

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:00](#)):

This is Bishop Michael Burbidge and you are listening to The Walk Humbly Podcast.

Billy Atwell ([00:08](#)):

Podcasting from the St. Clare Studio in the Diocese of Arlington, welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your co-host. If you're listening to this podcast, you're benefiting from the generosity of the thousands of people who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. The BLA supports a lot of ministries here in the Diocese that you hear us talk about on this podcast, but that includes the Communications Office and the studio that we're sitting in. Thank you all who have given. If you haven't already, please rate this podcast or write a review wherever you're listening. If you're on YouTube, make sure you subscribe to our channel and ring the bell.

([00:41](#)):

Sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org. As many of you know, Bishop Burbidge writes a short Gospel reflection every day and posts it to his Twitter account @BishopBurbidge. Check that out there. Make sure you're following the Diocese on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. If you have a question for Bishop Burbidge, email us - info@arlingtondiocese.org. You can send it also on social media if you want to message us there instead. Before we get started, on the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe, we will hold Adoration and a recitation of the Rosary at the Cathedral of Saint Thomas More.

([01:14](#)):

This will be the beginning and really a kickoff for year two of the Golden Jubilee preparatory period. The theme for that year is "My Soul Rejoices in the Lord." This takes place on Sunday, November 20th at 4:00 PM. Please join us. Today's topics - we're going to go through National Vocations Awareness Week, Month of the Souls in Purgatory and Election Day is November 8th. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:37](#)):

Billy, I'm doing well. Thank you for mentioning year two. It's hard to believe that we're already almost finished year one, so that means our diocesan Jubilee is getting closer and closer. But what a beautiful year two is going to be. Just as year one was devoted to the Eucharist, year two will be devoted to our Blessed Mother. Praying to God that all of us will deepen our intimate relationship with her. I mean, the Lord from the cross gave Mary to us as his mother, as our mother. Praying that we deepen our relationship with her, our trust in her as a powerful intercessor and also the commitment to follow her example.

Billy Atwell ([02:14](#)):

Absolutely. Now, we have serious topics, but before I get into that, the Phillies didn't do so great. Are you going to be getting a little more sleep now that you...

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:23](#)):

That's right, exactly. When you get to the World Series, even though the Phillies had a little bit of a magical run there at the end, it was exciting to watch and they did well. But when it's over, you're like, "Well, at least I'm going to start getting to bed at a normal time." Those games are over so late. Whether they win or lose, you have some adrenaline going.

Billy Atwell ([02:46](#)):

It's not like you can hit the sack right after the game's over.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:48](#)):

Well, I know there's a lot of Dusty Baker fans, former manager of the Nats, who listen to our podcast, really a good man who's always very, very good to the priests who celebrate Mass for the Nats. Although I prefer that the Phillies would've won, you're happy for a good man like that who's been in baseball such a long time.

Billy Atwell ([03:11](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Yesterday began National Vocation Awareness Week. I just realized this began in 1976. I didn't realize it's been going on for quite that long. It serves to promote discernment of vocations, particularly those to the priesthood and religious life. When you think back on your journey to the priesthood, what do you think was the most helpful in your discernment?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:33](#)):

First of all, you're right about it being National Vocation Awareness Week. The Church has these kinds of celebrations highlighting certain months or certain weeks. National Vocation Awareness Week is just a time for all of us to pause, to remember that God created us wonderfully and uniquely. In his divine plan, he has a vocation entrusted to us. Those who have heard God's call, whether it be to married life or the diaconate or priesthood or living holiness in the single life, we are reminded to everyday renew that promise, that yes to God's call. It's so important for a healthy marriage. It's so important for a priesthood rooted in holiness and faithfulness.

([04:23](#)):

For those discerning, it's a great opportunity. Please consider. God may be calling some of you to give your whole life to the Church as a priest or consecrated religious, but always ask that question, not so much "What am I going to do with my life?", but "Lord, what do you want me to do with my life?" For all those discerning, ask that question and then ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you and guide you. You'll hear the message. God will lead you in that path in which he wants you to walk. In my own life, I think the call to priesthood, first of all, it's placed in God's heart. You don't know why it's there, but you know something's there. It was really developed through the help of other priests.

