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Quo Vadis Days

Tools for Vocations

Quo Vadis Days is a summer camp when young Catholic men, learn more about the priesthood, deepen their faith, and discern God's call. Staffed by priests and members of the diocese, Quo Vadis Days has been highly successful in sparking vocations.

SPARK

Serra Promotion and Resource Kit

Summary

The Quo Vadis Days program started in 2000 in the Portland (OR) archdiocese. A local priest instituted it as a multi-day camp at which young Catholic men would learn more about the priesthood, deepen their faith, and more closely discern God's call. Quo Vadis Days events are typically held in a style and setting similar to those of other religious-based summer camps. They are staffed by priests and additional members of the local diocese. Attendees are typically in the age range of 13 to 18—in some cases, however, a larger age range is utilized.

The program has expanded from its initial home in the Pacific Northwest into dioceses in states as far east as Pennsylvania. In 2017, Quo Vadis camps are scheduled to be held in nine states.

The U.S. Council of Serra International encourages others to prayerfully consider advocating for the Quo Vadis Days program in their respective dioceses. The program has proven itself to be highly successful in sparking vocations to the priesthood.

A wealth of information can be found at the Quo Vadis Days website (http://qvdays.org/), which will help you start a Quo Vadis Days program in your parish or diocese. This information includes such items as bulletin and Mass announcements, prayers, a letter to pastors, a registration list template—even a T-shirt logo.

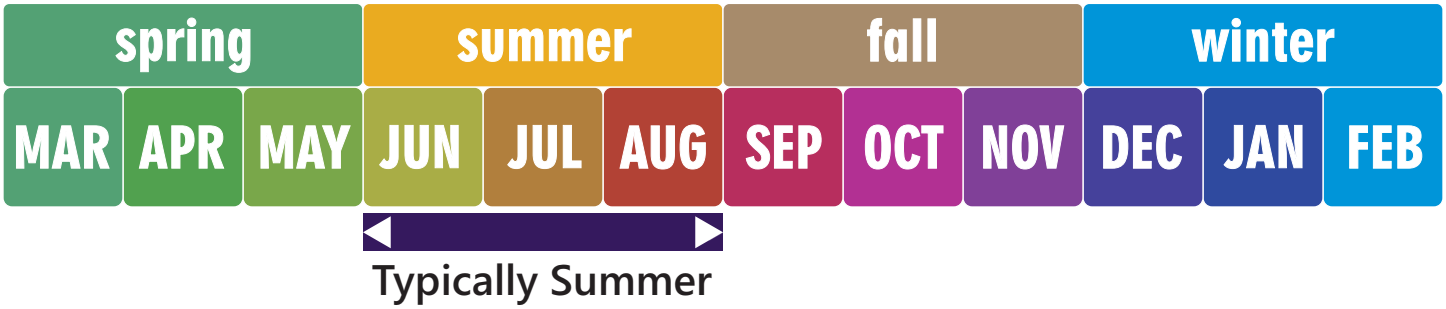
Link to Quo Vadis Days website
http://www.qvdays.org/

Quo Vadis Days

Program Outline

- Three- or four-day camp typically held in a suburban/rural setting
- Staffed by priests and other representatives of the respective diocese
- Invitees are young men of the diocese (ages 13-18 has been an oft-used range)
- A good variety of activities is offered
    - Talks by priests
    - Talks by seminarians
    - Mass
    - Confession
    - Benediction
    - Community prayer (Liturgy of the Hours)
    - Sports
    - Outdoor activities such as hiking and campfires
- Multiple opportunities provided to attendees
    - Deepen faith
    - Learn more about priesthood
    - More closely discern the call of God
    - Website — http://qvdays.org/ — is there to help support attendees after camp
- Serra members, volunteers and other clubs support Quo Vadis Days camps by…
    - Donating money
    - Holding fundraisers
    - Transporting attendees to camp
    - Purchasing food and bringing it to camp
    - Cooking
    - Cleaning up

Time of Year



Lead Time

Effort

Cost

Serrans / Volunteers

- Securing site for event
- Working with diocese regarding event planning
- Providing/underwriting the cost of transportation for students to and from event
- Providing/underwriting the cost of food and drink for students at event
- Staffing event in support of priests
- Procuring extras such as T-shirts, etc.

The title of the Quo Vadis Days program has its roots in a well-known legend within Christianity—one which holds that the apostle Peter asked the question "Quo vadis?" ("Where are you going?") of Jesus as the two crossed paths on a road leading to Rome. This legend holds that Peter was leaving Rome, fleeing the persecutions going on there, while Jesus was heading toward Rome; upon receiving Jesus' reply that he was going there to be crucified again, Peter turned around and went back to the city, where he was martyred.

