

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

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

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

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Bishop Burbidge ([01:28](#)):

I'm doing well, Billy. Hope all our listeners are doing well also. We're a little bit over the halfway point of Lent. So, I hope and pray it's been a source of blessings for all the faithful in our diocese. It's certainly a good opportunity at this point, I think, to go back to Ash Wednesday, think a little bit about what we promised the Lord of what we were going to do, what we're not going to do, to see how we have done so far. And maybe if we have not fulfilled all of our promises, not to get discouraged and then give up the next few weeks because the Lord wants just the opposite.

He's always there to pick us up and allow us to begin anew. Maybe dear friends, just a word of encouragement of God's grace, to make these final days and weeks of this Lenten season a time of renewal in your spiritual life and pray God a deeper relationship with our Lord as we prepare to celebrate his resurrection.

Billy Atwell ([02:24](#)):

And you're having a good Lent, personally?

Bishop Burbidge ([02:25](#)):

I am. Yeah, I've really been. It's been very prayerful. I've been able to keep my Lenten fast of things I give up.

Billy Atwell ([02:34](#)):

Good.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:34](#)):

And it's been a very prayerful season. Thanks for asking.

Billy Atwell ([02:38](#)):

Very good. And you recently had a visit with our seminarians, specifically, those who are assigned to the St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, which you know so well. You were the rector there, just outside of Philadelphia. Talk a little bit about what those visits are like for the seminarians, when their Bishop comes. What do you discuss with them? What's it all look like during those trips?

Bishop Burbidge ([02:56](#)):

Sure, yeah. The Bishop, God willing, is the one who will lay hands upon these candidates one day and to give the Church new priests. It is the Church's expectation that the Bishop is directly involved. I am the chief formatter of our seminarians. I entrust seminaries to help me in that role, but I'm the chief formatter so I have to know them. I have to have a relationship with them and see their growth throughout the years and maybe the challenges to present to them. So, part of that is to visit all the seminaries in which our seminarians attend, which are in Philadelphia, St. Charles Borromeo, now St. Mary's in Emmitsburg, St. John Paul II in Washington. And we do have a few guys in Rome too who are always in our thoughts and prayers. And so, I visit all the seminaries and part of that is that we pray together. We socialize together. Seminarians always make sure they find a way that you have to take them out for dinner and they-

Billy Atwell ([03:58](#)):

They're smart. Yeah, they're savvy.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:58](#)):

Yeah, they're smart and they usually have good taste in restaurants.

Billy Atwell ([04:01](#)):

Good.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:02](#)):

Fun places, so that's real good. But I also meet one-on-one with each seminarian and it's just one-on-one and I ask them in advance if there are maybe two or three talking points they would like to raise and, of course, any of the talking points that I would raise. I always find those conversations are very transparent. Our seminarians are very trusting and I leave, Billy, as I did this past visit in Philadelphia, I come back home uplifted and inspired. We have a strong presbyterate now in our diocese and God willing, these young men will make us even stronger. I was very blessed to be in Philadelphia though at the timing of this visit because I also celebrate the mass for the entire seminary community, and this year I did so on the feast of St. Catherine Drexel-

Billy Atwell ([04:50](#)):

Oh, wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:50](#)):

... to whom I have a great love. She's from Philadelphia.

Billy Atwell (04:53):

Yeah, that's right.

Bishop Burbidge (04:54):

It was her feast day and in addition, on that same day, was the 25th anniversary of the death of Cardinal Krol, who was the Bishop who ordained me a priest, who many times stood at that same altar in the seminary that I was standing to offer mass. And so, it was a special gift that God gave to me.

Billy Atwell (04:54):

That's wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge (05:15):

Please, dear friends, I know you do every day, but please continue, not only for an increase of vocations to priesthood and consecrated life, but please pray for our seminarians that God will grant them perseverance and holy joy.

Billy Atwell (05:28):

And St. Catherine Drexel has connections to our diocese. I was speaking with Father Fest, who's the pastor of St. Joseph's, and she helped provide some of the seed money. She was helping get donors to help provide the seed money to establish that parish. It's very interesting to see you think of saints is people from times of antiquity, but it's neat to see their fingerprints on what is still existing today in our own parishes. It's a wild thing.

