

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

Billy Atwell: Welcome to The Walk Humbly podcast. I'm Billy Atwell the Chief Communications Officer for the diocese and your cohort. If you're listening to this podcast then you are already a beneficiary of the generosity of all those who have given to the Bishop's Lenten appeal, which has made this studio possible, and certainly this podcast possible as well. If you haven't already, please make sure you rate this podcast and write [00:00:30] a review on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you're listening.

And if you're listening on YouTube, please subscribe to our YouTube channel and ring the bell for notifications. Sign up for our e-newsletter at [Arlingtondiocese.org](http://Arlingtondiocese.org), and you can follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter @BishopBurbidge, where each day you can read a short reflection from the gospel of that day. You can also follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and you can send your questions to Bishop Burbidge, to [info@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:info@arlingtondiocese.org). I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how [00:01:00] are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge: I am doing well, Billy, I hope all of our listeners are doing well. Certainly everyone continues to be in my prayer asking God to keep you and your families and loved ones all safe and healthy.

Billy Atwell: Very good. So before we dig into the main topics, a quick reminder for everyone about a special Holy Hour, that's coming up on October 28th at 7:30 PM, Uplift Arlington, with a theme One Nation Under God. You're welcome to join in person with social distancing masks and the space limitations at St. Thomas More Cathedral. [00:01:30] Again, that's October 28th at 7:30 PM, but you can also watch on live stream. It's going to be on our YouTube channel and Facebook and all those great options. So Bishop, I want to ask real quick, why did you choose the theme for this one of One Nation Under God?

Bishop Burbidge: Well, first of all, Billy, the Holy hour is just a blessed time for all of us. So many of us are living very busy and demanding lives. So whenever we decide, "Well, I am going to give this hour to the Lord." Whether it be in the church or the live stream, as you said, [00:02:00] you can be assured if you set that time aside to be with the Lord, he is going to use it well and give you the graces and the messages and the comfort that you need. So yes, with encouragement ask people to attend. Our first Holy Hour with that theme, Uplift Arlington was because we were hearing of the distress and anxiety that so many people were experiencing. So we said, "Well, let's come together." Let's just be together with the Lord. He alone brings us the serenity we need.

And I know what people appreciate the most about the Holy [00:02:30] Hour is that we allow time for silence. Such a precious gift, but so little of it in our lives just to be quiet and still with the Lord. And so, but the theme for this week's

Holy hour is One Nation Under God, because obviously we are approaching the election and we need to pray that the Holy spirit will lead and guide all of us to be faithful citizens and discerning our vote. Make sure that we discern prayerfully [00:03:00] and that wisdom has given to us. And wisdom that will be given to our elected leaders. But we're also saying One Nation Under God to remind us as we come into his presence, this is always God's nation. The Lord is King of all. And so no matter what happens, wouldn't matter what the results are this is in God we trust.

And we're reaffirming that belief today and asking for the grace, after the election to be what the Lord calls [00:03:30] us to be, to be peacemakers. Because I think no matter what happens with this election, I think there will be unrest. And so in the midst of that, we have to be the peacemakers. We have to be the ones who imitate Christ. We have to be the ones who bring serenity to the situation. So what better way to ask for all these gifts than to come into the Lord's Eucharistic presence?

Billy Atwell: Absolutely. So again, that's Uplift Arlington, October 28th at 7:30 PM. If you subscribe to our email [00:04:00] e-newsletter at [Arlingtondiocese.org](http://Arlingtondiocese.org), you'll be notified the morning of. And if you subscribe on YouTube and get notifications, you'll find out exactly when that live stream begins. So feel free to check that out. Major news for DC area Catholics. It was announced yesterday that Archbishop Gregory will be named a Cardinal next month. So he's cardinal designate Gregory now. Was this a surprise for you?

