

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

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

Billy Atwell ([00:07](#)):

Welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, chief communications officer for the diocese and your cohost. If you haven't already, I'd ask that you please rate this podcast, write a review wherever you're listening. iTunes, Spotify, Overcast, wherever it might be, and sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org. Just go into the footer and you can see the e-newsletter link there. Again, we've been sending out a lot of our updates to that, reminders about some of the live streams, those have been really popular so if you want to get a reminder about that, go sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org.

Billy Atwell ([00:37](#)):

You can also follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. More than 18,400 of you already do, @BishopBurbidge. Every day, he provides a short reflection on the gospel of that day, and those are very popular as well, so again @BishopBurbidge on Twitter. You can also follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. If you have a question for the Bishop you would like considered for the podcast, email us. It's info@arlingtondiocese.org. Again, info@arlingtondiocese.org. Now I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:05](#)):

I'm doing well, Billy. Great to be with you and to be with our listeners today.

Billy Atwell ([01:10](#)):

Just like last week, this week we've got a guest for the podcast, Father Stefan Starzynski. He's a hospital chaplain for the diocese, but before we bring him in, I wanted to ask you about something you did earlier today. At St. Thomas More Cathedral School, they're celebrating their 75th anniversary which is obviously a very big deal, especially given the history of that school. What was your message for the folks who were watching the live stream and listening? There were students, faculty and staff, parents and alumni listening and watching in. What was your message?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:36](#)):

It was a great day. Always, celebrating anniversary is a great occasion to give thanks to God for the blessings. In this particular case, the blessings he has bestowed upon the St. Thomas More Cathedral School for these past 75 years. I always say on an anniversary what I said at mass today, an anniversary gives us the opportunity to do three things. To remember, to rejoice, and to renew. To remember. To remember all the people throughout the 75 years who have served in the school, assisting parents in the education of their children. The sisters, the Catholic educators, the staff and the volunteers. We were blessed in the beginning of our school here at the cathedral. The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were here from the beginning and helped to give us these wonderful foundations to build upon. A special memory for me because the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary taught me in four different schools. In two different grade schools, in high school, and in college, so I know many of them were watching.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:47](#)):

Our charism is that, our Catholic education, so we thank them, but all of our Catholic educators, to remember them especially those who have died, who have gone home to God, we prayed for at mass for their peace. To rejoice. These are difficult days, unsettling days. It was difficult not having the students in front of me and the teachers for such a big anniversary, but in the midst, we have every reason to rejoice in God's blessings in our midst, the gift of life itself. The gift of our Catholic faith, the special people in our lives, the gift of a Catholic education, and so a day to rejoice for all God's blessings. How do we thank God for these gifts? We renew. We renew our commitment to be the person he's calling us to be, the student, the son, the daughter, the parent, the educator, to be faithful to that call that we have received and to grow in faith and holiness. That was the message to the school community today, and I told them how blessed we were. We're celebrating mass today on the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker.

Billy Atwell ([03:53](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:54](#)):

Powerful intercessor for all of us, as your fathers, but for all of us, especially for educators and students these days. Distance learning is working but it's hard work still. So ask Saint Joseph's to give us perseverance, that we persevere in doing this work entrusted to us, and this month of May, we begin this month dedicated to Mary, our mother. I think some of your listeners are aware that the 3:00 today, the Archbishop Gomez, the head of the Bishop's Conference from United States is reconsecrating our country to our blessed mother in this time of need during this pandemic. So what I did, I jumped ahead a little bit. Don't tell Archbishop Gomez, but I did jump ahead and I said that prayer with the entire school community today about reconsecrating our diocese and our nation to our blessed mother.

Billy Atwell ([04:52](#)):

For those that want to tune into that live stream from the US Conference of Bishops, go to facebook.com/USCCB. You can also go to their website, usccb.org to see other resources. There's a liturgy guide there and everything, there's a lot of good stuff, so if you want to participate in that, again, it was at 3:00 on Friday so depending on when you listen to this, you might've missed it, but you can always go back and watch that at facebook.com/USCCB. On the topic of schools, this coming Wednesday, May 6th at 10:00 AM, you're going to celebrate a mass via live stream for all the students, parents, faculty and staff of the schools of our diocese. As you've spoken with principal, teachers and so on, the staff of our office of Catholic schools for instance, what have you been hearing?

