

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

This is Bishop Michael Burbidge, and you are listening to the Walk Humbly podcast.

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

Welcome to the Walk Humbly podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese, and your co-host. I want to begin by thanking everyone who has given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. If you're listening to this podcast, it's because there are a number of folks around the Diocese who have contributed over the years to support many ministries throughout the Diocese, one of which is the Communications Office. So we just want to say thank you to those who have made this possible.

Billy Atwell ([00:31](#)):

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Billy Atwell ([01:09](#)):

And before we dig into our topics, I want to remind everybody about the Eucharistic Symposium on October 22nd at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More. We're going to have Holy Mass in the cathedral. Bishop Burbidge will be the celebrant, and the homilist is going to be Archbishop Chaput, the Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He'll also be offering a reflection and a question and answer, and anyone who has read Archbishop Chaput's different reflections and so on, he's a very bright man with great things to offer to the Church, and will certainly offer a lot to our Diocese. Adoration and Benediction will also take place. There is limited seating, so please register. And you go to [arlingtondiocese.org](http://arlingtondiocese.org), we've made it very easy to see the event there. Just click and you can register.

Billy Atwell ([01:49](#)):

Today's main topics we're going to be talking about, the FBI arrested a pro-life leader. Our Bishop's Lenten Appeal actually wins national recognition, and Respect Life Month is here, but we've got more. I'll start with your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how you doing?

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

Billy, I'm doing well. Hope all our listeners are doing well. Thank you for highlighting the October 22nd event, our symposium, as you mentioned, Archbishop Chaput, a gifted writer, a very, very gifted speaker, and he really enjoys the question and answer segment. So those who will be attending, you will be very, very enlightened by the Archbishop and his keynote speech, no doubt. But also in that conversation with him following the keynote. And as Billy mentioned, register, it's free. It's free, but because there is limited seating, we want to make sure we have a full house for the Archbishop and know that those registrations are coming in at great numbers. So we're excited about it, but there's still more space. I hope people from across the Diocese can be present.

Billy Atwell ([02:53](#)):

Absolutely. All right. Before we get into the main topics, I want to ask you about some developing news. Hurricane Ian. It has barreled through the Caribbean, and is now devastating South Florida on its way up the coast. I heard on the radio this morning actually driving in, that Cuba is completely without power, the entire country, which is really unbelievable. And South Florida was seeing wind speeds as high as 140 miles an hour. I can't even imagine what that would be like. As this storm develops, what's your message?

Michael Burbidge ([03:18](#)):

Well, sure. I've seen like I'm sure our listeners have the news and the highlights from the places you mentioned, and our hearts certainly go out to all the people impacted by the devastation caused by the storm as we brace, get ready for the impact in Florida. So I've asked all Catholics and people of goodwill, to pray for those suffering right now, and really just scrambling just to, as you mentioned, without power. But also those in the path of Hurricane Ian, particularly those in the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf Coast, we pray.

Michael Burbidge ([03:56](#)):

We can be united, That's a beautiful part of our faith, that we are united with our brothers and sisters in prayer. That's a very, very powerful way to be united, and keep praying that our Lord Jesus will calm the storm and keep them from harm that our Lady Star of the Sea will pray for us. And I'm sure as always in our Diocese and throughout the United States, we will be there afterward, after we know the damage, to contribute our resources to provide people with what they need after the storm. So more to come there on how we can not only assist with our prayer, but also in getting people the resources they will need.

Billy Atwell ([04:38](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. Thank you for mentioning that. Another developing story that's going on even as early as today with headlines is the transgender education policy that was put forward by Governor Youngkin as it relates to our public schools. His new policy would require that parents would be notified of their child's sexual orientation or gender identity, even if the student prefers that to be confidential just between themselves and the school. Governor Youngkin says that the fundamental question here is whether parents should be shielded from information about their child. Opponents say this could put students with gender dysphoria in an unsafe position. Bishop, I want to ask, what is your position on this, as it's catching a lot of news locally, as you can imagine?

Michael Burbidge ([05:16](#)):

As our listeners hopefully know, we did issue a pastoral statement on this very sensitive and significant issue, impacted the lives of so many individuals and families. In many ways, the Governor's draft policy really reaffirms what we have been saying, and that of course is, speak into truth and love. I don't think anyone can read our policy or even Governor Youngkin's draft policy without seeing that there is love. There's love for every child of God created in His own image and likeness, and that love and pastoral sensitivities are there. The Governor's policy, it restores, as you mentioned, parental rights that the previous policy pretty much disregarded, and also includes protections for students and teachers who believe what we believe about sexuality and the nature of the human person. And so I think the major point that Governor Youngkin makes is that children are not property of the state.