Bishop Burbidge: Well, in a sense, you never know. You never know when such decisions [00:04:30] will be made. There's certainly a history with the Archbishop of Washington being named a Cardinal. But it doesn't just come with the office. It also belongs to the person and certainly Cardinal designate Gregory has been a Bishop for many years. He has given long standing service, dedicated service, generous service to the church in many roles, including as the Archbishop of Atlanta. Now, as the Archbishop [00:05:00] of Washington. He was elected by his brother bishops in the early 2000s to serve as the president of the United States Catholic conference.

Billy Atwell: That's right.

Bishop Burbidge: We know he is a leader on so many issues facing our church today. And so I am extremely happy for Cardinal designate Gregory for all in the archdiocese of Washington. Cardinal designate Gregory and I go back a while. When I served as the Bishop in Raleigh for 10 years, he was my metropolitan Archbishop. [00:05:30] So we had opportunities to work closely together. I consider myself blessed to have him as a friend and certainly look forward when I heard he was coming to DC. I was like, "Wow, in a sense it's a reunion we're so close together." So his voice is needed more than ever. And I think certainly as a Cardinal, that is certainly elevated. So prayers, and I know I speak with all in our diocese prayers are with Cardinal designate Gregory.

Billy Atwell: Absolutely. So our Holy father made international [00:06:00] headlines this past week when quilts from a documentary were leaked out. The quotes from Pope Francis include statements about same-sex relationships and whether civil unions are an appropriate tool for providing them with legal protections. Initially headlines proclaimed that Pope Francis was endorsing same-sex marriage and things like that. But better help us sift through this here. What's what is the truth and what do people need to know.

Bishop Burbidge: Right. And I always think it's very important when we hear news alerts or receive news alerts [00:06:30] to be still for a little bit. I was at a meeting with a number of priests and everyone's phones were going off. And so I thought, okay, let's just wait here. Let's make sure we have the reports that are accurate. Let's study this. Let's see if there's going to be any clarification. And so we issued a statement the next day. And some of the points that I'll make was in the official statement, that's posted on our website, if anyone wishes to see it. But contrary, Billy, to some reports, Pope [00:07:00] Francis did not endorse gay marriage or in any way change the church's constant teaching on human sexuality. These are unchanging and unchangeable truths of the human person known to us by natural law, known to us by divine revelation.

So the Pope did not and would not teach otherwise. Indeed, and I think this is very, very important to remember what he has said. And he has repeatedly affirmed [00:07:30] these truths throughout his pontificate, the sanctity of marriage, the sacred union of one man and one woman, that those with same sex attraction must be loved as children of God. But the behavior, homosexual behavior is never accepted morally. And the Pope has repeated those statements time and time again. No reference to civil unions should be understood as the church accepting [00:08:00] homosexual behavior as morally licit. I think what you see throughout this is that Pope Francis is clear concern, is that those with same-sex attractions be treated with respect, with compassion and sensitivity. It doesn't mean that we don't uphold the truth. It doesn't mean we condone behavior. We know that is immoral, but we treat the person with respect.

And I think that was his reference when he says "All deserve [00:08:30] a family." You know, those with same-sex attractions come from families. They're someone's son, they're someone's daughter, they're someone's grandson or granddaughter or someone's brother and sister. Well, no matter what, within the context of a family, we should never disown a brother or a sister, a son or daughter. And I think he was trying to make that point very clear. And it's important... I mean again, I'm not being naive here. [00:09:00] When the statement came out, there was all kinds of red lights flashing and there was some confusion. I think there still is. And maybe that will be clarified in coming days with the Holy See, I don't know about that. But an important thing is to remember, but when the Church wants to explain or change the teaching, it happens through a very official and formal means not through a documentary.

