

ACTS Retreats

ACTS retreats have enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people: men and women, teens and retirees, the rich and the poor, Catholics and non-Catholics, both nationally and internationally. It has reinvigorated the spiritual lives of individuals, families, and entire parishes. Yet, 25 years ago, it did not even exist. The way this wonderful program came to be is a beautiful blend of the Holy Spirit and those who would listen to His words.

No history of ACTS would be complete without the help of, and some familiarity with, the *Cursillo* Movement. *Cursillo* began in Spain in the years between WWI and WWII in response to what many in the Church saw as the increasing secularization of many Catholics in Spain at the time. It was intended to be a "short course" on the Catholic Faith and it soon became widely popular for its profound effect on people's spirituality. By the mid-1980's, it had become an international movement and had spread across the world, including to Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Selma, Texas. It was here that three men who were heavily involved in *Cursillo* planned the first ACTS retreat.

People have credited ACTS with saving their lives, saving their marriages, convincing them to be ordained as priests or deacons, or leading them to the religious life, simply by opening their eyes and their hearts to God's Word. Pastors have praised its positive effects on their parishes, leading to highly invigorated parish life. And, bishops have called it the most important movement in the Catholic Church today. All this has grown from the efforts of a handful of faith-filled people with the courage and perseverance to allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit!

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