Michael Burbidge ([06:23](#)):

Children are not property of the state, they are members of a family. And parents, of course, are the primary caregivers and protectors of their children. And so any policy that deliberately takes parents out of this very, very sensitive crucial issue needs to be disregarded. And Governor Youngkin is saying, no, parents need to be part of this decision making. And as we have heard many times, sadly, where parents were not involved, young men and women in their teens made decisions without that parental consent who came back to question their parents, "How did you let me do this? Why weren't you involved?" Or whatever.

Michael Burbidge ([07:14](#)):

So parents need to be part of this. And I think this is the major emphasis that Governor Youngkin is making. We are in a 30-day period of public comment, and so I would hope that people who share our beliefs and convictions about the dignity of the human person, that God created us uniquely as male or as female, and we are under His protective care, will certainly reaffirm what this policy is stating, again, that the parents cannot be excluded from this decision.

Michael Burbidge ([07:53](#)):

And in case there are questions out there about how our Catholic schools handle these sensitive issues, I want to assure everyone that we will never keep important information about the development of your child from you. You deserve to know what's happening in your child's life. And so again, please, please... The other important part here is as always, sometimes people just read headlines. So before you comment on the Governor's policies, read the policy.

Billy Atwell ([08:24](#)):

Right. One way or the other, read it.

Michael Burbidge ([08:25](#)):

Read the original source. Don't rely on just what's being reported. And I think you'll see a good opportunity there again to reaffirm parental rights and the dignity of all persons.

Billy Atwell ([08:38](#)):

As a parent, it really gives you chills, at the thought that a teacher would know something important about your child, whatever that is, whether it's gender dysphoria for or something else, and knowingly keep it from you, it's really a scary proposition. Bishop Burbidge had mentioned his Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology. You can find that on our website. It's been very popular. We've gotten requests from around the world to republish it and to translate it. There's a reason. He worked with a team to make sure that this was in line with everything we know about bioethics and the law, theology and philosophy, really worked hard in developing that catechesis. So if you go to our website, [arlingtondiocese.org](http://arlingtondiocese.org), you can find it. Just search "catechesis on the human person" or "gender ideology". But actually, if you just go to Google and write "Bishop Burbidge on gender ideology", it's one of the first things that pops up. It's easy to find on our website.

Michael Burbidge ([09:25](#)):

Right. And the end notes that we included from a psychological, spiritual, emotional perspective, if people want to go even deeper into study and research, all that is there for them. And again, with this

public policy in Virginia, and along with our statement, we reaffirm that every person should be treated with respect, compassion, and dignity.

Billy Atwell ([09:50](#)):

That's right.

Michael Burbidge ([09:51](#)):

And it is our sacred duty to teach and to speak the truth in love.

Billy Atwell ([09:54](#)):

Absolutely. You can also stay up to date on political issues like this through the Virginia Catholic Conference, [vacatholic.org](http://vacatholic.org). It's so important to sign up for their email news alerts. Jeff Caruso there is the Executive Director, He doesn't pepper you with lots of emails, when he sends it, it's important, and you know to take notice of it.

Billy Atwell ([10:13](#)):

Bishop Burbidge, there's an interesting story that's been kind of developing, but the Catholic News Agency reports the following. A Catholic speaker and author, his name is Mark Hawke, 48, of Pennsylvania, who regularly prays the rosary outside an abortion clinic in Philadelphia, was arrested by at least 20 SWAT members on Friday for an alleged physical assault of a Planned Parenthood clinic escort last year. The alleged assault has been disputed by Hawke, as well as the legality of the arrest it is based upon. That's from Catholic News Agency.

Billy Atwell ([10:44](#)):

The FBI has stated that SWAT was not deployed, but media reports indicate, and Hawke's wife alleged that 15 to 20 federal agents were present for the arrest. Despite being arrested for an allegedly violent crime, and the violation of what's called the Face Act, which prohibits people from keeping someone from getting to an abortion clinic, Hawke was released after his first court appearance. This has caused some to wonder about the validity of the claims against him. But he has since pleaded not guilty in federal court.

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

The background of the story is that it apparently took place last November, so it's been quite a while since this incident. But Hawke stated to Catholic News Agency that he and his son were approached by the alleged victim, an abortion facility escort, who began harassing them, specifically his son. And he pushed the escort away, and that person fell. He claims that they only needed a Band-Aid, while the victim is saying that they needed more serious medical attention. Bishop, what are your thoughts on this story? He's a well-known Catholic pro-life advocate. I was just curious if you had seen the story, and what your thoughts were on it.