Bishop Burbidge ([05:33](#)):

It's really been amazing how well prepared we were for this distance learning. It wasn't long after, a few days after that we were right online and education is taking place, so we're saying our schools are open and our schools are thriving through this distance learning and our educators are doing such a great job. The students are persevering, their parents, God bless them, are helping them and in so many ways. I'm just so, so very proud of our schools and what's being accomplished. We haven't watered down the education.

Billy Atwell ([06:11](#)):

That's very true.

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

It's not being watered down. All the subject areas and the curriculum is being taught as intended and we've maintained in distance learning, Catholic identity. We're doing what we do every day. The school day is beginning with prayer, there's opportunity for prayer and devotion throughout the day, we're still learning our faith in the Saint, so the Catholic identity of our schools is remaining very, very prevalent, so I'm very proud of what our schools are able to accomplish.

Billy Atwell ([06:46](#)):

That's wonderful. Again, those who want to tune in on Wednesday, May 6th at 10:00 AM, Bishop's going to celebrate a mass for all the students and parents, faculty and staff and so on of our diocese. You can follow that on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/arlingtondiocese](https://www.facebook.com/arlingtondiocese). You can also follow it on Twitter. YouTube is also a great platform for us. You can subscribe. If you ring the bell there, then you can get notified when that's up and we'll also send out an email. Again, go to [arlingtondiocese.org](https://www.arlingtondiocese.org) to sign up for that email. Bishop, do you have any recommendation? As a parent my wife's doing most of the home learning, I'll be honest with you, but do you have any recommendations for parents who are facilitating that e-learning at home? Some might be struggling with it. Some not but-

Bishop Burbidge ([07:24](#)):

I know. I'm hearing the many blessings that are associated with it but also the challenges. My niece and nephew are both educators and have three children, and they're saying "Wait, this is a little bit more challenging than we thought here." I know the challenges are certainly there, but many parents are enjoying the experience. It reminds us, we always say this because it's true, parents are the first teachers of their children.

Billy Atwell ([07:51](#)):

That's true, yeah.

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

In any subject, especially in the areas of faith. This really drives that point home, so it's reminding parents of that responsibility, and I do. You're asking me for a recommendation, Bill. Respectfully, what I would recommend is to say to our parents especially, not to get too stressed, not to worry about whether you are doing enough. I promise you, you are doing enough.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:20](#)):

Your efforts, your sacrifices, God sees them and God's going to reward them. You're doing far better than you probably even imagine. Don't forget, God only calls us to do our best, right? To give the best effort to do everything we can, and if you're striving each day to provide what you can for your children, then in God's eyes, I'm sure you are doing enough. As I just mentioned, it's an opportunity. You'll never get a chance for most parents to teach your children in this way again. For some, this might be welcome news, but find some joys and moments to bond with your children. They may not remember exactly what you taught them as far as your lesson plans maybe, but they'll always remember this year. They'll always remember, "That was kind of a unique time, a unique way to go to school. I really remember how hard my parents tried and how much they loved us through that process."

Bishop Burbidge ([09:22](#)):

I think that's an important point. Bring Catholic identity into your home and into your schoolwork. Make sure that you're not just fulfilling the homework for math and science and language, arts or whatever. Make sure that you're praying together at the beginning of each class and you're stopping to pause to recall God's presence and bring that faith dimension into your work. Parents, basically, God's blessing you. He's blessing your sacrifices and efforts and I'm sure you're doing a great job.

Billy Atwell ([10:00](#)):

Very good. Just a quick reminder again, so that's May 6th at 10:00 AM, Bishop's going to do a mass for all the students and parents and so on. You can follow us on social media or YouTube or go to arlingtondiocese.org.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:10](#)):

That's always the highlight for me. One of the things I love doing is going out to the schools and I begin the day with mass and then spend days in a classroom. I so much miss doing that, so this is at least some sort of connection.

Billy Atwell ([10:22](#)):

It's as close as you can get for the moment. Your Excellency, last week we had on the podcast Sherri Longhill from Catholic Charities and she told us about the folks that she's helping through the emergency assistance program there at Catholic Charities. Why don't you introduce and welcome this week's guest?

Bishop Burbidge ([10:34](#)):

Yes. This week, we have one of our great priest here in the diocese of Arlington. Very hardworking, holy priest, Father Stefan Starzynski, the hospital chaplain at Fairfax Hospital. Father, welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([10:47](#)):

It's an honor, Bishop Burbidge and Billy.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:49](#)):

It's great to have you on. We're using our podcast during this time of pandemic to just keep our listeners aware of the great work continuing to go on in our diocese, and certainly I've been with you at the hospital. I am acknowledging I could not keep up with you during my visit with you. You make your rounds and visit so many patients and return in the evening to see them again and we're so blessed to have your priestly presence there. Father, for those unfamiliar with your ministry, could you just talk about what you normally do? Prior even to this pandemic, what is your role as the hospital chaplain at Fairfax?