([05:07](#)):

I was blessed to have priests in high school and one newly ordained was assigned to my parish who I was just in awe of. He became a real help to me and actually was the first person I told I wanted to be a priest. He just gave me great guidance. His advice was sound, like, "Okay, before you make this step of going into the seminary, are you going to daily Mass? Maybe you should start doing that. Are you praying a little bit more frequently?" He didn't say, "Here's an application." He said, "Let's do some prayer. Allow the Lord to lead you."

([05:40](#)):

I would say it was really the inspiration of other priests who helped me. That was a great, great support. And then upon making my decision to enter seminary, to have the support and love of my parents and family and friends was a great help.

Billy Atwell ([05:56](#)):

I've heard Father Isenberg, our Vocations Director, offer similar advice to groups that he's speaking with. Don't feel like that if you're thinking, "Maybe I'm called to religious life or priesthood," that you have to go to seminary right away or into formation. Start with things that would be important for any holy vocation, whether you're married or otherwise. Start there. And if the call grows, then answer it.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(06:17\)](#):

Right, exactly.

Billy Atwell [\(06:18\)](#):

Pope Francis - I read a quote from him recently I thought would be appropriate for this - he says, "As Christians, we do not only receive a vocation individually, we are also called together. We are like the tiles of a mosaic. This is the mystery of the Church, a celebration of differences, a sign and instrument of all that humanity is called to be." Because I think about in our own diocese, for instance, we have religious from different charisms and different orders that serve in different ways.

[\(06:44\)](#):

No two priests are the same. They have different gifts and different opportunities to carry out God's word. I would say as a bishop, when you're looking out over this entire diocese, you must be so grateful to see all of those differences and those collaborations.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(06:57\)](#):

Yes. In my ministry, I have the opportunity to do that frequently because I often preside at diocesan celebrations where all those vocations you just mentioned are represented. It often hits me. You're right, it often hits me. I look out into the congregation, I'm like, "Here's the Church. Here's the Church. People of different ages, backgrounds, personalities, vocations, and every person is essential with God's grace in building up the Church as we strive to be the one body of Christ." I never take that for granted when I look out there. I'm like, "Wow, this is really incredible, all these different vocations, all these different people living out the universal call we all share, the call to holiness."

Billy Atwell [\(07:42\)](#):

Very good. What a beautiful thing. Last week, we celebrated All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day and most people have heard of these celebrations. The one that people might not be as aware of is the Month of the Souls in Purgatory. This is a month commemorated in the Church for those who have departed from life here on earth, but are still awaiting the full beatific vision, meaning they're not yet in heaven. How do you recommend people pray through this month, especially if they're maybe just learning about it?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(08:08\)](#):

All Souls' Day, I had the beautiful privilege, as we do each year, of celebrating Mass in a cemetery, Fairfax Memorial. It's very solemn. It's very profound because you're there at the cemetery and you're reminded of a reality that sometimes we don't want to think about, and that is that this life is just a journey. Each day God gives us is a gift, but we're all going to die. We should not be afraid to say that because that's our ultimate destination and goal. Everything we do here on Earth should be preparing ourselves for that day when we meet the Lord. We don't know the day, we don't know the hour, and that's why it's so important to be vigilant.

[\(08:55\)](#):

If it's today, am I ready to meet the Lord? Am I in the state of grace? Am I in right relationship with others and with God? We know that those who have gone before us rely on our prayers. It's our sacred duty to pray for them. None of us are guaranteed that we're going right to heaven. Certainly there's a process for saints who are canonized, sure, but we are also mindful that there are those who are being purified, who are waiting to go to heaven in Purgatory. And that gives us the opportunity to pray for them. Saint Gertrude the Great is a 13th-century German nun and a writer, a mystic. There's a prayer she's given us that I often try to say myself.

[\(09:49\)](#):

It is this, "Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for me, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my own family." Just reminding us that those who have gone before us, even in our own lives, we are sinners and we're in need of God's love and mercy. When we pray for the souls in Purgatory, we are making an act of faith. We're making an act of hope. We're making an act of love because we're entrusting them to God's divine mercy.

