our brothers-in-white as well as our KPM retreat team, priests, deacons, prayer partners, benefactors and prison staff have been a true blessing reaching beyond the restricted walls of the prisons we serve. We will not forget the good things God has done for us.

Below is a summary of 2024 Dallas Kolbe Prison Ministries (DKPM) retreats and activities:

- Hutchins Unit: weekly Mass support, OCIA and Visits, two retreats Dallas Diocese, one in June 2024, one in December 2024.
- Buster Cole Unit: one retreat Dallas Diocese, one in August 2024, weekly Mass support and OCIA Visits.
- Outside Dallas: volunteer support to Fort Worth Diocese, Bridgeport Unit, Oklahoma and Kansas, Rusk Unit in the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, and other units in Texas.
- KPM Annual National Conference: Attended by DKPM members at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, located in The Woodlands, Texas just north of Houston, Texas.
- The Hutchins & the Buster Cole Units are Texas State Jails operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).

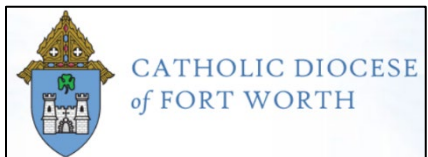
We experienced an increase in the total number of Dallas Kolbe Prison Ministries Volunteers. In addition, we were able to increase the number of brothers-in-white (inmates) served during our KPM retreats for the Hutchins and Buster Cole Units.

This year we have had overwhelming support from prayer partners across the Diocese of Dallas to fill all time slots. During the KPM retreat, we have added prayer intentions from retreatants and KPM Team Members written on post it notes and then placed onto the prayer board. The post it notes help us to make a visible prayer connection between the praying community and those on our KPM retreat.

We still have not been able to reach all TDCJ, Federal and County prisons within the Diocese of Dallas. We are evaluating and refocusing our future efforts on other prison units within the Diocese of Dallas yet to be served.

Costs to conduct our DKPM retreats have again increased during 2024 due to inflation and the growing number of retreatants and team members. These increases have been offset by several generous donations during the course of the year. And we are very grateful to our benefactors that have donated meals from local food establishments. During 2025 we will be looking for ways to streamline and reduce costs through greater efficiency.





**Fort Worth** – We currently serve one state prison MTC Bridgeport with 540 incarcerated men. We conducted 2 Kolbe retreats (Spanish in March and English in November) for 50 brothers in Christ as well as had 19 inside team brothers as well.

We donated 540 candy bars to the Bridgeport unit Christmas gift bags for all inmates. Our volunteers conduct English (Wednesday) and Spanish (Tuesday) OCIA classes and had 11 men receive confirmation after completing the classes.

Our volunteers conducted *Great Adventure Bible Timeline* classes English on Mondays and Spanish on Wednesdays, Apologetics course on Wednesday, Rosary class on Saturdays. We have weekly Rosary and confessions followed by Mass every Thursday.



**Galveston/Houston South/Houston Central** –

The St Rose of Lima GH-South team only conducted one retreat last year. It was held at the Memorial Unit which had not had a retreat since 2016. It was completely full and there was a reunion held a month later. The success of the retreat has led to further opportunities to serve at the unit. We will be

presenting a retreat at that unit later in January and are working on scheduling a retreat at the Jester III Unit later in 2025. We will start the Bible Timeline latter this year. We had to cancel the Jester III retreat in 2024, but it should be rescheduled for the summer of 2025. That unit has a highly active Catholic volunteer group.

**Galveston/Houston North** – In April 2024, a team of 40 KPM volunteers elevated their mission by hosting a KPM retreat in the chapel at the Jim Ferguson Unit in Midway, Texas, which houses over 2,000 men. These retreats have been incredibly successful at Ferguson, fostering a vibrant Catholic community of men committed to deepening their love for Christ and His Church. Given this success, why not extend the retreat to Ferguson's Administrative Segregation Unit? Often referred to as Ad Seg (aka solitary confinement), this unit houses men who, for myriad reasons, are kept separate from the general population, living in single cells for 23 hours a day, seven days a week.



This dream of including Ad Seg in a retreat was years in the making, but through God's generosity and the support of the Ferguson Unit administration, it became a reality. For the first time in Texas (or perhaps anywhere else in the nation), a normal retreat was held but was simultaneously live streamed to the men in Ad Seg, allowing them to take part. A number of large flat screen TVs were mounted in Ad Seg for the various inmates to watch. A dedicated subgroup of the KPM team focused on the Ad Seg unit, ensuring the men could fully immerse themselves in the retreat.