Father Stefan Starzynski ([11:33](#)):

My role is to bring Christ's healing love to the patients in the hospital and their families. Fairfax Hospital has about 1100 beds, of which maybe 15 to 20% are Catholic. Before the COVID crisis, we'd visit about 125 people every day and we bring the sacraments and every day, on average, I'm at the bedside of one to three people who are actively dying. What I mean by actively dying, I don't mean like next week. I mean today or tomorrow. I have the honor to escort one to three souls every day as they go to heaven.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:13](#)):

That's so beautiful, Father. The church, Christ is present with them in through your beautiful priestly ministry. How has this corona virus changed the way that you're able to minister to the sick?

Father Stefan Starzynski ([12:28](#)):

For one thing, in the middle of March, they did away with extraordinary eucharistic ministers. They did away with the volunteers, and also family is often not allowed into the hospital. Not in every case but in many cases. Now I don't so much go room to room. I have to go to the rooms where people invite me to go because of all the privacy laws that have come up. I would say about three fourths of what I do is going into rooms with people with COVID right now and it's an honor to be able to go into these rooms.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([13:11](#)):

I'm told that Fairfax is one of the main hospitals in Virginia for taking care of people with COVID, but in many ways, my ministry before this crisis and now, I often say that I'm almost doing the same thing that I was doing before as I'm doing now. I'm still visiting the sick, still bringing communion, still giving last rights, still hearing confession. I'm bringing the sacramental presence of Christ to the sick and dying at Fairfax Hospital, and not just the sick and dying, but to their families and to the doctors and nurses.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:50](#)):

That's a beautiful presence and like you said, we do know that it's true, right? That those with the virus, sometimes they're just alone. Their families cannot be with them, and I know that probably makes that moment even more difficult.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([14:08](#)):

Yes. Often, family is not allowed in and some of my most grace filled moments is going into a room of somebody who is dying of COVID and the family is not allowed into the room and I'm doing the Divine Mercy Chaplet, I'm doing the anointing, I'm doing the apostolic blessing, but the family is watching it via FaceTime. Sometimes they're all the way in Florida or they're in a different state. Even today, I went to a room of a man who was dying of COVID. The family was allowed into the hospital but not into the room. So they had to watch me say the prayers as they were standing outside. It was a beautiful family from the Philippines and we did the Chaplet Divine Mercy together because even though they couldn't hear the words, they knew what I was doing. They could see what I was doing and they could follow it in that way.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:06](#)):

That must've been such a source of consolation and comfort for them though to know that you are present.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([15:12](#)):

More than you can imagine. I feel like it is a great grace. I get called from family and saying "We're not allowed into the hospital and we're afraid that my father, my mother, my brother or my sister, I'm afraid of them dying alone. Can you go in there and visit them?" They are knowing that Christ's sacramental presence is going into these rooms even when they're not even allowed in. This brings about a great peace among many families and I feel like they're going to be eternally grateful for the rest of their lives.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:51](#)):

That's very true, Father. Even in your hospital ministry right now, video conferencing and technology is being of great assistance to you in ministry.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([16:06](#)):

Completely because they're watching the prayers from the room and so they're watching me say the prayers in real time, which is a great blessing to them. We have a mass now at the hospital that's now shown to the other hospitals, the Inova hospitals which I believe there's five. This technology truly is helping the people feel close to their loved one who sometimes is dying in the hospital.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:41](#)):

Father, I was asked a question last week on the podcast and it made me pause and actually think about it, it was a very good question. I was wondering if I could ask the same question to you. The question was this. What have you learned about yourself since this crisis started and we were quarantined?

Father Stefan Starzynski ([17:02](#)):

I have learned the value of the priesthood. I have learned that the doctors and nurses really do believe that what the priest does is very valuable. It's something that they can't do, bringing God's presence. I've had to overcome my fear. I had this fear of going into a room with COVID. Had to overcome that fear, and I also have learned that the most important people in the body of Christ, we're all important in the body of Christ, we're all the most important people in the body of Christ, but I've learned to see how much God loves the suffering, how much he is with us. I've learned that in myself. I've seen my priesthood through Jesus Christ as the divine physician and bringing his mercy and healing to those who are suffering often in the hospital.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:04](#)):

That's very beautiful, Father Stefan. Thanks for sharing that. Father, how can we, the listeners here, how can we pray for you right now and what intentions would you like us to include in our personal prayers?