Billy Atwell [\(10:30\)](#):

Absolutely. Bishop, Election Day is tomorrow. We're recording on Monday, November 7th. Tomorrow, November 8th is Election Day. In fact, some people will hear this on Election Day or maybe even after. But as Catholics, we're called to be a public witness, and you've talked about this a number of times on this podcast, to ensure that the voice of the Church is heard. That's part of our carrying the Gospel. But elections produce results that we might like or not, depending on where you live and who you voted for. How do you hope Catholics will respond to the election no matter the outcome, no matter where you live? What would be your hope for the way Catholics embrace the news?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(11:06\)](#):

Yes, thank you, Billy. First of all, if I could say, if you have not yet voted, please, please vote tomorrow. Again, it's just a sacred duty we have as citizens of this country. Think about so many people, even members of our own families and loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice to give us this freedom to live in a democracy, to be able to vote. It is something that is essential for us to do and as Catholics, to make sure that vote is rooted in prayer and that it is our faith and our deeply held moral convictions and truths that we bring in to that voting booth. But again, it has results. Sometimes people are happy with the results, sometimes people are disappointed.

[\(12:01\)](#):

But whether our preferred candidates win or lose, as Catholics, we must wake up the next day with the same mission and focus. Nothing changes in a sense. That mission and focus is to love and to serve God. No one election, not one election totally changed our world or our lives. Small improvements can be made, but our duty, no matter what the electoral outcome, is to be ambassadors of Christ, to reflect love and hope, to be joyful and knowing that in the end, we are only stewards of this earth and what God gave us. He's in charge. No matter who wins tomorrow, it's the Lord who is in charge.

[\(12:41\)](#):

It's one nation under God. All the elected officials and the new titles they may get as senator or governor or whatever, they're accountable to God too. Ultimately, we entrust the hands to him. I do think it is important, no matter who wins, that we pray for our elected officials, that God will keep them

truly wise, truly wise, the wisdom that only he can give. It's very, very important for us to pray and sometimes even pray that hearts may be transformed once people assume this leadership.

Billy Atwell ([13:19](#)):

Absolutely. The Virginia Catholic Conference, which represents you and Bishop Knestout of Richmond, we've mentioned them a lot on this podcast because they provide a lot of important updates and so on. They provided resources on their website to help guide Catholics through both the election process, how to vote, where your voting place is. They've got resources like that, but also on the four principles of Catholic Social Teaching. I was wondering, just for an educational moment, for those of us who haven't voted yet.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:44](#)):

If you're testing me though.

Billy Atwell ([13:46](#)):

Do you mind walking us through those just so we can recenter our thinking going into the election about what's most important?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:51](#)):

It's important too. Sometimes people, when you hear social teaching, they don't realize that when we say Catholic Social Teaching, it's rooted in Scripture. It's rooted in the Magisterium. It's rooted in our faith. Social teaching is a part of the Gospel. It is the Gospel. Yes. The four principles of Catholic Social Teaching, of course, begins number one, the preeminent one, is the dignity of the human person. All human life is sacred as created by God and we must do whatever we can to protect the innocent and vulnerable life. There you go. That's the preeminent issue. And then the common good. Well, if we believe all of life is sacred, then we believe that every person is due the respect and dignity as a child of God.

([14:43](#)):

The common good is when social conditions allow people to reach their fulfillment as a human person. It upholds, for example, the right to life, which makes all the rights possible. It asserts the right to food and shelter and education, employment, healthcare, housing, freedom of religious conscience, family life. See, there's all the issues. We are certainly clear in our teachings about every one of those issues. And then subsidiarity is looking at the family as the fundamental building block of society based on marriage between a man and woman.

([15:20](#)):

It's in the family, the school of prayer, the school of love that children are cared for and nurtured and policies and programs should defend, strengthen and respect the foundational unit and uphold parents' rights and responsibilities to care for and educate their children as the first of teachers. That subsidiarity means that society's larger institutions should not overwhelm or interfere with the smaller or local ones. In solidarity, pray God for this. It's what we say, we're the one body of Christ, God's holy family, that we're a human family. Despite our national, racial, ethnic, economic, ideological differences, we're called to love one another as God loves us, as we love ourselves.

([16:07](#)):

That is why we are rooted to eradicate poverty and disease and racism, to welcome immigrants and refugees and asylum seekers. That solidarity requires preferential concern for the poor. They're the four major pillars. But again, they're almost like a summary of everything that we believe as followers of Christ.

Billy Atwell ([16:30](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Again, folks, it's the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. If you want to find more about where your local polling station is, to learn more about these Catholic teachings on public policy issues - and there's a lot more information - go to [vacatholic.org](#). It's very important. I encourage you to sign up for their e-newsletter. When it's an important time to act, Jeff Caruso and his team there let you know through that email list. That is the most important tool for public policy for Catholics in this state.

