

FAQ of ACTS Retreats

What is an ACTS Retreat?

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

Adoration – the call by, acceptance of, and response to God

Community – the love and caring of each other

Theology – the study of God through scripture and the Catholic faith

Service – to God and His people

What is the purpose of the ACTS retreat?

An ACTS weekend is designed to help retreatants enter into a new or deeper relationship with our Lord and fellow parishioners. This is accomplished through Adoration and daily prayer, the call to Community in one's parish as a member of the Body of Christ, and Theology in encouraging the study of scripture and our Catholic faith. All of these emphasize and encourage the virtue of Service to our Lord, our parish, and one another. The weekend allows retreatants to experience God's love and joy and return to their parish with a deeper love for each other and a desire to become more involved in their parish community.,

How are ACTS retreats organized and run?

Each retreat is conducted by a dedicated team of parishioners who have attended prior ACTS retreats. They spend significant time prior to the retreat meeting weekly and preparing spiritually for it, as well as handling all the planning and logistics for the weekend. Chosen by the retreat Director and working with one of the parish priests, the team organizes the retreat, conducts the retreat talks and activities, and ministers to the needs of the retreatants during the retreat weekend.

Why attend an ACTS retreat?

The weekend is a powerful and enduring personal conversion experience. Talks, which draw from the personal experiences of team members, focus on **Adoration**, the need for prayer and meditation on the word of God, **Community**, the importance of community built on faith and love, **Theology**, the need to read and understand scripture and our Catholic faith, and **Service**, the need to answer Christ's call to servanthood. Activities conducted during the weekend give retreatants a better understanding of the significance and importance of prayer, liturgy, the sacraments, scripture, community and service. Retreatants are also given guidance to help them in their faith journey. It is a powerful community-building experience. The ACTS weekend brings retreatants to a better understanding of God's love for them and develops their need to share that love with others through their involvement in a faith-centered parish community. The retreat emphasizes our call to service, service to the parish community and to our world community. This results in a new or renewed dedication to the life of the parish community and increased awareness of the needs of those around us along with the desire, as followers of Christ, to help meet those needs.

What happens on an ACTS retreat?

What activities? Is it a silent retreat? If not, am I required to participate? This isn't a silent retreat – it is more participative. While the retreats are planned around the same format, they all happen a little differently and part of the blessing (and enjoyment) of the retreat is discovering what it means to you as it happens. There is prayer, reflection, liturgy and discussion. You can choose to participate in the discussion as much or little as you like. People are different, so their experience and reaction to the retreat differs, but if you talk to men and women who have been on the retreat, you'll see that responses are typically very positive.

How long is the ACTS retreat?

What do I prepare for? The retreat begins at church on Thursday evening at about 6:15pm and is completed at 11am Mass on Sunday. Take into consideration the time of year and pack appropriately. While most of the activities take place indoors, you will likely spend some time outdoors. Also, pack things you would typically bring for a short trip – toiletries, medications, etc. Bring clothes appropriate for Mass on Sunday.

What about accommodations and meals?

The retreat takes place at either LaSalle Retreat Center in Wildwood, or Pallottine Renewal Center in Florissant. Each retreatant has a private room with a single bed, desk, sink, and toilet. Retreatants at LaSalle share a large bathroom with 3 stalls and 4 showers, while Pallottine has private bathrooms. The food is wonderful – three meals are served each day and the retreat team makes certain that snacks and noon-alcoholic beverages (water, soda, coffee) are available throughout the day. If you have special dietary needs, it is helpful if you note them on the registration form when you sign up for the retreat.

If I go on an ACTS retreat, am I required to participate more in the future?

Do I have to do certain things? Do I have to be on a retreat team or be involved in other ACTS centered activities? The short answer is no, you don't have to do anything after the retreat. Hopefully, during the retreat you learn things about your faith, yourself and the way others practice their faith. The goal isn't more members for a group, it is a better, stronger relationship with the Lord. If that relationship moves you to also become more active in your parish community, that's great!

What is the cost of the retreat?

Please see the current registration form for the fee. PLEASE NOTE: Financial difficulties should not prevent anyone from attending this retreat. If you wish to inquire about a scholarship or need more information, please contact one of the persons listed on the retreat Registration Form.

Prayers for ACTS Retreat

Before the men and women head out on retreat, there will be a signup sheet available to pray for the people going on the ACTS retreat. We ask that those who are able, commit and sign up for an hour of prayer sometime during that weekend. Thank you from the members of ACTS!