Bishop Burbidge (05:48):

Exactly right.

Billy Atwell (05:49):

Very cool. As we've discussed on this podcast, in the past, there are three vaccines that are used in the United States for COVID-19. They were produced by Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca. The Pfizer, Moderna were preferred because the cell lines of aborted fetus were only used in the testing. While we don't like that either, it is the least compromised morally of the vaccines. Those were Pfizer and Moderna. And then AstraZeneca used those cell lines in the research production and testing. We've got a new vaccine now. It's the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. There's been some news on it. That's been approved for use in the United States. What should people know about this vaccine? And a lot of questions is, "Should I get that one if it's offered to me?"

Bishop Burbidge (06:30):

Yeah, and thanks for raising those issues, and a good explanation in the beginning there too, Billy. Thank you for that. The approval of the Johnson and Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine for use in, as you said, raises questions about the permissibility of using vaccines developed, tested, and or produced, as you said, with the help of abortion derived cell lines. So, Pfizer, Moderna vaccines raised concerns because as we said in a previous podcast, an abortion derived cell line was used for testing them but not in their production.

The Johnson and Johnson vaccine, however, was developed, tested, and is produced with abortion derived cell lines, raising what we would say additional moral concerns. So, the congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has judged that when ethically irreproachable COVID-19 vaccines are not available, it is morally acceptable to receive COVID-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses, in a research and production process.

However, and this is very, very important, and even that is with grave concern. If one can choose among equally safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, the vaccine with the least connection to abortion derived cell lines should be chosen. Therefore, I mean in answer to your question, if one has the ability to choose a vaccine, Pfizer or Moderna vaccines should be chosen over the Johnson and Johnson one and the AstraZeneca ones, which was what we have been saying all along.

Billy Atwell ([08:09](#)):

Right, that is consistent.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:10](#)):

And we also should continue to insist that pharmaceutical companies stop using abortion derived cell lines, given the worldwide suffering that this pandemic is causing. We, again, affirm again, that we provided templates of letters to the faithful saying, "Listen, even if you received the Pfizer/Moderna, it was not under perfect situations here. So, please write to these companies." We provided a template, a letter, and I know the Virginia Catholic Conference has also made that available to at least say, "Yes, I got that vaccine for these reasons, which we just explained, but in future research, please," so, still making our voices heard.

Billy Atwell ([08:58](#)):

And that's an important part of this. There's no matter which vaccine you get, or which ones are available to you in some areas, that the Moderna and the Pfizer are not necessarily available. It's important to use this opportunity to share the faith, explain what we believe, and why we're concerned. Even if you get one of these vaccines, it's important to share that and those letters are an example, but even with the person who's administering the vaccine, talk to them about it. "Did you know?" That kind of thing, I think can be very effective and creating a culture where what we've been dealing with the production of the vaccines or the testing of vaccines, it doesn't continue forever maybe and that we're able to, kind of, turn a corner culturally where we just don't accept the use of abortion drive cell lines.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:35](#)):

That's right, Billy. And I know that even getting the vaccine itself is a sensitive issue and certainly a topic that is raised with me by parishioners and it's discussed. I know at this time by many others, I've said that in our prayerful discernment as to whether to get the vaccine, if you could bring at least to prayer, this being an act of charity that serves the common good. And I think that's the way I approached it myself, as an act of charity for the common good, certainly under prayerful discernment, spiritual direction, speaking with Catholic, moral, theologians and doctors that I deeply respect.

I have chosen to get the vaccine. I'm in and out of our schools, our parishes. And for me, after prayerful discernment, that for me was the right thing to do. I ask everyone in our diocese to make sure you are well updated and informed on the current science and to do the research, to consider this as an act of charity, to bring it to prayerful discernment, and to make your decision.