Michael Burbidge ([11:41](#)):

Sure. And Billy, I think as we have learned on numerous occasions, even in recent times, it's very, very important for the facts to surface before we make judgements, or before we make definitive statements. There is a thing called due process, there's a process that allows the facts and the truth to surface. And so even in this case, we have to allow that. My hope is that the court case will provide the

truth of what happened. And if he did attack the man, as the Justice Department is alleging, he should be held accountable. However, if he did not, or if the charges are exaggerated, then this would be appear to be a very sensitive and unfortunate case of, really, negligence on their part. So we have to see what happens. But we also have to be realistic and not naive in living in this world.

Michael Burbidge ([12:34](#)):

The timing and scale is kind of a sign of what we're seeing. There have been hundreds of attacks on Catholic parishes, pregnancy centers, pro-life entities, over the past years. We've not seen anything on this scale like this previously. And the risk to those praying outside of abortion clinics is very real. And I applaud the courage of those who do. We just were there last Saturday. I was joined by many in our Diocese, including many of our young people. And when we pray outside of an abortion clinic, that's what we're doing. We're praying. We're praying that the hearts of mothers and fathers thinking about doing the unthinkable may be transformed, as well as those who are inside a clinic. So we are truly praying for those people. And we do so, so peacefully. We do so peacefully.

Michael Burbidge ([13:33](#)):

But in this day and age, that takes a lot of courage, because we hear the horns beeping, and we hear not so nice comments being thrown at people who are just exercising their right to stand up for the unborn, the most vulnerable, the most weak. And so, for all of our people who do so, bringing their faith into the public arena by engaging elected officials, by offering such witness. We had Mass, we began the day with Mass, the most perfect way, the source of our unity. I do want to say thank you for your perseverance. Thank you for your courage. Always do so peacefully, and also as witnesses of the Gospel of Life. And so with this particular case, again, let the facts surface and hopefully the truth as well, of course. And then we can comment properly more specifically.

Billy Atwell ([14:29](#)):

Perfect. And we'll talk more in a moment about Respect Life issues. But first I want to say, the International Catholic Stewardship Conference this year, at that conference, our Office of Development received the Total Annual Appeal Award for the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. And to receive this award, the Diocesan Appeal was evaluated from start to finish for different things, from materials to communications, the way it operates at the parish level, those kinds of things, the involvement of the Bishop.

Billy Atwell ([14:56](#)):

And the reason I wanted to ask you about this award is because I know from speaking with you, and you've mentioned on this podcast a number of times, that you credit its success and the good that it does on those who have contributed to the ministries that we support. Everything from Catholic Charities to communications, vocations, education, pro-life ministry, family ministry, young adults, the list goes on. Many of those people are listeners to the podcast. I thought, well, the BLA got an award, that seems more like inside baseball news. But I thought, actually no, this is a credit to those who have contributed. I thought you would want an opportunity to talk about that.

Michael Burbidge ([15:27](#)):

Well, no, absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you for saying that, and gives me a great opportunity to thank the pastors and priests throughout our Diocese who support and encourage participation in the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, for helping the ministries that you just mentioned that help and assist so many people.

But also a wonderful opportunity to thank the faithful of this Diocese who are so generous and kind in sharing their resources, and giving to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, to allow us to do our ministries. There's no gift too small. We just ask that you contribute according to your means, and to help us to carry out the important work of this Diocese, and our faith will respond in an extraordinary way.

Michael Burbidge ([16:17](#)):

And I just hope everyone knows how grateful I am to all of you. And congratulations to our team. Part of the Bishop's Lenten Appeal is communicating the message and inviting people to participate. And that takes hard work and dedication and creativity and zeal. And to be recognized nationally by their own peers and colleagues, just as recently as our Catholic Herald was by their peers, it makes me very proud. We have such gifted people as part of my team who are just doing incredible work. And so congratulations to our team, our Development and Stewardship team, but congratulations to all in the Diocese of Arlington.

Billy Atwell ([17:01](#)):

Perfect. And Bishop, we're on the doorstep here of Respect Life Month. So October is Respect Life Month in the United States. And with everything going on in our culture, I think it's good timing. Within the past year, we have one of the most, or probably the most significant pro-life victories in our nation's history. The overturning of Roe v. Wade, and what we call the Dobbs case. So what are you focusing on during this month that's Respect Life Month that's coming up?