- Billy Atwell: Right, right. You can't look back and think of the great doctrines of the church being communicated through an edited documentary.
- Bishop Burbidge: And saying Pope Francis's [00:09:30] point about those with same sex attraction needed to be loved and cared for within families does not mean that they have a right to marriage or children as we continue to hold those beliefs.
- Billy Atwell: Yeah, that's a good point, an important distinction. So if anyone wants to read Bishop Burbidge's full statement on this, go to [Arlingtondiocese.org](http://Arlingtondiocese.org), and you can see it there under public statements. Bishop we're just a few days away, actually from the beatification of Father McGivney. Some in our diocese are going to know that name very well. Others might not recognize [00:10:00] the name. Tell us a little bit about why this beatification of father McGivney is so important.
- Bishop Burbidge: Yeah. It's a blessed time for the church here. Father McGivney is the founder of the Knights of Columbus and was a man known for his profound faith, Billy, as well as his compassion for the poor and the destitute. So, I mean, there you go. Someone in imitation of Christ. The Knights of Columbus, as we know, has become one of the largest outreaches to the poor in history. The Knights do a tremendous amount of good throughout our world, including our diocese. And I'm [00:10:30] going to take this opportunity because we have many Knights out there to express as I do every time I see you. Thank you so much for all that you do.
- First of all, on behalf of the sacredness of life, always faithful witnesses out there. And you're concerned for upholding the gospel of life is certainly reflected in the many, many charitable works you do throughout our diocese to help those in need. Feeding the hungry, helping the vulnerable, [00:11:00] raising money for parishes, helping pregnant women who need help. You know, we all know they paid for the ultrasound at the Mother Mercy Clinic, which they continue to do, which no doubt is saving many lives.
- Billy Atwell: That unlocks for them, the ability to do prenatal care-
- Bishop Burbidge: I know.
- Billy Atwell: Which is a huge need-
- Bishop Burbidge: Exactly.
- Billy Atwell: [crosstalk 00:11:15] and the Knights stepped in and made it possible. It's really profound.
- Bishop Burbidge: To my brother [Bishop 00:11:19] has I, we loved the Knights of Columbus, and I know this is a great moment for all of you. So keep up your good work.

Billy Atwell: It certainly is and I encourage you to, if you're listening to go to the Knights of Columbus website, you can read a lot [00:11:30] about Father McGivney, his life. He's got a really powerful backstory. That explains a lot of why he founded the Knights and you can see a documentary that they have there as well. Again, you can just Google Knights of Columbus and see all of that.

Bishop from November 1st to 7th is going to be national vocations awareness week. During this week, the church in the US celebrates the vocations of the priesthood, diaconate and religious life. And we renew our prayers for those who are considering one of those calls. Bishop, if a young man or woman is out there discerning [00:12:00] their call and they think they might be called to the priesthood or to religious life, what would you encourage them to do to better hear that call from God?

Bishop Burbidge: Yeah. First, let me just use this occasion as we prepare to celebrate national vocations awareness week to thank all in this diocese. This diocese is known for praying specifically for vocations.

Billy Atwell: That's true.

Bishop Burbidge: One of the reasons we have 50 seminarians and so many in consecrated life from our diocese, so many wonderful deacons. So [00:12:30] we all need reminders it's a vocation, whereas this week is keep those prayers going. And continue to ask the Lord to generously bless us with more vocations. But if someone's discerning, I know many are, because God never stops calling his people to come forward in a life of service. Sometimes at a young age, sometimes a bit older. And always people with different gifts, different backgrounds, different personalities, just like he did with the apostles. But [00:13:00] for those discerning, first of all, you must have a rich and constant prayer life.

There is no way we can discern God's will, to understand where he's leading us, unless we spend time with him in prayer. And in that time, not just to do the talking. Give God some time to do this speaking so you may listen. And I always encourage people if you can do a prayer in front of the blessed sacrament, that always enriches that moment. [00:13:30] And you should also trust that if you do not have peace about your vocation call, that that means it may not be the time. But don't worry God will give you that peace. If you keep listening, you'll know. You'll know exactly when that moment is. "Wow. You know, I just feel a serenity like I never had before. I know this is what I must be doing."

And speak to others. You know, speak to your parish priest, speak to a consecrated religious, speak to a seminary. Speak to [00:14:00] people who've been through what you're going through. Trying to figure out where is God leading me. God puts special people in our lives. And if you heard, if I could say to those discerning vocations out there. If you've heard from someone you respect and admire, "Hey, listen, I think you'd be a good priest. I think you'd be

a good deacon. I think you'd be a good consecrated religious." That may be God speaking to you through that person.

