

Bishop 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, the Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your co-host. If you're listening to this podcast, you're benefiting from the wonderful generosity of so many faithful Catholics throughout our diocese who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal in past years and certainly this year as well. The BLA supports many different ministries that I'm sure you've heard of, one of which is the Communications Office. We would just want to say thank you before we get started.

Billy Atwell (00:35):

If you haven't rated this podcast or written a review, please do that wherever you're listening. Make sure you sign up for our e-newsletter at [arlingtondiocese.org](http://arlingtondiocese.org) and follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. More than 21,000 of you are already doing that @Bishop Burbidge, where every day you can read a short reflection on the Gospel of that day. And make sure you're following the Diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. And send your questions for Bishop Burbidge to [info@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:info@arlingtondiocese.org), or you can call or text us at (703) 831-7013. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge (01:10):

I am doing well, Billy. I would like to join you in thanking the faithful in our diocese for their generosity to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. This year's appeal we're actually off to a very, very good start, and I'm so grateful to our pastors for their support and to the parishioners. And as you said, I think the response is because our faithful understand clearly throughout the years, this appeal is always used to support those ministries that help so many people, especially those in need and to help in the work of evangelizing, sharing the good news and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So I'm so grateful to everyone for your generosity, and please know my deep gratitude. We're recording this podcast on St. Patrick's Day. So happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone. Sometimes people don't realize Burbidge is actually an Irish name.

Billy Atwell (02:00):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge (02:02):

Both my father's parents were born in Ireland.

Billy Atwell (02:06):

Wow.

Bishop Burbidge (02:07):

And really didn't come over until they were in their 20s to United States and met here. They met here in the United States.

Billy Atwell (02:13):

Interesting.

Bishop Burbidge (02:15):

Actually my grandfather, I could barely understand him as a little child because of his brogue, you know? So I notice I have special memories of this day. My father and I would always march in St. Patrick's Day's parades and things like that. So it's a day for us to celebrate and remember St. Patrick, the patron of Ireland, because he had a hard life, he had hard work, he had to evangelize a country and through his great work was able to do that. Great reminder for all of us that we are missionary disciples. And certainly we're recording the day as March Madness begins. And so that's always an exciting time. I think the excitement of March Madness is, because it's exciting, it's one and done like you lose, you're done.

Billy Atwell (03:07):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge (03:08):

I always say, thank God it's not like that in our spiritual lives with the Lord.

Billy Atwell (03:11):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge (03:11):

One and done. God is always ready to forgive us and to allow us to begin a new one. Hopefully that's something our listeners understand throughout the sacred season of lent. If you need to go to confession, be forgiving, God is there to allow you to begin anew. If your Lent didn't get off to his greatest start as you had hoped, it's not too late. Start again. It's not one and done here.

Billy Atwell (03:36):

That's right. It's always nice to see those Light is ON signs outside the parishes where you can go from confession, and our parishes are so generous already with confession, but it's nice to see it open up even more. Bishop, the war in Ukraine is continuing, sadly, and despite the bravery of so many Ukrainian people, Russian forces are continuing to gain ground in certain areas and capturing certain cities. And they're getting dangerously close to NATO countries, which elevates the risk to a whole new level where that's where World Wars actually can happen. Pope Francis announced this week that he will be consecrating both Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He plans to do this in St. Peter's Basilica next Friday, March 25th. As this has progressed, is this the way that you saw the Church and the way it should be responding to this situation?

Bishop Burbidge (04:24):

Well sure. Especially from the very beginning in the midst of seeing evil and violence and so much suffering, and it's heartbreaking. I know that, with all of our listeners, it is just so sad to see the violence, to see the loss of life and suffering and destruction. It really pains our hearts. And so from the very beginning, one of the most important things we can do is to turn to the Lord in prayer. Our heavenly Father sent his son into our world who, by his own cross and resurrection, destroyed the power of

darkness of suffering and of evil itself. And so we know that in Christ, there is victory, and it's only the Lord who will transform hearts to end this violence, this insanity, and to bring about peace.

Bishop Burbidge (05:26):

So yes, we have to. We have to be united in prayer. I know our parishes every day, every Sunday, include intercessions, and I know special rosaries and holy hours are also being held for these special intentions. But what a way for the universal Church to be united.