Michael Burbidge ([17:25](#)):

Yeah. Every month is Respect Life Month. We know that. But in a special way, October just intensifies our work, intensifies our call to respond, our duty. So when you designate a month for a certain issue or initiative, it's good. It just reminds you, it renews you of what we should be doing every day and every month. So we have numerous events and celebrations planned. Last Saturday, as I mentioned, we celebrated the Mass for the Gift of Human Life and prayed a Rosary outside a clinic. I'll be doing a Holy Hour for Project Rachel, Post-abortion healing. Those in need after having made that decision. Beautiful ministry. St. Leo's, October 11th, 7:15. There will be a Mass for Respect Life on Sunday, October 30th, at St. William of York, and blessing a Mary Shelter in Fredericksburg on October 30th. And check your parish bulletins, because parishes are celebrating Respect Life Month in unique ways.

Michael Burbidge ([18:21](#)):

Also, as we know, abortion is a tragic and barbaric act that kills a child and wounds a mother. And every day the Catholic Church in the United States works not only to make our position known, that no, the unborn must be protected, life is sacred from the very moment of conception. We can never tire of witnessing on behalf of that truth, praying for that truth to be protected, and engaging our elected officials. But it's also important, I think, for our faithful to always be reminded that through their goodness and generosity, we do so much to help mothers and fathers who are going through crisis pregnancies. We provide free housing at St. Margaret Cortona, for moms who are going through that free medical care at our Mother of Mercy clinics, Project Gabriel—our clothes and the basic necessities, bottles, diapers for people who need that.

Billy Atwell ([19:16](#)):

Yeah, there's a lot.

Michael Burbidge ([19:18](#)):

We provide rent and utility assistance and so much more, including adoption through our Catholic Charities. So we are pro-life, and so that means we will protect, yes, of course, the unborn, and we will have ministries that will radiate our belief in the sacredness of life, and how we're there to help those who certainly want to bring forth life into our world. And especially those in most need. And again, it is through the generosity of our people that we can always be there for them.

Billy Atwell ([19:50](#)):

And one of the things you heard in the listening sessions for the synod of Bishops was a desire to hear more about the good that the Church does. They know where the Church stands on certain issues. It's no mystery what we think about abortion, but there is some mystery about, how are we working to combat it? How are we helping moms, like you said, that are in need, mothers and fathers that are struggling with the decision, or have a child and need help? What are we doing for them? Well, we know we're doing a lot, but they needed to be equipped with more. So I think we keep finding more opportunities to share that message.

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

You're right, Billy, because we do this every day, and we're helping so many people every day, and it's in front of us. So I think there's maybe just human nature or something that we just presume because we're doing, everyone knows we're doing it. Well, in the listening sessions I always mention some of these basic things that we do every day. And very good active participants in our parishes saying, I didn't know that. And it certainly would be nice if I was able to tell my friends or my colleagues, "Hey, do you know what else the Catholic Church is doing?"

Michael Burbidge ([20:50](#)):

I'd say it's probably one of the challenges, in the sense that we face, that we do all these works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, not for credit, not to have a pat on the back. We do it for love of God and love of neighbor. But there's also a practical element to it. If we're not letting it be known what we do, we don't equip our parishioners to be able to speak positively on behalf of the Church they love. And if we don't talk about it, then we're not inviting people to participate in it.

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

Yeah, it's part of our evangelization.

Michael Burbidge ([21:22](#)):

Yeah, it's part of our evangelization. And could not be more proud of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington for what we are doing to live our belief in the Gospel of Life.

Billy Atwell ([21:34](#)):

Absolutely. And if you want to stay up-to-date on a lot of those things that the Church is doing, a lot of it's communicated through the Catholic Herald. So make sure that you're receiving it, or go to the [catholicherald.com](http://catholicherald.com) website and sign up for the free e-newsletter. They put one out every week of the latest and greatest of what's happening in our Church. So Bishop, I have a couple questions from the faithful. So the first is, what sort of training, if any, are future priests given in the seminary on both the content and delivery of their sermons or homilies?

Michael Burbidge ([22:01](#)):

Ah, that's an interesting question, and it's one that we heard a lot in our listening sessions. I don't know what people are trying to tell me. I don't know. But we do hear that a lot. People in this Diocese, they love their priests, and they're so good to them and so grateful. But we did hear, those in formation for priests, are we helping them? Because that privileged moment, that privileged opportunity a priest has, especially every Sunday, to stand in front of people and to preach the word of God is a very, very important task. But there's skill involved. And so yes, I can say more than ever, more than ever, seminary formation is really doing an intense formation of homiletics. Definitely providing those who will one day as deacon, and then God willing as a priest, be preaching, giving them the skills they need, the theories, the research, but also the opportunity to practice.