And I think that we should not allow this to be a source of more tension or division. In the end, we have to be respectful of the conscience and the decision to others make and it can never ask anyone to violate their conscience, of course. So, it's a sensitive subject and I asked that we be respectful of each other. But, again, I do want to emphasize that please, at least consider this in your prayer and discernment, is this an act of charity that, even though under not perfect circumstances, is something for the common good?

Billy Atwell ([11:34](#)):

Thank you, Bishop. Thank you for sharing.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:35](#)):

Everyone. I know it's a little sensitive and I just want to be as respectful to everyone as possible but to share my thoughts honestly.

Billy Atwell ([11:42](#)):

Well, thank you very much. And we do have some good news on the horizon. It looks like on Monday, the CDC updated its restrictions to say a few things. They said that those who are two weeks out from getting the vaccine can gather in small groups with others who are vaccinated without a mask. Which there's some kind of joke about that, it seems like, well, of course it seems like it could. It's like say it gets hot in the summer and cold in the winter, but yeah. So, if there's a group of people are vaccinated, they don't have to wear masks if they're two weeks out. Vaccinated people can gather with unvaccinated people from one household without a mask, unless someone in that group is high risk. And that those with the vaccine that are exposed to someone with COVID, don't have to stay away from others or get tested unless they develop symptoms. That kind of the new condition. I'm sure you saw this as a sign that maybe we're starting to turn a corner and seeing some improvement. What was your response when you saw some of these updates?

Bishop Burbidge ([12:30](#)):

I mean, it is, it is. I think that as we look at statistics, those in hospitals and those dying from COVID, thank the good Lord, we're seeing that we're moving forward in the right direction. The availability of the vaccine is an, all our research, going on. For those who get the vaccine, these are all very, very positive signs that we're moving forward. We know that we're still in the midst of a pandemic, so we can't let our guard down. I think we have to be very vigilant and I think being asked to wear masks, to sanitize, to wash our hands, to keep the social distance, think we're still there and we have to be careful but I do think that as we move forward we have to say, "Okay, what are some of the changes that we can begin to make?" We're not going to go from A to Z. We're going to make some gradual changes even within our churches and liturgies.

We have a reintegration working plan, a group that has been together from the very beginning. I've asked them to say, "Okay, let's look at where we are now and what is it that we can begin to do gradually to give some signs that things are changing for the good." As we give directives regarding liturgy to our pastors and parishioners we'll first speak, of course, with our pastors. But I do think there are some positive signs, but let's all stay vigilant too and make sure we're doing what is essential to make sure this progress continues to go in the right directions. I can't say enough in our diocese for our pastors, the way our churches have remained open and the sacraments celebrated, keeping people safe. Our schools, the same way. I think our diocese, I think we've, thanks to the good leadership of our

pastors, our priests, our Catholic educators, really have kept a great balance. But we've also stayed very vibrant.

Billy Atwell ([14:33](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Bishop, many Americans along with USCCB, or are looking at the massive relief spending bill known as the American Rescue Plan that was recently went through Congress. One of the major issues, and it was that it's applied taxpayer funding for abortion which used to be something that would not be allowed but in recent time has been something that's been introduced more and more, both in our Commonwealth as well as nationally. The U.S. Bishop spoke out about this recently, if you would kind of share your thoughts and what was this perspective of the U.S. Bishop.

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

Yeah. And again, it's sad, Billy, that we're talking again. It just seems like, again, we're talking about the lack of protection and as we're moving forward here, for the protection of the unborn and the most vulnerable, and it's alarming, it's unsettling, and I think we have to be vigilant. I don't want to be a prophet of doom, but we also have to be realistic that the way we see things going right now should be of grave concern to us. As the American Rescue Plan Act was being written, for example, Catholic bishops reached out to every House and Senate office to express our support. And this is important for us to say, I mean, we support providing additional relief to help the poor and vulnerable people who are most at risk of harm from this pandemic and our strong conviction that this relief should also protect the unborn and their right to life.