As a special blessing for the retreatants and KPM team this retreat included two team members already well known at Ferguson: **Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J. and Jeff Cavins**. Fr. Mitch's podcast '*Scripture and Tradition*' is an offering available to the men on their prison-issued tablets. **Jeff Cavins** is well known among the men for his Great Adventure Bible study program, which KPM has offered every Saturday morning since 2018. About two years ago, Ascension Press

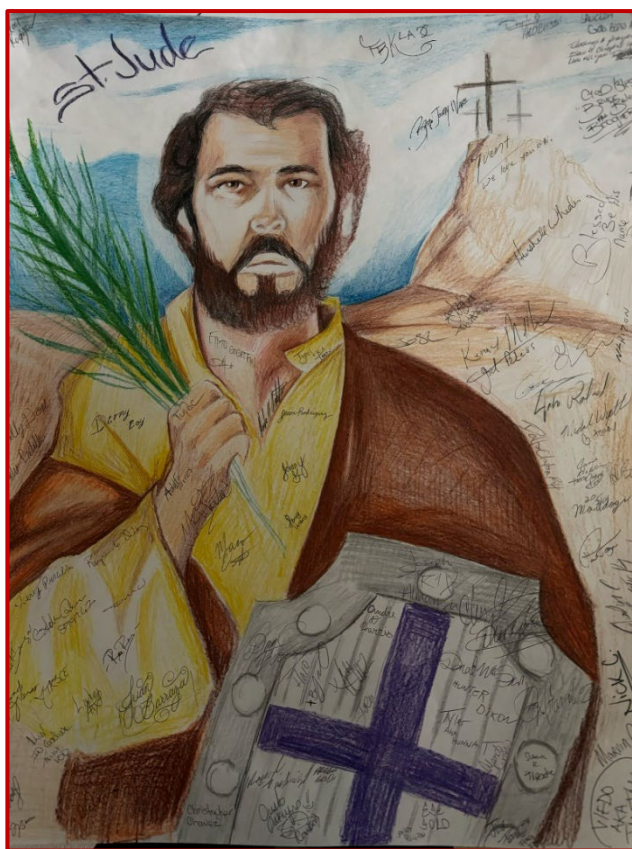




generously donated to KPM over 9,000 copies of their flagship Bible study “The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation”, a 24-session program presented by Jeff Cavins. The use of these powerful instructional materials has made a tremendous and positive difference to the inmates at the Ferguson Unit as well as at many other prisons served by KPM.

Splitting their time between the Ferguson chapel and the Ad Seg unit, Fr. Mitch and Jeff pitched in as small group discussion leaders and took on various leadership tasks to ensure the success of the retreat. They were just like any other KPM volunteer, except they also happen to be two of the best Catholic Scripture scholars in the U.S. Their knowledge was invaluable. Fr. Mitch and Jeff hosted several Q&A sessions, tackling topics wide ranging as anti-Catholic myths, the Magisterium of the Church, and the use of bells in Mass. Fr. Mitch also presided over an instructional Mass, explaining what the Mass is, the significance of the priestly vestments, the meaning behind the priest's gestures, the sacrificial nature of the Mass, and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Jeff Cavins spoke several times to the men on how to read Scripture, God's plan of salvation, and how to find meaning in suffering – a poignant topic for many, who shared how their incarceration has impacted them and their loved ones.

Perhaps the retreat's most memorable moment came when one of Ad Seg's retreatants was allowed to come in person to the chapel to share his faith story. With his hands bound to his waist, he was escorted to the podium where, for the next 20 minutes, he spoke. Without notes, he eloquently recounted his upbringing, his arrival at Ferguson, his 23 years in solitary confinement, and how God changed his heart—not in a sudden “Holy Spirit moment,” but gradually over time through frequent visits from a KPM volunteer. When asked about his future plans, he paused and said, “They say charity begins at home. So does evangelization. When I’m released, I want to be a father to my children and a grandfather to my grandchildren. I want them to learn what I’ve learned.” One staple of every Kolbe retreat is “cross-table sharing,” where each small group comes to the podium to share their thoughts at various times throughout the retreat. These thoughts can include reactions to faith sharing talks, the overall experience of the retreat, or inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Because of the physical separation between Ferguson’s chapel and the chapel itself. But it was evident that despite the F-Block (where the Ad Seg unit resides) were a Before beginning their remarks, the chapel-b phrases like, “Shout-out to F-Block!” or “Love



This love was reciprocated by the men in Ad Seg. On the second day of the retreat, a beautiful poster of St. Jude, the chosen patron of the Kolbe retreat for Ad Seg, was delivered to the chapel. Hand-drawn with colored pencils by one of the Ad Seg men, it was then slid beneath the door of every cell on the Ad Seg unit, where each man signed it as a gift to Kolbe Prison Ministries. It now resides at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in The Woodlands, Texas.



For Kolbe volunteers, however, the ongoing gift is the opportunity to see God's great mercy in action as he ministers to his hurting children and to see how the smallest acts of mercy bear abundant fruit. As one Ad Seg retreatant put it, "Your being here made us understand that we're not forgotten."