Quo Vadis Days asks the same question of its participants—within the context of modern-day vocational discernment. The program was instituted in 2000 (the Jubilee Year) by Msgr. John Cihak in the Portland archdiocese. (It served as a response to the papal request that the Roman Catholic Church begin the process of 'The New Evangelization.') At the core of the program is a multi-day camp for young Catholic men which provides an opportunity to deepen their faith, learn more about the priesthood, and discern the call of the Lord in their lives. (Camps vary in length from three to five days. A common age range is 13-18, though at least one diocese expands that range to 15-25.) The camp includes many different activities: talks are given by priests, as well as seminarians; attendees go to Mass and participate in community prayer sessions; sports and outdoor activities are offered, as well. Campers are invited to attend more than once—some choose to return to annual camps in their respective diocese year after year.

The program spread rather quickly. By 2003, Quo Vadis Days had gained a foothold in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Two years after that, it became active in the eastern United States, with the Diocese of Harrisburg (PA) joining the list of participating entities. Increasing attendance has caught the attention of diocesan officials in recent years, with the Portland (OR) archdiocese reporting some 100 young men ages 13-18 taking part in its 2016 camp.

Various reports in Catholic media indicate that Quo Vadis Days camps have been quite effective in fostering vocations, with some seminarians pointing to the camps as having been one of the biggest influences on their decisions to enter training for the priesthood. A Church member from the Harrisburg (PA) diocese reported to a Serra member that, after Quo Vadis Days was instituted there, the number of seminarians in the diocese doubled. What's more, in the Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood for the Class of 2016, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate listed Quo Vadis Days among the top-five vocation programs; a full 11% of diocesan seminarians ordained in 2016 said that they participated in Quo Vadis Days prior to entering the seminary.

As of early 2017, the Quo Vadis Days program had spread across the Pacific Northwest, Rockies, Great Plains, and Northeast regions of the U.S. For the 2017 calendar year, Quo Vadis Days camps are set to be held in California, Colorado, Idaho, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington.

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In at least one case, an archdiocese has also brought into being a reunion event for young men who have already completed the Quo Vadis Days camp. Portland (OR) has hosted such events, which its archdiocesan website describes thus: "The Quo Vadis Days Reunions are a way for these young men to continue their discernment throughout the year while having fun and growing as brothers in Christ."

Additional Resources

Official Quo Vadis Days website (**contains a variety of resources which can be used in support of efforts to start new Quo Vadis Days events** in dioceses that do not currently have such events):
http://qvdays.org/

Archdiocese of Portland (OR) Quo Vadis Days webpage with excellent resources:
https://archdpdxvocations.org/quo-vadis-days

PDF of flyer from Archdiocese of Portland (OR) Quo Vadis Days—could be used as an example by organizations wishing to begin their own event:
https://archdpdxvocations.org/documents/2016/7/Quo%20Vadis%20Days%20Camp%20flyer%20English%202017.pdf

Video posted to Quo Vadis Days website blog page in which Quo Vadis founder Msgr. John Cihak speaks about the gift of the priesthood (scroll down all the way to the end of the page and then click on the video found there):
http://qvdays.org/blog/

YouTube video describing Quo Vadis Days — from the Diocese of Spokane (WA)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6_j2xpepgo

Video from Diocese of Fall River (MA) which describes its own Quo Vadis Days event:
http://qvdays.org/uncategorized/fall-river-quo-vadis-days-2014-video/

Article from Archdiocese of Philadelphia's official newsletter which highlights the success of Quo Vadis Days in sparking vocations:
http://catholicphilly.com/2016/02/news/local-news/seminarys-vocations-focus-is-fun-and-its-working/

Article describing Quo Vadis Days camp held by Diocese of Harrisburg (PA):
http://qvdays.org/uncategorized/knights-support-vocation-discernment-programs-assists-youth-hearing-gods-call/

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Additional Resources

Officials with Quo Vadis Days state that anyone who has questions or comments about the program is welcome to reach out to the following (see the Quo Vadis Days website for more details on contact information):

Portland

Msgr. John Cihak
Fr. Theodore Lange
Fr. Jeff Eirvin

Seattle

Fr. Derek Lappe
Fr. Hans Olson

Spokane

Fr. Dan Barnett (qvd@dioceseofspokane.org)

Harrisburg

Fr. Ray LaVoie

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Tools for Vocations

For more information about
Serra Vocations Tools, visit us at
SerraSpark.org
Or write us at
Spark@serraus.org
Phone 312-201-6549