

INVITATION OR COMMAND?

A few days ago I was having a nice conversation, during dinner time, when someone confronted me with this important question. "Should I do what I am supposed to do just because God invites me or because He commands me to do it?" For example, "Should I attend Mass every Sunday because it is one of His commandments or because He is inviting me to have a closer relationship with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ?"

We can reply in a purely straightforward manner, "It's a command rather than an invitation." But this answer is not as easy to give as we might imagine. Why? Because as human beings we truly don't like to be commanded; we prefer to be invited. Yes, the majority of us prefer an invitation to do or not do something, over being commanded. This dilemma is not something new. I'm not creating this hypothesis. Since the very beginning of creation, man and woman have been confronted and challenged by this dichotomy. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read how Adam and Eve were told: "It's only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'" (Gen 3:3) What was their first move? They ate it! Why...because God, instead of inviting them not to do it, gave them a command. I honestly wonder, were Adam and Eve Cuban?

A more profound question to ask about this dilemma is, "What is wrong with being commanded rather than being invited?" Is it not acceptable, especially, if that person is God, the One who creates us, redeems us, and loves us unconditionally? Most of all God wants us to be always safe, alive and able to abide with Him for all eternity.

Of course, we need to realize that when God is commanding us, instead of inviting us, it's because He wants us to be closer to Him and to act towards others as he acts towards us. God does not command us to do or not to do something just because He wants to make us miserable or has a whim. The Lord commands us because we are only able to achieve our full potential in life by following his orders. When God tells us not to do or to do something, it is because He wants the best for us. As He reminds us in Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

In the last paragraph of today's Gospel, Jesus offers us a command when he declares, "But I say to you, love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father...So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." God commands us today to live our lives loving others, because God is Love itself. To truly love is to do whatever is possible and even what seems impossible for the well-being of the beloved.

In conclusion, when God chooses to command us instead of to invite us, it is for the same reason as when we read the sign on the electric panel of a building, "Do Not Touch - High Voltage". To be commanded by God, rather than to be invited guarantees us life rather than death. Indeed, God forms us to be perfect as He, our heavenly Father, is perfect!

With Love, Fr. Julio

MARCH 1, 2017

ASH WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

Masses with Eucharist and distribution of ashes:

7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM

3:30 PM Prayer Service with distribution of ashes

LAST YEAR'S PALMS MAY BE PLACED
IN THE PURPLE PALM BOX
IN THE CHURCH VESTIBULE

PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

EXPOSITION OF BLESSED SACRAMENT AND BENEDICTION

Will take place in Church on

Saturday, February 25th

from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Reconciliation from 11:00 AM – 12:00 N

Benediction at 12:45 PM



MEDITATION HOUR



"DESERT SURRENDER"

Please join us on Thursday, March 2nd at 7:00 PM in Marian Hall for prayer, guided meditation and reflection.

RCIA

Journey with Us - Discover the Keys to the Kingdom

Join us on **Monday, February 27th** at **7:00 PM**
in the Russo Room as we journey with the *Letters of Paul*.

If you would like more information about **RCIA**, please call Donna Scancarella at 973-779-6200. Make-up sessions will be available.

BIBLE STUDY

A seven week Lenten Bible Study series begins on **Monday, February 27th** at 11:00 AM in the Molloy Center. We will discuss the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus from St. John's Gospel.

7TH ANNUAL ST. PATRICK DINNER DANCE &



ST. JOSEPH DESSERT TABLE

Saturday, March 11th at 7 PM

St. Philip Auditorium
(doors open 6:30 PM)

Traditional Irish Dinner

Beer, Wine, Soda, Coffee/Tea, Italian Desserts
Specialty drinks available for purchase
\$40.00 per person

Entertainment by The Peter McKiernan Band

To purchase tickets, please send the following

- Your name
- Phone number
- Number of tickets requested
- Payment (check payable to St. Philip the Apostle)



To

St. Philip the Apostle Church
797 Valley Rd., Clifton, NJ 07013
Attn: St. Patrick Tickets

****You will receive a call when your tickets are ready to be picked up
at the Parish Office****

Tickets will be sold after all masses on February 18/19

This event sells out quickly so order your tickets early!
For more information call **Donna @ 973-779-6200**
Tickets will not be available at the door
You must be 21 years or older to attend this event

STEWARDS OF CHRIST'S WORK

Thank you to all parishioners who have completed and submitted your Commitment Card to the church. As a reminder, we ask that commitments be submitted to the church no later than **February 26** in order to be accounted for in the final Summary Report. For those parishioners not currently supporting the church on a regular basis, please consider making a commitment through envelopes or Online Giving to support the needs of our parish.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES SCHEDULE

Grades 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6: February 26, March 26

Grade 2: February 26, March 19, 26

Grades 7, 8: March 19

Confirmation Grade 9, 10: March 19

YOUTH MINISTRY

- **Thurs 2/23** Youth Group in the Youth Room 7-9 PM
 - **Thurs 3/9** Youth Group in the Youth Room 7-9 PM
- Our next SEARCH retreat weekend is **March 30 – April 2**. This retreat experience is open to all 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. Please contact Andrew ASAP if interested.

ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Pre-Kindergarten students celebrated the 100th day of school on Friday, February 10th. We celebrated by counting to 100 in all different ways and participated in group activities. We also talked about all the fun things we have learned in school the past 100 days.

2017 TRICKY TRAY

St. Philip Prep Annual Tricky Tray
School Auditorium
797 Valley Rd., Clifton

Friday, March 24, 2017

Doors open at 5:30 PM

Tickets \$15 per person

(includes 1 sheet of General Bidding Tickets)

Tickets on sale now!

See Karen Powers at the front desk in school lobby

From 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM Monday – Friday
or contact Carol Urquhart at 973-472-3523

No one under 18 permitted

BOY SCOUT PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The annual Boy Scout Troop 21 Pancake Breakfast will be held in the auditorium on **Sunday, February 26th** from 8 AM to Noon (last seating at 11:30 AM) Adults \$10.00, seniors \$8.00 and children (ages 4-11) \$5.00. Children under 4 eat free with an adult. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Please come to enjoy pancakes, sausage, eggs, juice and coffee to support Troop 21.

ST. PHILIP PREP FAMILY FUN NIGHT FUNDRAISER

Support our school and join us for lunch or dinner at California Pizza Kitchen, Willowbrook Mall, on **Monday, February 20th** between 11:00 AM and 10:00 PM. Anyone who presents the Give Back Flyer OR mentions this "Give Back" event to their server that day will have 20% of their check donated back to St. Philip Prep. The students of St. Philip Prep thank you for your support!

MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

WIDOW/WIDOWERS

- The Monday Night Group: **February 27th** at 6:30 PM
- The New & Recently Bereaved Group: **TUESDAY, February 21st** at 7:00 PM.

COLUMBIETTES

- Our monthly meeting will be on **Thursday, February 23, 2017** at 7:00 PM in Cerullo Hall.
- We will be collecting cereal, juice boxes and fruit snacks for School 12. Call Sharon at 973 464-6608.

DIOCESAN NEWS

12TH ANNUAL DIVINE MERCY CONFERENCE

Saturday, April 8, 2017 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Cardinal Spellman H.S., Bronx, NY
Register Online at: TheDivineMercy.org/bronx
or phone 1-800-462-7426

PRAY FOR

THE SICK: Joan Hughes, Silvia Berardo, Lara Buell, Ryan G. Micale, Jayce Mazza, Patsy Sinisi, Barbara Sikora, Margaret Sikora, Steve Kuchta, Sister Beverly Aiazzino, Linda Brady, Gus Perez, Joseph Villano, Marie Nattvo, Jennie Marto, Antoinette Van Setters, Mary Ellen Stanton, Alexander Bancey, Josephine Pipitone, Zigrig Roman, Derrick Medeiros, Maria Ligato, Philip Kutzenko, Susan Russell, Evelyn Wescott, Ana Cabezas, Theresa Buhler, Annette Wanamaker, Daniel Marty, Alan Graf, Jim Lacava, Natalie Pych, Catherine Jackson, John Stanton, Virginia Mascolo, Christine Carpenter

THE RECENTLY BAPTIZED:

Giselle Christine Gillett, child of Matthew Lloyd & Natalie Marie Daniel Julius Kutzelman, child of Dawn & Glenn Colton Basil Soria, child of Christopher Ray & Allison

THE DECEASED: Marion Indelli, Valerie Manne, Jim Cherrey

PARISH GIVING

Total Sunday Collection: February 14, 2016	\$13,560.00
February 12, 2017 (SNOW/ICE)	
Envelopes	\$ 9,216.00
Cash	\$ 1,124.00
Online Giving Donations	\$ 4,486.00
Total	\$14,826.00
2 ND COLLECTION: PROJECT FAITH	\$ 2,319.00

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Lv 19:1-2, 17-18; 1 Cor 3:16-23; Mt 5:38-48

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2017

- 8:00** John Tolway – 17th Anniversary
Shannon Carroll – 3rd Anniversary
- 10:00** Claire Jaeger
Valerie Kaminski
Felicia & Pietro Mannarino
Kitty Colca
- 12:00** Lee & Peter Bartolo
Ida Pompeo

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2017

- 7:00 NO MASS AT THIS TIME**
- 9:00** Berta Saudia

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2017

- 7:00** Sara Smith
- 9:00** Richard Brophy

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2017

- 7:00** William Lacey
- 9:00** Teresa Palumbo

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

- 7:00** Valerie Manne
- 9:00** Regina Pellegrino

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2017

- 7:00** James Lake
- 9:00** Joseph Hugh Ganguzza

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2017

- 9:00** Alma Indelli
- 5:30** Joanne M. Koval
John Strangeway
Angeles Cabigao

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2017

- 8:00** All the People of the Parish
- 10:00** Frank Sabella
Mary Alfieri
Patricia Fitzgerald Nash
Katherine "Kitty" Colca
- 12:00** Nikki Valle

Sanctuary Candle: In Memory of
Mary Pinke
From: Pat & John Pinke

PRIESTS' SCHEDULE: FEBRUARY 25/26, 2017

5:30 PM Fr. Julio 10:00 AM Fr. Miguel
8:00 PM Fr. Kevin 12:00 Noon Fr. Joe