**Kansas City** – The Core Team of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas held two inaugural retreats in 2024 as shown below. We committed to supporting the other 3 diocese in Kansas as two of those bishops have submitted letters in support of Kolbe Prison Ministries retreats within their

correctional facilities. Lansing #1 was blessed with 42 residents, 15 mission volunteers, and 28 local volunteers. Six residents have entered the OCIA process. We have recorded over 756 formation hours for that unit.

Topeka #1 was blessed with 44 residents, 15 mission volunteers and 12 local volunteers. Sixteen residents have entered the OCIA process. This unit has recorded 824 formation hours.



The First Annual Core Team Meeting with dinner was held on January 16, 2025, with 13 in attendance. We submitted our 2025 budget in February 2025. Our total monetary donations exceeded \$7,600. We are planning

retreats at both of those correctional facilities in 2025 as well as an inaugural retreat at the new Lansing East campus where a pilot program focused on restorative justice and reintegration readiness opened in 4Q2024.

We are assisting the Wichita Diocese in hosting an inaugural retreat at the Winfield Correctional Facility. There may be a second retreat in 2025 in the Wichita Diocese after they create their Core Team.







**Lake Charles** –Growth has come not only in the numbers of new KPM brothers, but the number of State of Louisiana institutions we serve. In addition to the two retreats, we have become accustomed to at Allen Correctional Center, after several weeks of planning with the Program Director

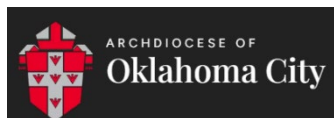
and Chaplain at Phelps Correctional Center in Dequincy, we conducted SKP#1 during the last week of August. The director's team as well as all of those on the team were called upon to think outside of the box as preparations were made for the retreat as the venue was considerable different than that we have all become comfortable with at Allen Correctional over the years. Rather than viewing these "differences" as "problems that needed to be solved" the entire team, after invoking the Holy Spirit's guidance, viewed what was ahead as "challenges to be met." And the Holy Spirit, as always, came through! The challenges were met and SKP #1 was a tremendous success. A total of 48 Retreatants became our latest additions to the KPM family. The process of conducting a Renew has been challenging and efforts to overcome them are ongoing.

SKA#6 and SKA#7 were both held at Allen Correctional in 2024. Each retreat was easily filled with 72 retreatants with which we are accustomed to, with a total of approximately 120 applications to attend each retreat. Our "Inside Team" continues to provide outstanding support that helped both retreats come off without a hitch. Thanks to all of our inside KPM brothers for either being a physical part of the team or a part of the 25-30 that applied but were not with us in body for being a part of the KPM "Prayer Team" .... Your prayerful presence was essential to the success of both retreats. Although the driving force of KPM is to bring the Light, Love and Good News of salvation that Jesus Christ brought to our world to our incarcerated brothers, it is significant that during the calendar year 2024, we ministered to approximately 192 new KPM brothers, not to speak of the fellowship that we have enjoyed with our weekly Renew program at Allen Correctional. Preparation for SKA#8 and SKP#2 are about to begin.



The KPM of the Lake Charles Diocese was blessed to bring our Ministry to Phelps Correctional (officially known now as Louisiana Workforce, LLC) in DeQuincy during 2024. Our contact person there, Audrey Thorn, was very instrumental in the planning of the retreat through the completion of SKP#1.



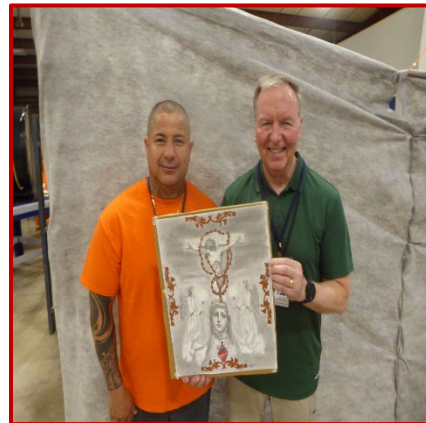


**Oklahoma City** – Kolbe Prison Ministries got off to an exceptionally good start in Oklahoma in 2024. We held 2 retreats, Feb. 8-10 and Sept. 19-21, both at the Great Plains CC in Hinton (Oklahoma City Archdiocese). **Archbishop Paul Coakley** celebrated Mass at

each of these retreats. A total of 104 retreatants attended, and the fruit of our work is evident. Our weekly Catholic Service has grown from about 20 men attending - before the retreats started - to 75 currently. We will be Confirming 9 men into the Catholic faith on Feb. 18, 2025.

Feedback from the OK DOC and our two bishops in Oklahoma has been incredibly positive and supportive. A retreat is planned in May 2025 for the Allen Gamble CC in Holdenville (Tulsa Diocese). There will be at least one more retreat this year, probably in the fall and probably back at Great Plains CC.

Future plans for growth in the number of retreats are dictated by the number of team members we can recruit. We have a particularly good pool of team members, drawing from Kairos, ACTS, and Cursillo retreat communities.