Billy Atwell (05:48):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge (05:49):

Where there's the Holy Father consecrating Ukraine and Russia to Immaculate Heart of Mary. We'll participate in the same way, in that we'll be united with the Holy Father. I'll be celebrating Mass, the noon Mass that day at our cathedral. We will have a prayer of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary that we will say after Mass together, and I will be asking our pastors to do the same. I would encourage the faithful too, maybe this is a day, March 25, that you really could attend daily Mass that day.

Billy Atwell (06:29):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge (06:29):

Yeah. And for this special intention, but Our Lady Queen of Peace, pray for us.

Billy Atwell (06:34):

Absolutely. It's dearly needed. Bishop, we started off talking about the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. One of the most critical ministries it supports is our Vocations Office, which supports our seminarians and makes sure they get good formation. You had a phone call with a couple of them this week. Would you share some of the details with that?

Bishop Burbidge (06:53):

Yeah, it's funny. It's something within the Church that maybe is not known to all the faithful, but before someone is ordained they receive a call from the Bishop. Now we don't mean just a phone call.

Billy Atwell (07:13):

This preceded the phone, right?

Bishop Burbidge (07:15):

Right. But what's very important--and men know this when they enter the seminary--the whole time in the seminary, they are not the only one discerning.

Billy Atwell (07:24):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge (07:25):

The Church is discerning too. And so that's why it's so important that the seminarians make their way through formation, that they, out of their love for mother Church, they're transparent. They allow the Church, their soon-to-be bride, to get to know them well, like who they truly are. None of whom are saints, but striving to be. And so the Church, through this formation program, through the seminarians, through their connection with their bishop and their vocation director and their formation advisors, are discerning together. And then they petition for orders. And then I receive a recommendation from the vocation director, from the formation team, and then upon prayerful discernment and, hopefully by then, there are no surprises because I'm getting to know them well throughout the years, but it's then that I speak with them and say, "I am calling you to Holy Orders, to the priesthood or to the diaconate." And then it's official.

Billy Atwell (08:30):

Wow.

Bishop Burbidge (08:30):

And as I always say to the men, is that, really, this is the Lord speaking to you through his Church. So he's using a bishop, a successor to the Apostles to say, "Yes, come forward." So when they get that call or when I'm able to tell them in person, it's a moment of great excitement for them. And because it's really a conclusion of a lengthy process.

Billy Atwell (09:02):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge (09:03):

And so how blessed am I as the Bishop of Arlington to have called eight men to the priesthood who will be ordained, God willing, on June 4, and eight men to the transitional diaconate, meaning transitional that, God willing, will be ordained priests on April 23. So God's plan, God willing, 16 priests in two years, we need every one of them, believe me. We need every one of them. And so I am so grateful to the faithful for praying so much every day for our seminarians, for an increase of vocations, and to our men who have been called and to their parents and their families, I offer them congratulations.

Billy Atwell (09:50):

Do you remember when you received those calls?

Bishop Burbidge (09:51):

Sure. Yeah. You never forget it.

Billy Atwell (09:53):

What was the emotion?

Bishop Burbidge (09:53):

Oh yeah. You kind of know you're going to be called. If you weren't, I think you'd have a feeling, but still until you hear it, it's like... And you remember exactly where you were and where you received the call and everything like that. So, yeah. It's great.

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

It's almost like an engagement of sorts. You kind of know it's coming up to that point, but hearing it is certainly special.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:15](#)):

Makes all the difference. Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([10:16](#)):

And then it's publicly. Canonically has to be publicly announced.

Billy Atwell ([10:20](#)):

Oh really?

Bishop Burbidge ([10:20](#)):

Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([10:20](#)):

Okay. Very good.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:21](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

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

Okay. So for anyone who is interested, both Masses will be at 11 a.m. at Saint Thomas More Cathedral. Again, the transitional diaconate ordination will be on April 23 at 11 a.m., and the ordination to the priesthood is on June 4 at 11 a.m.. All are invited to attend. Please come if you can, and if you cannot physically attend, we'll be live streaming both of them. So just go to [youtube.com/arlingtondiocese](https://youtube.com/arlingtondiocese) or [arlingtondiocese.org](https://arlingtondiocese.org), and we'll make the links when we get closer to make those ordinations easier to find. But what a beautiful moment for the Church. What do you attribute--we have 16 men that you just mentioned; that's a lot of phone calls to make, that's a beautiful challenge for you--but what do you attribute that many seminarians in the diocese of our size?