Father Stefan Starzynski ([18:18](#)):

Please pray that I stay healthy. Pray that I do stay healthy, pray that Father Stanley stays healthy, pray that all hospital chaplains, doctors, the nurses and everyone that's in the hospital stays healthy. Again, pray for all the people who sadly do have to die alone, and how much that pains so many families, so many people who die alone. Pray for the people who are suffering for COVID, but also not everyone in Fairfax Hospital has COVID. There's still the people who have heart attacks, there's still the people who have strokes and all those other things. Just pray for all the people in the hospital so they feel your prayers, and that helps them to feel that they are not alone, that Christ is with them. The most important thing you can do is to pray for the people in the hospitals, pray for their families, and also pray for all the people who are assisting the people in the hospitals, that they stay healthy.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:24](#)):

Father, I'm sure I can speak for all of our listeners in saying you can be assured of those prayers as we've been mentioning on these podcasts in recent weeks that we are praying for those suffering, those died, and their families, but especially our healthcare workers and first responders, those who are on the scene are courageously, generously, sacrificially serving the needs of others. That certainly includes you,

Father Stefan, and we are so very proud of you and we thank you for being such a great priest and a powerful instrument of the Lord's healing love. Be assured of those prayers that you requested, and thanks. I know how busy you are and I thank you for taking the time to speak with us and our listeners on this podcast.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([20:14](#)):

Thank you, Bishop Burbidge. It was truly an honor to represent the hospital on this podcast today.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:21](#)):

Thank you, Father Stefan, and God bless you and stay safe and healthy.

Father Stefan Starzynski ([20:25](#)):

God bless you.

Billy Atwell ([20:27](#)):

A quick reminder for everybody, the hospital ministry of the diocese is supported by the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. For those of you have supported the Appeal, thank you so much. You've made these stories possible and that sacramental ministry of Father Stefan possible, so thank you for that. If you would like to learn more about the hospital ministry, go to arlingtondiocese.org/hospitalministry. You can learn more it there, you can see some more about their mission, and if you would like to contact somebody relating hospital ministry, the email address is hospitalministry@arlingtondiocese.org. That was a powerful testimony that he just provided.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:01](#)):

I've been with Father a number of times. Just say "I just want to experience your day" and I'll tell you by the end of the day, I'm like, "How does he do this every day?" He is so present to the patients and to their families, and as he said, to the staff and all too. Father's the type, if he visits someone in the morning, he's back there at night to see how that patient has progressed throughout the day, and he's on call throughout the night and he just does it so, so generously. We will definitely be praying for him and everyone else he asks us to pray for.

Billy Atwell ([21:40](#)):

Absolutely. Bishop, we have a few questions from the faithful. The first one's a little lighter, then they get a little more intense from there. The first one is a what app on your phone do you use the most?

Bishop Burbidge ([21:53](#)):

That's a good one. I like the news apps, so I have a couple of news apps about that I use a lot to keep you current on the daily news just as you're going from one meeting to another just to make sure you're up to date on what's going on. I'm sure our listeners know by now, I have a couple of sports apps.

Billy Atwell ([22:13](#)):

I'd imagine, yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:16](#)):

I actually like the CBS Sports app the best because it has all the sports covered and I use that. I have an app that also helps you to keep track of how many steps you're taking a day and your exercise and the physical part. There's two of them I use, and there's a couple of music apps here and there.

Billy Atwell ([22:41](#)):

Very good.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:43](#)):

I don't want to mention specific, I don't want to get free advertising.

Billy Atwell ([22:47](#)):

If anyone wants to be a sponsor of the podcast, just let us know. Next question. Why would Jesus have chosen Judas to follow him knowing that Judas would betray him? Didn't Jesus, in a sense, set Judas up for failure? That's from Larry K. Not an easy one.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:04](#)):

That's a very profound question, actually. To Larry, I would say it touches his question, really when the mystery of God's providence and human freedom and how they fit together. It's like the same approach when people ask why do bad things happen in good people type thing, but we know two things definitively. First, that nothing falls outside of God's providence. That's part of our central belief, and he works all things through his glory. Even those things, as we celebrated throughout Holy Week, that seemed to be against him. But that guidance or a providence does not destroy human freedom, because then we wouldn't be human if we didn't have the freedom. It's in the context and atmosphere of human freedom. I would say maybe to Larry that Jesus's foreknowledge of Judas's betrayal did determine Judas's betrayal in one sense, but it does not take away his freedom. That's like that mystery I'm trying to talk about. Just because our Lord knew what would happen does not mean that he did not extend to him. Judas, every opportunity graced, needed not to do what he did, right?