**Pensacola-Tallahassee** – The KPM of Pensacola

Core Team continued advancing its service to the incarcerated in jail and prisons during 2024. Every Wednesday, KPM volunteers visit the Escambia County jail (in the Pensacola area) to provide Communion Service, deliver Catholic books, and arrange Priests visits to those inmates who would like to make Confessions or receive spiritual advice. Compared to the prior year, two more female volunteers have stepped up to increase the breadth of coverage. We now have a total of 9 volunteers helping at the jail. And, the best of all news, is that the jail has reinstated the celebration of Mass each month, having been lost during Covid. Service at Century Correctional Institution (Florida state prison) has increased as well with four men running Communion Service every Sunday, up from three, and with three men visiting every Thursday for the rosary, OCIA classes, bible studies, monthly Mass, up from just one Catholic volunteer in 2023. KPM retreats #2 and #3 at Century (twice the number as in 2023) were held. **Bishop William Wack** visited the prison during Christmas season to confirm one man. This is in addition to the two confirmations earlier in the year.

In 2024, the KPM of Pensacola Core Team led its first mission retreat at the Santa Rosa Annex. This is a state prison just east of Pensacola along I-10. It was a wonderful experience for all parties and plans are in place for KPM retreat #2 at Santa Rosa Annex.

While KPM made progress in the western portion of the Pensacola-Tallahassee Diocese, it is projecting an advance toward the middle of the diocese with a retreat in the planning stage for a state prison about halfway between

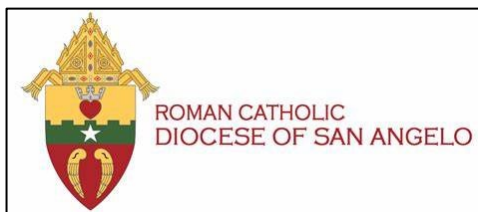




Pensacola and Tallahassee in the Bonifay area. The Catholic pastor with jurisdiction over the local prison there, the warden and head chaplain are all in favor of bringing KPM retreats into the institution.

KPM retreats in the Pensacola area have sparked interest by those Catholics currently serving in prisons in the eastern side of Florida and the middle of the state. Stay tuned! The Holy Spirit is at work and seems to be in the process of opening more doors.

During KPM retreats the inmates are offered the opportunity to say what is on their mind. There are many powerful and telling quotes but the one that sums it all is this: "Kolbe saved my life".



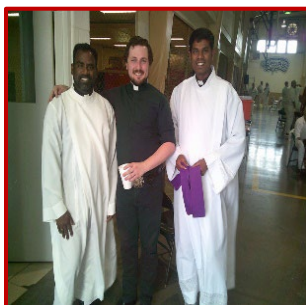
**San Angelo** – With the assistance of KPM Founders, Jeremy Itz and Larry Reeh, plus many non-Diocese of San Angelo volunteers, we conducted 7 retreats the following TDCJ prison units in 2024: Lynaugh-Ft. Stockton, Robertson-Abilene, Smith-Lamesa, Price Daniel-Snyder, Wallace – Colorado City, Robertson-Abilene. On August 10, 2024, KPM of San Angelo Mission Core Team held its

Organizational Meeting, Officers were elected and required documents executed. Our Core Team consists of 8 voting members and one non-voting member, **Dcn. Dan Shannahan, CJM** of the diocese of San Angelo. (DOSA).

The KPM cargo trailer we received from Larry Reeh in February 2024, was taken by Core Team Member, Mitchell Jansa, who did substantial refurbishing and maintenance on the trailer, including replacement of all tires and brake overhaul. Additionally, Mitchell began, with the assistance of other Core Team Members, the process of inventorying the trailer. The following units were served retreats in 2024 by KPM of San Angelo utilizing the completed trailer and assistance from non-DOSA volunteers: N5, Ft. Stockton- Oct 30-Nov 1, Lynaugh, Ft. Stockton - Nov 21-23, Smith, Lamesa - Dec 14-16.



Our Core Team remains committed, and meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.





**San Antonio** – Kolbe Prison Ministries continued to be highly in the San Antonio area in 2024. Nine 3-day KPM retreats were held at the units and resulted in many inmates beginning the OCIA process. The generous donation of catechisms and bibles by ARCHSA, along with financial assistance to partially reimburse expenses associated with KPM retreats and the administering of the sacraments at the units was appreciated.

Through the generous donation of their time, priests and deacons provided inmates with the opportunity to attend Mass, Reconciliation and Adoration in the units on regular basis. There is an emphasis on formation following a Kolbe retreat in this report. The donation made by Ascension of Adventure Bible Timelines continues to be implemented in our units and is well received. We also appreciate Ascension's generosity to discount our new study of ACTS. The discount made it possible for us to begin studying in the Torres Unit.

In the Applewhite Recovery Unit, a Bexar County Detention Center, KPM presented a women's retreat in January 2024 with 26 women in attendance, and a men's retreat in February 2024 with 28 men in attendance.