([17:02](#)):

Please check that out. All right, Bishop, we got a question from a parishioner. It says, "Each year as we begin Advent I intend to pray through it, but I inevitably forget and end up surprised by Christmas." I've been in this position before. "Any advice for staying focused on Advent throughout that season?"

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([17:19](#)):

That's a great question. Again, it goes back to that need to be vigilant because that can happen. All of a sudden, we're in Advent. Things move quickly. It's a busy time of year for many people, many families. It's a great question, but there's a real need to be very intentional at the beginning of Advent and just say, "Okay, I am going to make sure that this is the best prepared I've ever been to celebrate Christmas, the birth of our Savior, and to make that a promise to God and to renew that promise each day through Advent." Advent is a reminder to slow down. That's what Advent is, a reminder to slow down.

([18:03](#)):

Yeah, there's all kinds of things going around you and shopping and celebrations and parties and family gatherings, all those things. They're all good, but they cannot take priority over our being with the Lord. Maybe an extra effort is needed during these busy days to slow down, to be with God. There are many Advent devotionals out there, but just some suggestions I could offer: Commit daily to doing the readings of the day. The Conference of Bishops has the daily readings, has a reflection. There are publications out there that do the same. Just take time to do readings. Think about the Sunday reading.

([18:50](#)):

Maybe in advance of going to Mass on Sunday, prepare by doing that. It's a beautiful time of year to pray the Rosary as a family, as individuals, or as a parish to allow a little bit more time for silence. I'm also very happy that each Sunday of Advent we are going to be offering an Advent reflection. I think that's a result of you and your team doing something very creative this Advent. I know you're teasing it a little bit on social media, but I've heard some of the details. Haven't seen the videos yet, but I've heard some of the details of these videos that will be on Sundays of Advent. How can people get that?

Billy Atwell ([19:24](#)):

If you're signed up for our email, so if you go to [arlingtondiocese.org](#) and click on the e-newsletter in the footer there, you'll be signed up to receive these each Sunday of Advent. They're the video reflections that we're offering where we got great contributions from the faithful and some priests and a religious sister of our diocese to lead those for us. They're going to be very inspiring. People are going to like those a lot.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([19:47](#)):

That's great, Billy. I'm grateful to you and your team. Also Billy, the other thing I would like to suggest is, I do this myself and I find it very helpful, I think it's great to go to Confession at the beginning of Advent because we want to begin a sacred season by being in right relationship with God, ourselves, and others. Be reconciled at the beginning of Advent, because this is a season that's filled with abundant graces and blessings. You want your heart, your soul to be ready to receive these blessings. Don't wait until the last minute, like two days before Christmas, to go to confession.

([20:24](#)):

I mean, that's fine. Parishes provide those opportunities and that's fine too. But spiritually, I think it's better sometimes to do it at the beginning of the season to be at peace as you begin the season of Advent and allow that peace to increase in your heart as we begin to welcome the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Billy Atwell ([20:43](#)):

Absolutely. Bishop, any final thoughts and then if you'd send us off?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:46](#)):

No, just a request to our listeners, I'll be leaving at the end of this week for the Bishop's Meeting, our annual meeting in Baltimore for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. I ask the faithful and all those listening to pray that the Holy Spirit will be enlightening us and guiding us as we make some important decisions and as we try our best to strengthen our unity as brother bishops. I want to give a shout out to my grand-niece Allie who I get to confirm this week.

([21:27](#)):

I've celebrated First Holy Communions for my grand-nieces and nephews, weddings for my niece and nephew, but it's the first time I'm confirming one of my family members. She's already given me advice about the homily, how long it should be and all those things. Of course, I'll do everything she says.

Billy Atwell ([21:44](#)):

This Friday is also Veterans Day.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:46](#)):

Veterans Day. We give great honor and thanks, profound gratitude for all of our veterans and your beautiful service to our country. Thank you so much, everyone. Billy, continued prayers for all of our listeners, that God will continue to keep us strong in faith and joyful in hope, constant in our love of God and one another, as we approach Thanksgiving, mindful of all the blessings that God has given to us and enter into the sacred season of Advent, we will walk humbly with our God.

([22:18](#)):

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