Billy Atwell ([16:03](#)):

Yeah. Those go hand in hand.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:04](#)):

Right? Exactly. There's a consistency. So, we're grateful. I mean, we're grateful that this legislation addresses many positive provisions and, including here's some of the positive provisions: unemployment assistance, child and earned income tax credit enhancements, nutrition funding, vaccine distribution funding, health care funding, international assistance to region stricken by the COVID conflict, and hunger. So, there are provisions that, okay, all right, in themselves they're good. However, it is just not acceptable that Congress has passed the bill without critical protections needed to ensure that billions of taxpayer dollars are used for the life affirming health care and not for abortion. This is where the disappointment is. And it's unlike previous COVID relief bills. Sponsors of the American Rescue Plan Act refuse to include longstanding, bipartisan consensus policy to prohibit taxpayer dollars from funding abortions domestically and internationally.

Billy Atwell ([17:12](#)):

And it's amazing that was voted down. That it was rejected.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:14](#)):

I know. Right. And so the many important life-saving provisions in the American Rescue Plan have been undermined, I think because of what we just said.

Billy Atwell ([17:26](#)):

Yeah. So, if you want to reach out to your legislator to express concern about what was passed there, go to USCCb.org and you can click on their action alert system and to reach out, but this is something we're going to have to continue to watch because the taxpayer funding of abortion is something that is sadly continued as we've seen.

So, before we go to a question from the faithful, and Bishop I think you've got some other questions there, we have three upcoming events I want to make sure everyone is aware of. There's a Gaelic Mass in honor of St. Patrick. It's on March 15th at 7:30 PM at St. Thomas More Cathedral. There's also a Mass for the solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the blessed Virgin Mary. It's also at St. Thomas More Cathedral on March 19th at 12:05, so that's a midday Mass there at 12:05.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:10](#)):

Especially this year with the year of St. Joseph's, what a beautiful way to celebrate

Billy Atwell ([18:13](#)):

Yes. Exactly. And you've got a column coming here for St. Joseph. And then Open Wide Our Hearts, the enduring call to love, it's a conference to address the issue of racism in our country. It's going to be held at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke. That's March 20th at 5:00 PM. So, there isn't the ability for any more people to come live to the event, like in person, because of space capacity. That's already been done but we are going to be live streaming that event. So, if you go to ArlingtonDiocese.org and follow the calendar there, look for Open Wide Our Hearts and you can find information about the live stream, but we will be live streaming that. We encourage you to check that out.

Also, sign up for our e-newsletter. We send links to the live streams a day before, a couple of days before, sometimes the morning of depending on what it is but you'll at least have that so you can save that link and it will be very accessible to you.

All right, so Bishop, question from the faithful. This one's deep. It's philosophical, so get ready for this one. How do you balance God's will with free will?

Bishop Burbidge ([19:13](#)):

And Billy, when the very deep questions that you at least give me a few minutes notice to think about it. So, thank you for that. Usually you'd be-

Billy Atwell ([19:20](#)):

I'm a very generous person.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:21](#)):

Usually with the less difficult questions it's kind of on the spot, but thanks for like the few minutes you gave me in advance. Well, I would say... That's good, right? How do you balance God's will with free will's the question. Well, I think we, first of all say, we have to be careful not to place God's will and human free will in competition. God's will is all encompassing. Everything has been brought into being by God's will and it's maintained by his will. So our free will is created by God. And it is within the scope of God's will that it is exercise. You see, so not in competition, our freedom of will was therefore never threatened by God's will.

In fact, as we know and the saints teach this all the time and the Lord himself, if the proper exercise of our will, the proper exercise of it, is true freedom. It is always according to his will. When we

do God's will, we know that the freedom, the serenity, the peace we long for, are ours. The paradox is that the more we obey God's will, the more free we become.

Billy Atwell ([20:39](#)):

That's so true.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:39](#)):

I mean, that's the beauty of our faith and our spirituality. And it's required we do remember that freedom, and this is so misunderstood in this day and age, does not mean doing whatever we want. That's not free will. And so, I think that's an important thing. Maybe... I like sports analogy sometimes, so an athlete... Let's say it this way, an athlete, for example, does not exercise his freedom properly, right? When he disobeys the rules of the game. So he does not become more free that way. He only ruins the game, in a sense. But when an athlete trains himself to play according to the rules, that's with precision talent, endurance, then he's more free. He's at his best in playing the game.