A weekly Bible study has been established on Saturday afternoons since October 2023 for the two women's groups and there is a plan in the works to schedule a weekly bible study for the men at Applewhite.

Briscoe held retreats #17 and #18 with 66 and 67 men, respectively. Following the retreat, as many as 80 men registered for the OCIA process: a number including sponsors and mentors. OCIA is presented year-round at Briscoe with only a brief break in August and September. **Bishop Mike Boulette** confirmed 6 men who completed their OCIA process and were brought into full communion with the church. The break offered an opportunity to implement a Bishop Barron class followed by a meal at the completion of the study.



KPM facilitated the donation of twelve 60-inch round tables to the Briscoe Chaplaincy along with a 65-inch TV, DVD player, and rolling stand for the TV. These are used for OCIA classes in the Briscoe gym. Briscoe has been blessed with **Fr. Agustin Estrada**, Pastor at St. Joseph's in Dilley, TX who is committed to celebrating the Sacraments weekly. Additionally, ashes were distributed throughout the prison on Ash Wednesday, including many of the corrections officers who received the ashes and blessing. We want to recognize the following priests for their service at the Briscoe Unit: **Fr. Stanislaw Marciniak, Fr. Kevin Ryan, Fr. Doug Fater**

. We held 2 KPM retreats on the Connally Unit A Side (General Population) in April, and the Connally B Side (Medium Custody) in November. We had 5 volunteers assist with distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday and were honored with **Bishop Michael Boulette** leading of the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. Our incredibly supportive parish priest, **Fr. Robert Ploch** celebrates Mass or Confessions on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays each month. Communion services are offered by the Director of Prison Ministry **Deacon Adrian Cepeda** or **Deacon Wally Cantu** in opposite weeks. Additionally, Adoration is now scheduled prior to the Communion Service on the last Monday of each month. It is amazing to see the Chapel filled with the brim and everyone in complete awe of the Divine Presence. Our choir continues to grace us with beautiful music and is now learning chants for the special masses and occasions. Quite beautiful for 5-6 men that started with nothing.





With the completion of each KPM retreat, we invite those who would like to enter into more formal apologetics of the Catholic faith to enroll in OCIA 1. Eventually, should the inmate desire to celebrate the Sacraments as a Catholic they enter OCIA 2 (Sacramental Preparation). This year we had 2 Baptisms, 5 First Communions and 7 Confirmations. These men are invited to continue their spiritual journey with OCIA 3 (Mystagogy). Additionally, we have added an inmate led class using The Didache Series Theology (Scott Hahn) study for those Catholic inmates who would like to pursue facilitating the Catholic faith at our unit.



One of the most exciting inmate catechesis opportunities is for those seeking to live a religious life as a Dominican Lay (3<sup>rd</sup> Order). There are over ten (10) men currently in formation. One after several years of preparation has made his temporary vows and will make his permanent vow in 2025. Two others are working toward temporary vows and several others towards candidacy. This group of Catholics live out their faith through prayer, study, community, and service. This faith formation is a minimum of five years of preparation. We are grateful that an average

of 100+ men attend primary worship (Catholic) weekly.

An additional highlight were candid interviews with two Connally Catholic Field Ministers, Rob Hernandez and Derek Pena and Chaplain Deb Achimugu which aired on EWTN LIVE.

The Dominguez Jail had 55 men participate in the Ascension Press Studies on the Book of Hebrews and the Book of Joshua. They love participating in discussions and enjoy the perspectives brought by different faith groups. KPM coordinated weekly Reconciliation and Mass, scheduling priests and deacons to bring the Sacraments into the prison. **Bishop Gary Janak, Auxiliary Bishop in San Antonio and Bishop Mike Boulette** celebrated Mass for the men. In September, the OCIA process was introduced for the first time at Dominguez State Jail. About 25 men attend the weekly classes. KPM and the Archdiocese of San Antonio provided bibles, catechisms, and workbooks from Dismas Ministries. Two cases of the “*Beautiful Eucharist*” book by Matthew Kelly were donated to the men who attend weekly OCIA classes and Mass. Ash Wednesday; ashes were distributed to more than 400 men and correction officers and were offered in every building on the prison campus.

Catholic Services and OCIA preparation is held at the Ney Unit every Saturday. Services and studies are provided by volunteers and various deacons including **Deacon Adrian Cepeda, Deacon Bob Leibrecht, Deacon John Cook, and Deacon Mark Urby**. Mass is celebrated by **Fr John Cyriac** from Hondo once a month and on special occasions. The men greatly appreciate being able to receive sacraments as well as the dedication and assistance of all these men.

Following services, OCIA classes using the KPM OCIA curriculum were held, and 5 inmates celebrated their sacraments with **Bishop Boulette** at the unit in January 2025. Additional courses presented in the past year and planned for 2025 include “The Prophets” and “The Bible Timeline” from Ascension Press, and “That Man is You” from Paradisus Dei. A KPM retreat was held at the unit in July 2024 and was followed up by a KPM Reunion. A KPM retreat is planned again for July 2025.