Bishop Burbidge ([11:08](#)):

Well, I think a few things. I always say that our first bishop (we're getting ready to celebrate our 50th anniversary)--so I always speak about our first bishop, Bishop Thomas Welsh, who was involved in seminary formations, rector of seminary. He dedicated from the very beginning our diocese to praying for vocations. It was from the very beginning, through our Blessed Mother and asked our cloistered nuns to pray in a special way for this intention, and all the faithful. So I think from the very beginning, our diocese had a strong foundation with vocations. I'm grateful for the beautiful spirit of family life in our diocese because so often family life is the main reason, is from the family that these vocations come,

including many of our schools and people being invited. And plus the great example they see in our priests in this diocese, and ultimately it's by the grace of God.

Billy Atwell ([12:22](#)):

Absolutely. Well, those are great reasons. So keep praying for our seminarians that God would continue to guide them. Over the last few weeks you've had the opportunity to attend both the Men's and the Women's Conferences. You celebrated Mass, met with the attendees and addressed them and spoke to them. Unique this year was that you also held listening sessions. This is part of the synod of bishops that Pope Francis called for, and he's called on pastors to hold these at the local parishes, but you've been attending a lot of these. So first, how did the conferences go from your perspective, and was there any interest seeing feedback that you heard at these different listening sessions?

Bishop Burbidge ([12:56](#)):

Yeah, first of all, it was great to be back at the... This is a standing tradition in our diocese, the Men's Conference and Women's Conference, always a big success that certainly has been altered in the last couple of years. So it was great to be back. I think it was 700, 800 men and women on each Saturday. To see so many of them gathered in one place with the really dynamic speakers, the opportunity for me to celebrate Mass, to have a question and answer session, and then a listening session as part of the synod that you mentioned. And as you also said, Billy, we are doing the same. I've asked every parish, every parish in our diocese to have a listening session with either the pastor representing me in the parish or with various groups. I've sent delegates to represent. And I'm trying to be as present as possible, both in the parishes and with groups.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:57](#)):

And I have to say, when this first started, it was a synod on synodality listening session, what is this? And we tried, we write the documents of the Holy See. I've asked Father Planty to serve as my delegate. And he did a wonderful job. He and people he asked to serve as a committee with him in sending our pastors the materials to make it as easy as possible, and each one has a facilitator, there's a script for the facilitator, and basically it is a listening session. So that's number one, but it's focused on specific questions. As we always say, it's not about changing dogma or discussing dogma, changing of the dogma of the Church, or specifically your parish Mass schedule.

Billy Atwell ([14:51](#)):

The truly untouchable of untouchables.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:52](#)):

Yeah. It begins, like the first question is, how have you encountered Christ in your parish and in your diocese? And it's beautiful to listen to some of the responses. Then the very next question is, where have you met obstacles in your parish, in your diocese, in encountering Christ? And again, when people answer those questions, they do so very respectfully, because sometimes there are obstacles, we know that, but they do it out of love for the Church and in a very helpful way. And then how can we bring truth and goodness and beauty in a more effective way throughout our diocese? It's really amazing.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:39](#)):

And for me, at first people are shocked that I don't comment or I don't clarify or I don't say anything except thank you. And it's really been a really wonderful experience. And as you know, I'll be required to write a 10-page report, but I think people, they say this to me afterwards, they just say, "It is just so wonderful to know that the Holy Father, that you, that my pastor want to hear from me and you respect me." It's been a great experience.

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

That's wonderful. I'm glad it's been so fruitful. All right. So a quick bonus round before question from the faithful, if you don't mind.

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

Sure.

Billy Atwell ([16:23](#)):

March Madness: What college basketball teams do you see leading the tournament? And do you have any thoughts on who's going to sweep it?

Bishop Burbidge ([16:28](#)):

I have lost touch this year for some reason. I am far from being an expert here.

Billy Atwell ([16:35](#)):

It's all those listening sessions.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:36](#)):

Yeah, all those listening sessions. But I guess with a little bias here, I would say, keep your eye on Villanova. I think they may go a little further than people think there.