That's what we admire in great athletes. Not that they do whatever they want on the field, but that they are so free in playing the game, and observing its rules, they make it look effortless and beautiful.

Billy Atwell ([21:50](#)):

That's a very good point.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:51](#)):

So, Christians, we always say, should be athletes for God. We should live according to the will of God with such intensity, precision, and generosity, that it doesn't appear to be a hassle. It doesn't appear to be a burden or this big weight on us. In fact, it appears to be beautiful. That's what I said, draw also to the saints like mother Theresa, Saint John Paul II, just reveal. And so, your favorite saints too, the beauty of adhering to the will of god in all things.

Billy Atwell ([22:24](#)):

Yeah. That sports analogy makes a lot of sense. I think of it with my kids. They're learning to play the piano. Well, they're free to just hammer away at the keys with their fist if they want to. That's not freedom though. It's as they learn how to play properly, that beautiful music will eventually, eventually come out of that instrument.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:38](#)):

Are they there yet?

Billy Atwell ([22:39](#)):

No, no. We're keeping it simple and they're working their way up. I think this is an easier question but it may not be, going off the sports analogy. So, Jim from Fairfax asks, what are your NCAA basketball predictions?

Bishop Burbidge ([22:52](#)):

Ah, there we go.



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Billy Atwell ([22:53](#)):

I don't know if that's easier or harder, but?

Bishop Burbidge ([22:55](#)):

That's pretty good. That's a good question. I think we're a little ahead of the game yet. We're still a little ahead of the game because the brackets about who will be in the tournament are still being decided.

Billy Atwell ([23:09](#)):

That's a big part of it.

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

And I take this pretty seriously, so I want to see the seeding. I want to see who were the number ones and twos and threes. I want to see who they're playing. I want to see where they're playing. So maybe next podcast-

Billy Atwell ([23:25](#)):

So, where they're playing, how does that?

Bishop Burbidge ([23:26](#)):

Well, because they get sent to different regions.

Billy Atwell ([23:29](#)):

Oh, okay.

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

So, sometimes you end up playing in your own territory. And so the poor other teams traveling across the coast might figure into it.

Billy Atwell ([23:30](#)):

That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:38](#)):

You know?

Billy Atwell ([23:39](#)):

Wow, you've got quite a formula.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:40](#)):

I really take this seriously. So, we may not have time before the next podcast, but before the first game of the tournament starts, I'll write down in an envelope, seal an envelope, what my prediction is. Now, mindful to your listeners, I rarely get this right?

Billy Atwell ([23:58](#)):

No, I just got word from the production that all of the games are being played in Indianapolis.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:02](#)):

Oh, that's right. It's different this year. That's right.

Billy Atwell ([24:05](#)):

Hey, that simplifies, simplifies the formula.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:08](#)):

So that simplifies the formula. See, I would've made, if I would have predicted now I would have made a mistake.

Billy Atwell ([24:13](#)):

There you go.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:14](#)):

So this is good. This is good why we waited?

Billy Atwell ([24:17](#)):

What's funny to me is that the question about how do we balance God's will and free will, you're ready for but the NCAA predictions you want to wait until next week.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:17](#)):

It shows you my priorities.

Billy Atwell ([24:28](#)):

It shows what you're ready for. You're ready for the most important questions. All right. So, I'll follow up. We're not letting you off of that one but all right. And then you had some questions, I think, too, right?

Bishop Burbidge ([24:36](#)):

Yeah. Well, I'm going to turn the table a little bit. So, this Thursday, The Diocese of Arlington has the great joy of welcoming the Bishops of the Province of Baltimore. So, the diocese of Arlington, we belong to the Province of Baltimore, okay? And so each year the Bishops of the Province, we meet and we discuss pastoral situations and kind of talk to each other. So we're going to welcome the bishops next Thursday, mass at the Cathedral with all the bishops in attendance and then we'll have a day of meetings and a dinner together. It's always a great thing to do.