Bishop Burbidge ([24:33](#)):

What does that mean for us pastorally in our situation? More to the point. God knows, I guess, that we will also betray him, and we do. But that does not stop him from extending to us the grace and the opportunity we need to be faithful. It's there, right? The important thing is that his grace is never lacking, for Judas or for us. He doesn't set us up for failure and he provides us with the grace to reject that which is evil. He doesn't take that freedom away.

Billy Atwell ([25:13](#)):

Because he's operating outside of time, so we're limited by that so our perspective is limited. He sees in that greater perspective.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:19](#)):

That's a good question. That could be a whole course I think.

Billy Atwell ([25:21](#)):

I'm sure there are courses on it. Thank you, Larry, for that question. The next question is what are your thoughts on the short and long term as we manage through the pandemic and emerge on the other side? This is from the Goedert family in Leesburg.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:35](#)):

That question in itself is very practical because it's talking about the realities of today, but I'm glad that it also reflects a sense of hope because it mentions that we will emerge on the other side, and we know we will because we're an Easter people, and that's what we believe. For the short term, to people see and maybe reflect upon how God is asking them to live in this moment. This is not a punishment that God's giving us. This is a moment in time that is hard and it's difficult, but God is asking us to embrace it, to learn more about Him and about ourselves, and to live in this moment in the way that He may be leading us. So rather than think about what we cannot do, I hope we think about the opportunities we have to grow closer to God and one another because of the fact that we're staying home.

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

It's easy to focus on all the things we can't do, and it's human. I find myself doing that at a time and that's frustrating. It gets you grumpy. So you're saying, "What are the things I can do?" I think we all are finding some new, creative, life-giving things to do including our time with other people. I worry now, this time particularly with those who are poor, especially the hungry, we're hearing so much.

Billy Atwell ([27:13](#)):

We heard about that last week on the podcast, we discussed it.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:14](#)):

With the food, right? What Sherri was telling us, but I'm aware of so many places, schools and parishes. I just saw the list today where food is being collected and distributed, and so yes, people are lacking food but people are also providing food and I think you mentioned on our last week's podcast how people can do that. We want to make sure people are not going to bed hungry.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:44](#)):

The long term concerns, this is a time, we've talked about this before too, I just had a Zoom conference call with some leaders in our diocese and what they're seeing an increase of which, that all this time home and not going to your job or having the same responsibility, some non life-giving things are occurring and we do see a little bit rise in abuse of alcohol and other addictions, even domestic abuses, something that has come up in Catholic Charities. There are realities that worries me and those issues have to be addressed, and thank God we do have our counselors available. There's ways for people who need any assistance now, please call our Catholic Charities, we're here to help you. As I said, we're still in the Easter season and we know that this darkness, God will turn to light and he will lead this suffering to glory and even death to life. Let's keep encouraging one another in faith and live in joyful hope.

Billy Atwell ([29:00](#)):

That's wonderful. Bishop, I've gotten such great feedback just about this podcast and how that has contributed to people's hope and joy. Something to look forward to in hearing some of these stories, just as we got a number of emails that really reaffirm this, so thank you for doing this, for hosting this podcast and making it available to people. Any final thoughts and then if you would close this out with your blessing?

Bishop Burbidge ([29:20](#)):

I did mention today, we're recording the podcast on the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, and so we're very mindful today of those in the midst of this pandemic who are furloughed or unemployed or underemployed. We want to pray in a special way through the intercession of Saint Joseph the Worker that they will find work and employment real soon, and for all of us who are working, we want to ask Saint Joseph to help us to remember the purpose of our work. It's not for personal satisfaction or honors or recognitions or rewards, that's not why we work. We work to use our gifts and talents or whatever work God has given us to give glory to God. We do it in His honor and for His name and to remember that's the purpose of our work and in service to others.

Bishop Burbidge ([30:23](#)):

If we remember that, then our work will never be in vain, and so we ask Saint Joseph the Worker to help us with that. I do want to reassure our listeners that every mass that I'm celebrating throughout this pandemic, every day as our priests, we are celebrating mass every day, we are praying for all of you asking our Lord Jesus to keep you strong and help you to persevere and be patient and be convinced that he is with us, and with God's grace, may we continue to walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:00](#)):

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