Billy Atwell ([16:50](#)):

They're rating pretty high right now. I think number two.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:52](#)):

Yeah. I think they're two. Yeah. I know that Gonzaga and Baylor and Arizona and all those people ever mention as favorites, but you never know.

Billy Atwell ([17:02](#)):

That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:02](#)):

You never know. That's what's fun about it. There's always so many surprises, and all those things. So again, as long as people enjoy this in the right spirit and get their mind off other things, it's fun.

Billy Atwell ([17:18](#)):

I feel like half the time the office pool is won by someone who knows nothing about basketball.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:21](#)):

That always happens. Exactly.

Billy Atwell ([17:23](#)):

They like Illinois, because, "Well, Mom's from Illinois."

Bishop Burbidge ([17:26](#)):

One of our staff persons was telling me yesterday they do a family one, and the last time the eight-year-old daughter won the tournament. He said, "You want to talk about being humbled."

Billy Atwell ([17:38](#)):

Probably wasn't reviewing spreadsheets and all that.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:39](#)):

Who had no idea. Right. Exactly.

Billy Atwell ([17:42](#)):

All right. So we've got a few questions from the faithful, and the first is one that we've gotten a few times, so I just wanted to bring this to the podcast here. Is there an update on the Latin Mass? You've given us updates along the way, so you've communicated on this before, but there's been some time since the last, is there anything you wanted to update about the process that you're going through there?

Bishop Burbidge ([17:58](#)):

Yeah, sure. From the moment we received the motu proprio from our Holy Father in July, and in addition, the responsa in December, there has not been a moment, in a sense, or a period of time where this has not been on the front burner.

Billy Atwell ([18:15](#)):

Right, yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:15](#)):

And I'm grateful to the Holy See. I'm grateful to the faithful for their patients and us eventually and hopefully in a timely way issuing an implementation document. But I really am seeking great collaboration and advice. As you know, I asked Fr. Lundberg to serve as my delegate in getting to the point where we do have an implementation document. And with his committee, I have spoken and invited all the priests to speak to me on this issue. I certainly have heard from the faithful of the Diocese. Please know I have received your letters and your emails, and thank you for respectfully sharing with me. And you hear from different angles, but thank you for sharing with me your thoughts.

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

We're in a diocese in somewhat of a unique position. I'm aware that other bishops have received motu proprio responsa, and they issued their document. Well, in many dioceses, that's because they have two



parishes that celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass, and both parishes fit into what the motu proprio and the responsa allow. So they're done, right?

Billy Atwell ([19:39](#)):

Not exactly the case here?

Bishop Burbidge ([19:41](#)):

We're a little bit unique in that we have 70 parishes.

Billy Atwell ([19:48](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:48](#)):

And, at some point during the week, the Traditional Latin Mass is celebrated in 21 out of 70 parishes.

Billy Atwell ([19:58](#)):

It's quite a-

Bishop Burbidge ([19:59](#)):

We are very, very unique in that way. And as I've been here five years and I have absolutely appreciated and understood how that spiritually enriching this Mass for faithful in our diocese, but with the motu proprio and with the responsa--

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

That's right.

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

--don't forget. This was in consultation. The Holy Father consulted every bishop in the world. And I had the opportunity to describe the situation in our diocese, and I certainly expressed that my understanding of how meaningful this is for the spiritual nourishment and a spiritual life of some of the faith in our diocese, and I think we can say that, I hope our people know, that the Traditional Latin Mass will continue. There are situations where we know we can continue the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass in our diocese, maybe not to the extent that we are currently seeing, but certainly not in any way that will be a hardship for people to be able to attend a Traditional Latin Mass. We're blessed to have a number of priests in our diocese who also have a love for the Traditional Latin Mass.

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

And also, as Pope Benedict had requested, have been trained to celebrate the Latin Mass and mastered the Latin. That was what the Holy Father wanted from priests who celebrate this Mass. And so we're blessed the diocese. So this is on the front burner, and I ask our people to continue, please, to pray for the guidance and wisdom that we need, and above all, please, to make sure that we stay united as a diocese. This is revolving around the celebration of the Holy Mass, the Eucharist, the source of our unity, and God forbid that that would do anything to divide us. So we're trying our best to do what I said my

two goals were: to be faithful and share fidelity to the Holy Father and to be pastorally generous as the motu proprio and the responsa allow.