Billy Atwell: Wow that's true, yeah.

Bishop Burbidge: I think every... So many I should say of the priests, I know, myself [00:14:30] included. When did I really begin to take it seriously is when another priest came to me, and said, "I think you'd be a good priest and I'd like you to think about it." And that changed everything for me. And I really do believe to this day that that was God's instrument in helping me to get off the fence and go forward in my discernment.

Billy Atwell: And I know you've mentioned on this podcast before, even that part of the reason we have such a healthy group of vocations and men continuing to apply [00:15:00] is because the priests of our diocese are so active and open to speaking with people who are discerning a vocation. And we, a lot of religious coming out of our diocese. We have a poster for them as well, information for religious life.

Bishop Burbidge: And that's another big poster [crosstalk 00:15:13] Lord. You know, we're having what we call these St. Andrew's dinners. We're having one this Friday night. And what I asked the priests to do is, "Hey, listen, if there's someone, a junior in high school or beyond, college included, of course, you think would like to learn more about the priesthood. Not that he definitely wants to be a priest, but he [00:15:30] wants to learn. Invite him to a dinner." We're going to feed them first. That's always a good thing to do with young men.

We're going to say a little prayer. We're going to sit around in a space together me and my brother priests, we're going to answer their questions. We're going to have a conversation. And then we're going to have a, a little bit of time with the Lord and bless the sacrament. I think we have 30 men who've said yes. Why? Because they were invited. It wasn't through a postcard. It wasn't through an email. Another priest said, "Hey, listen, if you're interested, I would really welcome the opportunity to bring you to this [00:16:00] event." And again, like I said earlier, if these young men are giving up a Friday night to spend time talking about the Lord and his church and vocations, God they will not leave there the same person. God will speak to their hearts.

Billy Atwell: That's wonderful. Very great. So if you want to learn more about this week, but also if you want information, flyers, prayer cards to help you pray for vocations, especially during that week, go to [Arlingtondiocese.org](http://Arlingtondiocese.org). Before we go, Bishop Burbidge is going to be celebrating mass [00:16:30] for All Saints at St. Phillips Catholic church in Falls Church. And it's going to be shared on the St. Phillips live stream found on their Facebook page. So go to [facebook.com/stphillipCatholicchurch](https://facebook.com/stphillipCatholicchurch), that's S-T Phillip Catholic Church to tune into that. And you can also set a reminder for yourself as well. Bishop, we have a couple of questions from the faithful.

Bishop Burbidge: Sure.

Billy Atwell: So the first is Jennifer. She says, "Bishop, I'm delighted that our Catholic schools have been able to reopen. Yet I see that other school districts are still struggling to come to a reopening [00:17:00] consensus. How was the diocese able to reopen schools"? I know this is a question you've gotten before.

Bishop Burbidge: Right. Exactly. And we made the decision to open our schools because we knew how important it was for the students to be back in a community, in a learning environment. We're human beings. We need to be together. But it was always with the commitment that we would be very, very strict in following the protocols of our state officials, the CDC. We've [00:17:30] even gone beyond that, because the highest priority is "Okay, this is what we want to do, but we can only do it if we can do so safely and with the health and wellbeing of all people involved." So our schools have done a tremendous job offering various models, some hybrid models, to have both the option for in-person learning, virtual learning. Our schools have done a tremendous job. So much thanks to our principals, [00:18:00] heads of schools, teachers, Catholic educators, and staff. And I've been visiting the schools.

Billy Atwell: That's right.

Bishop Burbidge: Yeah. And I have never seen... And they tell you. I have never seen students so happy to be in school.

Billy Atwell: That's wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge: I have never seen... And they say it outright, including our high school students. It's like "I just need to be with my friends. I need to be with my teachers and have these activities." And we're staying vigilant, Billy. We're making sure that our all protocols are in place. If God forbid there was a contained [00:18:30] case, those protocols are in place, and we follow them strictly.