Michael Burbidge ([23:09](#)):

And Billy, that is brutal. When you're practicing it, as I recall the days, and it still happens. So you're practicing your homily, but your audience is your classmates or those who know you the best, and they're all critiquing you. It's an unnatural setting, number one. And then you know your friends there will keep you very humble. So actually when you get to the parish, you're more relaxed than ever. And I have to say, and I'm really glad this question came in today, because I have to say, last couple, few years especially, including the eight who were recently ordained, I am hearing many positive comments from the faithful and their pastors, saying, these new priests, they are coming. They're ready to preach. And so I think the seminary has also heard this request. And the seminaries that we use to send our seminarians, their homiletics departments are extremely, extremely well done. So I feel very confident that our men are getting the help that they need to be great homilists.

Billy Atwell ([24:23](#)):

That stress in your homiletics class might have prepared you, because I know that you've had to preach in front of brother bishops before.

Michael Burbidge ([24:29](#)):

It is still nerve wracking, let me tell you. It is still, it is the most nerve wracking part. I think we talked about it the last podcast, I had the mass at Catholic U, the opening Mass of the Holy Spirit. What I did not realize, I thought I was going to be mostly preaching to Catholic students, I went there and there were like 60 priests concelebrating. I'm like, "Oh no, this makes it very difficult."

Billy Atwell ([24:53](#)):

All right, so the next question is going to sound like I wrote it. I promise you this is a real question that came in. I have noticed a poster in my parish promoting the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund. Can you tell me a bit about that? So this is a great question, but people are going to think I wrote it.

Michael Burbidge ([25:06](#)):

I did. No, I'm kidding. I'm only kidding. But as I mentioned previously regarding the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, the faithful of this Diocese see the needs we have and respond generously. And the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund is just another example of that. We have fundraisers that work on a year-by-year-basis, like the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, or the Catholic Charities collection. We collect those funds, then use them in that year to help provide for the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in our Diocese, as we just mentioned. Other funds, however, look over the long term and try to provide sustainable



revenue for some of the most critical needs. And so the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund is an investment from which we draw a certain amount from the interest that accrues each year, but not so much that the overall fund decreases. So the goal is to increase.

Billy Atwell ([25:58](#)):

To grow over time, right.

Michael Burbidge ([25:59](#)):

And currently, there's about \$3 million in that fund.

Billy Atwell ([26:01](#)):

That's wonderful.

Michael Burbidge ([26:02](#)):

And so we are blessed that we have 48 seminarians in formation, but as many of our parents know out there who send their children to universities and colleges, room and board and tuition, it's no different for seminarians. And so there's a hefty price. Certainly well worth it, but we could never do it unless we had the support of our Bishop's Lenten Appeal, and the Seminarian Endowment Fund. So any of you thinking about how you can best help us, please consider this as one of those opportunities.

Billy Atwell ([26:34](#)):

Absolutely. And you can learn more about it at [arlingtondiocese.org](http://arlingtondiocese.org). Bishop, there's a lot in this podcast, but I was wondering if you had any final thoughts, and if you'd send us off with your blessing?

Michael Burbidge ([26:42](#)):

Thank you very much, Billy. And October is also a month that we also dedicate to our Blessed Mother. November will be year two of our three-year preparation period for 2022, which is dedicated, also, to our Blessed Mother, and deepening our relationship with her, and intensifying the way we imitate her in our own lives and her "yes" and surrender to the Lord. So, I just hope that in these days, all of us grow closer to Mary, our mother, and ask her in a very special way for her powerful intercession to watch over you and your families. And also to intercede for all those, as we mentioned the beginning of the podcast, who are impacted by the severe hurricane and the damage that is causing. And together may we pray for one another, that with the Lord's grace, we may always walk humbly with our God.

Michael Burbidge ([27:40](#)):

Thank you for listening to the Walk Humbly podcast. Make sure you check out more episodes on iTunes, Google Play, Stitcher, and Spotify. You can follow me on Twitter, [@bishopburbidge](#), where I offer gospel reflections each morning, and share photos and updates of what is going on in the Diocese of Arlington. Stay up-to-date with news, event information and inspirational content by subscribing to our e-newsletter at [arlingtondiocese.org](http://arlingtondiocese.org).