Billy Atwell ([25:23](#)):

That makes a lot of sense because I assume you're embracing, or you're challenged, by similar issues but also welcoming similar opportunities since you're all in the same area.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:30](#)):

That's right. I asked the middle school students to be present, from the Cathedral School, the sixth, seventh, eighth graders will be there. I met with them yesterday just to give them a little preparational teaching moment. It felt great being back in the classroom, teaching again,

Billy Atwell ([25:45](#)):

I was going to say, you're an educator in your earlier life.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:47](#)):

Yeah. I'm just trying to help them understand, well, what is a province? What is a metropolitan? You know, all those kinds of things. And afterwards I said, "Okay, I want to see how well you did." And I had a 10 questions tests with a bonus question to see how well they were listening and, really, they got most of the questions right. A couple of ones they struggle with.

So, I'm going to see if you know them instead.

Billy Atwell ([26:09](#)):

All right. I hope so.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:10](#)):

So, they all knew that we are members of the Diocese of Arlington. They knew that. They knew that the other Diocese of Virginia is the Diocese of Richmond. So, there's only two Dioceses in Virginia. And then they got a little tricked on this one. I say, both diocese belong to the province of Washington, Baltimore, or Philadelphia.

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

This one instinctively you would think Washington because it's right across the river.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:38](#)):

And that's what they thought.

Billy Atwell ([26:38](#)):

Yeah. But it's Baltimore.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:39](#)):

And so we belong to the province of Baltimore, which is a region. It's a region. And that region, has a metropolitan Archbishop, he's the one who gathers us together, right?

Billy Atwell ([26:53](#)):

And now, a question we get pretty regularly when they hear about that we're in a province or that there's a Cardinal in the next door diocese. Do you work for the Archbishop of Washington, the Archbishop of Baltimore? Or do you work for a Cardinal, like those kinds of those are questions and there's theological reasons why that's not the case but talk a little bit about that if you will.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:53](#)):

It's actually one of the things I taught to them-

Billy Atwell ([27:12](#)):

Oh is it? Okay. [crosstalk 00:27:12] I'm getting ahead here. Sorry.

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

Well, I'll go to the question I said, "So to whom does the Bishop of a Diocese directly report?" And I said, "To an Archbishop, to a Cardinal, or to the Pope?" Well, they all said to the Archbishop, who's the head of the metropolitan.

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

Because we think kind of corporately like we would in the U.S.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:28](#)):

And I said, "No. It's actually to the Pope." Well, it is important, because you're right, we get asked this question a lot. We're going to be meeting as the bishops of the province and we're just discussing it with each other, "Hey, how are you handling the reintegration plan? How you handle the gender identity issues? How are you handling requests for marriages outdoors?" And we talk about but each Bishop then is entrusted with that decision in his own diocese.

And, so, I don't have to ask the Archbishop of Baltimore or the Archbishop of Washington for... It's entrusted, the Bishop of the diocese. Now the Pope, you know, ultimately is the one where if I'm not being faithful steward of my Diocese-

Billy Atwell ([28:10](#)):

You'll get a call.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:10](#)):

Yeah. You get a call. One of the kids reminded me so beautifully, "But isn't it Jesus that you're?"

Billy Atwell ([28:17](#)):

You're consecrated to Jesus.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:19](#)):

You're very good, ultimately, I'm accountable to Jesus. And, so, Archbishop, they got a little confused with this but Archbishop Lori is the Metropolitan Archbishop of Baltimore.

Billy Atwell ([28:30](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:30](#)):

So, he's our Metro and he'll be the celebrant homilos at this Mass. I asked them that the diocese in our province are Richmond and Arlington. I asked them to name the other three. Can you do that, Billy?

Billy Atwell ([28:43](#)):

All right. So, it's Baltimore. Like you said, it's Richmond, it's Baltimore, it's Wilmington, Delaware, West Virginia. And what am I missing?

Bishop Burbidge ([28:53](#)):

You got it, I think.