The brothers put together their own liturgy team for Mass and Communion Services. They decorate the room, so it appears to have stained glass windows and looks like a church. We also





helped to get them a Catholic library so the men can "check out" Catholic reading materials. A shortage of officers continues to impact on our units negatively.

The Torres unit has a thriving Catholic Community with several faith formation programs available for inmates. Faith formation programs were hampered by the lack of a full-time Chaplain for the Unit

Kolbe Prison Ministries conducted retreats at the unit in the Spring and Fall of 2024. The Spring and Fall retreats were attended by 50/40 retreatants and 20/18 volunteers, respectively. We wish to sincerely thank the following clergy who helped with the retreats and Communion Services at the unit: **Auxiliary Bishop Gary Janak, Fr. Babychan Arackathara (Hondo), Fr John Cyriac (D'Hanis), Fr Daniel Renaud (San Antonio), Fr. David Chacko (Boerne) Fr. Norman Ermis, Deacon Adrian Cepeda, Deacon Bob Leibrecht, Deacon Mark Urby, Deacon Jim Wainer.**

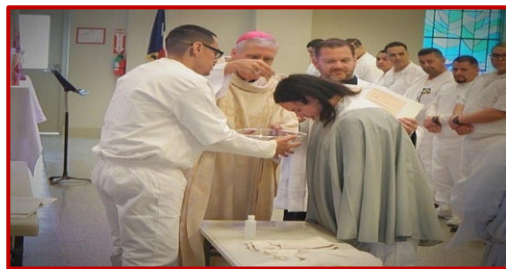
Inmates are currently only able to attend Mass and receive Reconciliation once a month. However, it is hoped that the frequency will return twice a month once **Fr. Lajarus Soreng** from D'Hanis is approved to enter the unit by the TDCJ.

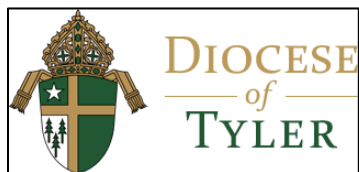
On the weeks when a priest is unavailable, **Deacons Adrian Cepeda, Bob Leibrecht and Mark Urby** have helped lead Communion services at the unit. Masses and Communion Services are typically attended by approximately 30 inmates. Ashes were distributed to inmates in all areas of the prison on Ash Wednesday.

The Torres unit has a continually active faith formation program. In the first half of 2024 inmates had the opportunity to study the Bible Timeline. Following completion of that program, inmates are now studying the Gospel of Matthew. Both programs are inmate led and attended by KPM volunteers who help direct the classes. An average of 20-30 men typically attends these classes. Upon completion of the Gospel of Matthew study program, the men will have an opportunity to attend a class on "ACTS – The Spread of the Kingdom" which was partly subsidized by Ascension Press.

The Torres Unit also conducts an OCIA class on Thursday afternoons. Attendance at class varies and has been heavily influenced by the frequency of Chapel Closures and Unit Lockdowns. The class typically averages 15-20 men.

We were blessed to welcome **Bishop Gary Janak** twice to the Torres unit in 2024. In June **Bishop Janak** administered the sacraments to two inmates. On November 26<sup>th</sup>, the Torres Unit welcomed **Bishop Gary Janak** returned to the unit to administer sacraments to 18 men who had participated in the OCIA program. Ten men were baptized, and the remainder received their first Holy Communion and Confirmation. Bishop Janak's participation in both events was greatly appreciated.





**Tyler** – The East Texas Chapter held 1 retreat and 1 reunion in the Hodge Unit in 2024 and started an OCIA class on Wednesdays after Mass. We will be having our Core Meeting this coming Sunday setting dates for our 2025 retreats. We are planning to start the Women's retreats back-up in Skyview this year as well.

As soon as we have our dates approved with TDCJ, we will put them on the KPM Calendar.



### **Victoria**

Kolbe Prison Ministries serves the

Clarence N. Stevenson Unit in Cuero, Texas. This unit houses inmates in custody levels G1, G2, and G4.

Kolbe Prison Ministries at the Stevenson Unit is facilitated through a network of volunteers from the Diocese of Victoria, as well as from nearby communities along the boundaries with the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

In August, we welcome **Fr. Scott Hill**, appointed by **Bishop Brendan Cahill**, as the new chaplain for our Catholic services at the Stevenson Unit. In 2024, we held our 24th and 25th retreats on April 11-14 and October 17-20, respectively. Both retreats were

conducted in English, with approximately 150 new inmates participating. Five priests from our diocese assist with the celebration of Mass and/or the sacrament of reconciliation.

The retreats offered at the Stevenson Unit have significantly enriched and reinvigorated the spiritual lives of hundreds of inmates. The following services are offered at the Stevenson Unit: **Weekly Mass OCIA** and on Mondays, **Catholic Education Class in Spanish** on Tuesdays, and **Catholic Education Class in English** on Wednesdays.