And so we have been able to do it because we have followed the guidelines that are most helpful in doing it. And so I walk around the school. Children are wearing their masks, and they're washing their hands, and their social distancing, but learning in an environment with other people is taking place. I know [00:19:00] some districts and all that, are struggling with that idea. And their needs and circumstances may be a little bit different than we have as Catholic schools. But I've always said that we're willing to share with others what we've learned throughout the process. What has gone really well, where we had to make adjustments. But the biggest thing is we're staying vigilant. It's every day we reassess, is this the best thing to be doing for our students?

Billy Atwell: And it's huge credit to the teachers. They did a lot of heavy lifting to make that possible. [00:19:30] To situate the classroom so that students can come back. So a huge credit to our teachers.

Bishop Burbidge: Huge credit. Yeah. And thanks.

Billy Atwell: So next question is from Emily, she says, "Bishop, the dispensation to attend mass is still in effect, right? I see on the news that we might be getting a second wave of coronavirus. My question is what factors will determine when the dispensation will be lifted."

Bishop Burbidge: Yeah. The dispensation, the obligation for attending Sunday mass is still in effect. [00:20:00] It's a great question. And there really is no single factor that will help me decide when to lift the dispensation. That will be really based on many factors, including the current state guidelines, the transmission rates, the death rates, the feedback from our pastors, our ability to accommodate all parishioners, safely. All those kinds of things. But people are free to make their decision. We know that there are people right now who are physically compromised, who cannot [00:20:30] come into a public space like that. Or there are some who, because of taking care of someone who's compromised or unable to do. Or maybe just fear itself. And so that's why that dispensation is there. But we also have to encourage the faithful listening, that maybe... I have a family member who, you know, he's afraid of the large crowd on Sundays. But he goes to weekday mass.

I mean, maybe that's something that you consider it because there's less people and you're spread out. [00:21:00] And I also have to say, and this is in my article coming up in the Catholic Herald, but I do a little plug, Lord it is good that we are here. Just to say that many of us have made some decisions. Some of us have at least returning to restaurants and returning to shopping centers and things like that. And I think if that decision that say, "Well, I'm able to do those things," that should also be applied to your spiritual life.

Billy Atwell: Right.

Bishop Burbidge: You know, if I've decided that I can be in [00:21:30] such public gatherings and all those things, well, then what does that say about me being in a church. Where, by the way, all the... We've asked all the pastors to implement these protocols that we've been talking about. So right now the dispensation stays in place. I ask everyone to prayerfully discern what God is asking of them at time. And we're very, very respectful of the health and wellbeing physically and emotionally of all the faithful in our diocese.

Billy Atwell: Very [00:22:00] good. Bishop, any final thoughts or... And if you would also send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge: No, but we are approaching a beautiful month, as you mentioned in November. I love the way November begins all saints. The reminder that we are all called to be saints. That's the ultimate vocation we have to become a Saint, to live with God forever in heaven. And we're part of the communion of saints. Our brothers



and sisters in heaven who have gone before us, are they able to help us and protect us. And then the next day of course is All Souls.

[00:22:30] And it is a time to remember with great affection those in our families, those we love, friends who have died, have gone home to the Lord. We never stopped praying for them, praying for their eternal peace and All Souls gives us that beautiful opportunity. So dear friends who are listening, for all of your family members who have died, and that those please know I, certainly at that mass, will be praying for their eternal rest.

And for those who are mourning, maybe some listeners right now are mourning [00:23:00] the death of a loved one. It's a difficult time. And we pray that God will give you the strength and the peace you need at this time, trusting in the sure and certain hope that you know, for all of us who unite ourselves to him on earth, and we will live with him forever in heaven. So praying that, God dear friends will keep all of you safe and healthy, stay strong in faith. Keep encouraging one another and together let's walk humbly with our God.

Thank you for listening to the Walk Humbly Podcast. [00:23:30] 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, inspirational content by subscribing to our e-newsletter at [Arlington diocese.org](http://Arlingtondiocese.org).