Billy Atwell ([28:53](#)):

Oh, is that all of it? Okay. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:55](#)):

And Wheeling-Charleston, in West Virginia.

Billy Atwell ([28:56](#)):

West Virginia. That's the West Virginia. Wheeling-Charleston, which covers that whole state.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:59](#)):

Yeah. And then I did these two questions too. I hope our listeners are-

Billy Atwell ([29:05](#)):

Following along.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:05](#)):

Sometimes the average Catholic doesn't know these things either. So we're paying attention here.

Billy Atwell ([29:09](#)):

I had never heard of province until I worked for the Diocese.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:11](#)):

What is a province? We're having a provincial meeting, well, what does that mean? What do you mean you belong to a province? So, it's a good teaching moment here.

I then, I said, "Which statement is true about becoming a Bishop?"

Billy Atwell ([29:24](#)):

Okay.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:25](#)):

A: any priests can apply for the job. B: there's an official interview before being named a bishop. Or C: the Bishop is appointed by the Holy Father. Now, after... Our listeners have heard this on many podcasts so they better know the answer as you should also.

Billy Atwell ([29:42](#)):

I definitely know this because the stories are great when you talk about the surprise of it. No, you're picked by the Holy Father. There's no interview process or selection.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:53](#)):

You know, there's a thorough process in which there's consultation with priests, religious and lay participate in the process but ultimately it's the Holy Spirit and the decision to Pope and you're just told. And I told them the threefold role: the Bishop is sanctifying, governing, and of course, as you know, the last one's teaching. And then when I said, "Okay." I had 10 questions after I got done teaching the kids. I said, "All right. Pick a question 1 to 10 or bonus." One of the first students, "I'll take the bonus question." So, the bonus question goes back to one of our last questions. I said, "Your Bishop's two favorite men's college basketball teams are, A: UVA and Virginia Tech. B: Georgetown and Gonzaga. C: Duke and Villanova." You know the answer, right?

Billy Atwell ([30:41](#)):

It's Duke and Villanova.

Bishop Burbidge ([30:42](#)):

Yes.

Billy Atwell ([30:42](#)):

You're an alum of Villanova.

Bishop Burbidge ([30:43](#)):

And I don't want any of the listeners to get mad at me, but to understand that with Duke and Villanova, I spent, let me see what is it, 59 years of my life in the states where those two are. But, although, I have a very good friend who is definitely helping me with Duke and Villanova not being in great position right now. Duke is out of the season because of COVID testing. And Villanova has lost two starters, so he has now appealed to me that, therefore, all my support now should be going to UVA. So that's easy enough.

Billy Atwell ([31:23](#)):

UVA?

Bishop Burbidge ([31:24](#)):

I think I can do that. I think I can do that.

Billy Atwell ([31:25](#)):

Very good.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:27](#)):

Thanks.

Billy Atwell ([31:28](#)):

Bishop, you've gone through some serious issues and some more lighthearted ones, any final thoughts, and then if you would send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:34](#)):

No, but again, in mentioning that this gathering of bishops next week, it's a humble request to our listeners. Please pray for us. We are entrusted with the care of our diocese, and I know we all want to do what is best for the Church and for God's people. We're not perfect. We make mistakes but you don't know how much it means when I hear, and I know my brother bishops feel this way, when someone closes a letter or says to me in person, "You know we're praying for you."

I can't tell you how much that means. And what a gift that is. Like I said, we're not perfect and we need prayers. And as we gather next week, I just hope it could be an opportunity reminder for all of our listeners to pray for the bishops as with God's grace we strive our best to be faithful to the Lord and his Church and his teachings and to joyfully share them with conviction and compassion others. So, just a request for prayers and just assuring my prayers, everyone, as we make our final journey, these upcoming weeks, to Lent and to the holiest of weeks that you will give your spiritual life the priority it deserves so that you may be well-prepared to celebrate Holy week and the new life that is ours in Christ.

So, many blessings to you. Let's support, encourage each other, in word and deed. As together, we walk humbly with our God.

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