Our goal is to witness and teach the Catholic faith not only to those behind bars but also to those entrusted with their care. We seek out our Catholic brothers and those who wish to join our faith, bringing them to a better understanding of the “fullness of our Catholic faith.”



### **Special Events:**

- **March 28th:** Bishop Brendan Cahill celebrated Holy Thursday Mass and washed the feet of twelve inmates.
- **May 6th:** In appreciation for their service, we provided lunch to 120 Correctional Officers at the Stevenson Unit during National Correction Officers Week. The meal included pulled pork sandwiches with pickles, onions, pinto beans, coleslaw, a cookie, and potato chips, all individually boxed.
- **May 20th:** A group of fifteen incarcerated men completed their last step of Christian initiation by being “sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” during their Confirmation at the Stevenson Unit. **Bishop Brendan Cahill** conducted the ceremony. The Mass readings were from the Feast of Pentecost liturgy. During the Sacrament of Confirmation, candidates renewed their baptismal promises, and Bishop Cahill, along with **Father Francis Nguyen** and the faithful, prayed for the Holy Spirit to descend upon and remain







with the Confirmandi. Judith Kubena and Travis Wagner, our catechetical volunteers, prepared them for the Sacrament.

For the eighth consecutive year, on December 15th, Kolbe Prison Ministries volunteers delivered Christmas gifts to 1,384 male inmates at the Stevenson Unit. Each gift consisted of a pair of white crew socks along with two Christmas cards.




***Final thought from excerpt of the Saint Oscar Romero prayer:***

*'We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produce effects far beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.'*



**Sr. Helen Prejean**  
Author, Advocate for Abolition of the Death Penalty

**Keith Cooley**  
Warden at Allen Correctional Center Kinder, LA

**Dr. Lawton Searcy**  
Corrections Program Manager, Elayn Hunt Correction Center

**Andrew Hundley**  
Executive Director Louisiana Parole Project

**John Paul Funes**  
Louisiana Parole Project Industry Liaison

**"Knock and the door will be opened to you"**



## Not to be missed....

Be sure to review these **updated Documents** on the Kolbe Prison Ministries What's

New on the Website: <https://kolbeprisonministries.org/whats-new/>

### **What's New in the Private Pages** (accessed with members Login)

- Revised Team Affiliation Agreement
- Revised 'KPM Roles Responsibilities Acknowledgement' document
- Revised 'Institutional Memorandum of Understanding' document

### **Ongoing Formation Committee News**

- New Catholic content was donated to Kolbe Prison Ministries by Ascension Press and Paulist Prison Ministries. Your Core Team will receive instructions for ordering this free content for your diocesan prison units. Please be sure that all of your unit volunteers are aware of this gift so they can prepare to offer it in classes or as a self-paced continuing formation for the inmates you serve.
- Check out the Ongoing Formation Guide posted on the Kolbe Prison Ministries website; to get a glimpse of many best practices as well as successful apostolates being offered in prison.

## KOLBE PRISON MINISTRIES

### 10th Annual National Conference

July 26th, 2025



**MBS**  
Most Blessed Sacrament

Plus KPM Committee Overview and More!

Hosted by Most Blessed Sacrament  
Catholic Church  
8033 Baringer Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70817

## JOIN US!

Learn more about Prison Ministry during  
a day of prayer and reflection.

Event will last from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM  
Followed by a Mass at 4:30 PM  
Celebrated by Bishop Michael Duca Diocese of Baton Rouge

2025 Annual  
Conference Information

Visit for More Information  
[kolbeprisonministries.org](https://kolbeprisonministries.org)





### THE "KOLBE" EXPERIENCE A Muslim's Perspective

My name is Noel Cordoba Sr. and I recently attended the Kolbe #11 retreat on the Connally unit. I loved every minute of it and hope and pray I can attend again.

I am also a practicing Muslim.

At first glance it would seem as if the two religious faiths would have little, if anything, in common. However, that is a myopic view of what I see when I encounter my Catholic brothers. The Kolbe retreat is centered on two things: love and service. The testimonies we hear and the outpouring of emotion we see are indicative of why the outside team members in conjunction with the inside team members work so diligently to give the retreatants a memory they will cherish for years to come.

Let it also be noted that the Kolbe retreat is also about education. I for one learned much about the different saints and the view the Catholics have of the Virgin Mary. Its not all singing. Questions are asked and openly answered. Bonds and bridges were made. Hopefully lives were changed.

Yes, I am a practicing Muslim and I cherish Islam. But make no mistake, if we, of all religious persuasions, were to focus more on loving our fellow man and serving the interests of others before ourselves, we could positively and permanently change the world.

That is a tenet we all hold dear, no matter what we call ourselves.

To paraphrase the old, Polish priest who gave Mass on Friday afternoon: All we have here is five minutes. Time is only a number. Let's spend the miniscule amount of time we have on this planet loving and serving each other.

May the peace of Almighty God be with you all.

Noel Cordoba Sr.  
#750835  
Connally Unit

*"It was a great 3 days – I usually work Sunday-Friday. During the retreat I had no worries about work. Work did not contact me to help or "fix" any issue. **For the FIRST TIME in 10 years, I felt normal and able to enjoy my faith.** Our Catholic callout went from 26 to 58 members after the retreat. That is not a coincidence."*

JGH, Lansing, KS, June 2024

*"Because of Kolbe Ministries, I am more free than most men that live on the outside."*

*Quote from an offender*

### KOLBE PRISON MINISTRY AT THE STEVENSON UNIT

The Kolbe Prison Ministry, since its inception on Stevenson Unit, has had a tremendous impact on the inmates. The Kolbe retreat, which transcends race and religion, brings hope, joy, and a high level of spirituality to the participants. Held twice annually, this retreat has recorded indelible transformations in the lives of the inmates. It creates a space for the men to express themselves as they sit in groups with "free-world volunteers" and other inmates to share. This opportunity for vulnerability keeps their spirits open to receiving from God.

The weekends spark joy, excitement, and hope on the unit, and everyone looks forward to the next retreat. The impact of the Kolbe Prison Ministry is evident in the increased attendance of Catholic Mass, RCIA classes, and Bible studies. There is a hunger for spirituality as inmates attend these classes, and the difference it makes in their lives is clear.

Stevenson Unit Chaplaincy will always remain grateful to God for Kolbe Prison Ministry's impact on Stevenson Unit. God bless you for all you do and will continually do. May your labor of love never be in vain in Jesus' name.

Chaplain Deborah Achimugu  
Stevenson Unit in Cuero Texas  
August 2024



## Poem by an Inmate and Kolbe retreatant in a Texas Prison

### The Men in Blue Shirts (aka Kolbe Prison Ministries retreat volunteers)

We sit in a gym in a small room we wait,  
while the men in blue shirts file in the back gate.

Walls covered in sheets the men form a line,  
while we listen as our own names are called one at a time.

I come around the corner to see faces full of smiles,  
received hugs and handshakes, I think the line went for miles.

Sat down at a table that was big and white and round,  
my first cup of real coffee in years, I wonder is it instant or ground.

The waiters walked out, the food and drinks started to flow,  
at the same time in my eye a small tear started to grow.

We're the outcast, the forgotten, society calls us scum,  
but that didn't stop the men in blue shirts, look out here they come.

There are things that go on, I'm not allowed to say,  
you have to experience it yourself; I hope you get the chance to one day.

Many of us just went for the coffee, we figured we'd eat us a good meal,  
but as the men began to talk, our hearts began to heal.

We heard about guys who were just like us, and how they made it through,  
that life does get better, but it's still up to you.

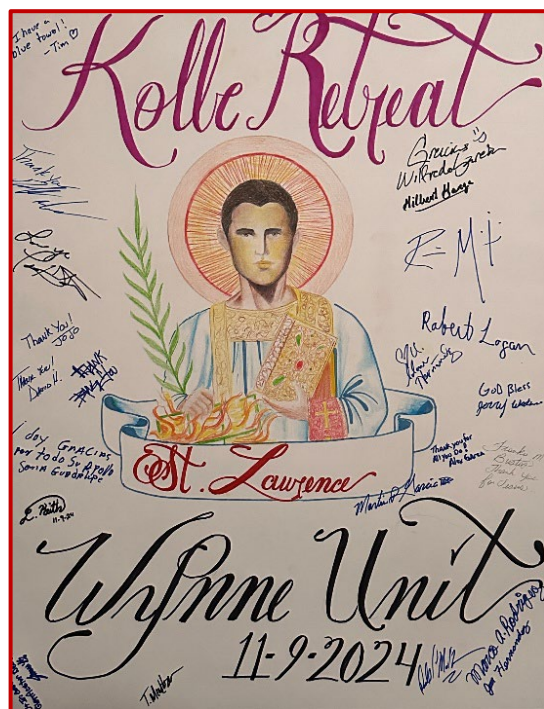
Jesus stands waiting with arms open wide,  
with proof of His love in His hands and His side.

You're free to choose Jesus and with Him to dwell,  
or you're free to do nothing and end up in Hell.

The priest, the food, the message it all faded away,  
but the men in blue shirts came back the next day.

The ceremony we went through, I don't think I saw a dry eye,  
murderers, rapists, and thieves, tough me began to cry.

The biggest act of humility that I ever saw,  
ALL BECAUSE MEN IN BLUE SHIRTS ANSWERED A CALL.



*"Be a Catholic: When you kneel before an altar, do it in such a way that others may be able to recognize that you know before whom you kneel."*

**St Maximilian Kolbe**

*"A single act of love makes the soul return to life."*

**St Maximilian Kolbe**

*Saint posters from a recent retreat.*







*Artwork provided by a retreatant in Louisiana.*