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

Very good. All right. We have a question: For a young adult transitioning from college to independence in the beginning of a work career, how can we avoid losing touch with our faith during that time?

Bishop Burbidge ([22:35](#)):

Yes, that's a great question. And I think one of the things--and I hope college students, especially those involved in campus ministry as they were getting ready to graduate, understand there was going to be a transition here, that as you graduate and as you move into the corporate world or into society, your parish experience most likely is going to be different than your campus ministry experience.

Billy Atwell ([23:05](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:05](#)):

Because campus ministries focus on basically a select group. So sometimes people leave college or university saying, "Well, then I want it to be just like it was in my campus ministry, because that was the best experience possible." Well, the faithful includes a lot families and people of all various ages, but it's the same faith. It's the same Eucharist celebrated. So I would say, first of all, to keep your commitment to attending Mass each week. That is so essential so that you do not lose touch with faith. Why? It's Christ coming to us, speaking directly to us in his Word, giving us the gift of his Body and Blood. You cannot stay strong and sit fast in faith without that help. I also think it's very, very important that you continue to pray every morning and every night. I think that it's also that you see your faith as ongoing. We're never done. We're never finished learning our faith.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:15](#)):

So take those opportunities in your parishes, whether it be Bible studies or lectures or whatever your parishes offer, to be engaged, and I'm thrilled in our diocese that there are so many small groups within our parishes.

Billy Atwell ([24:30](#)):

That's true.

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

And I think that is one of the greatest ways to stay in touch with your faith, to be involved with men, women who share your beliefs and also are also asking the same question about how can we stay in touch with our faith, but also how can we help each other, encourage each other, lift up each other in faith. And sometimes people get overwhelmed by the size of a parish. That's why these small groups developing is such a great initiative.

Billy Atwell ([25:02](#)):

Absolutely. The next one says, "I saw in Facebook that you celebrated the Rite of Election..." You actually celebrated two, I think?

Bishop Burbidge (25:09):

Yes.

Billy Atwell (25:09):

"...Can you explain what that is?"

Bishop Burbidge (25:11):

Sure. Acting in God's name, in the Rite of Election, the Church makes its "election." We'll put that in quotes. That is the choice and admission of catechumens who have the spiritual dispositions that make them fit to take part in the Sacraments of Initiation. So catechumens are those who are seeking to be fully initiated into the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Billy Atwell (25:41):

So they're starting from scratch.

Bishop Burbidge (25:41):

Right.

Billy Atwell (25:42):

Ground floor.

Bishop Burbidge (25:43):

And it's an intense period of preparation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Most people are familiar with RCIA.

Billy Atwell (25:52):

That's right. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge (25:53):

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the center of their preparations. And so those who come for the Rite of Election are those who adults who are not baptized, catechumens, who have heard the mystery of Christ proclaimed, who have consciously and freely entered in into the way of faith and conversion and say, "Yes, I want to enter at Easter," be fully initiated into the Church. And at that Rite of Election, through a beautiful ceremony surrounded by their family and their sponsors and godparents, we say, we are... They leave there as members of the elect. It's a beautiful ceremony.

Bishop Burbidge (26:29):

And similarly, adults who have been baptized, but have not yet been received into full communion with the Catholic Church, we call "candidates." I mean, they're not maybe baptized, but not received Eucharist or Confirmation. And so the Church also at the Rite of Election can recognize those candidates who will be sealed with the gift of the Spirit and take place at Christ's Eucharistic table. I always say at the Rite of Election, you look out--because people are different ages who are receiving this--and it's like, if I ask you to tell me your story of why is it now that you're here? I bet those stories would be

fascinating, like who it was who inspired you, or what experience it was that led you to this moment. It would be so interesting. I would love to hear all their stories.

Billy Atwell ([27:15](#)):

Yeah.

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

But what they all have in common is that this is part of God's plan. This is God's time. It is God who has chosen them. And the other thing they have in common is that they're not making this journey alone. It is the whole community of faith, not just their family and their sponsors, but all of us who are supporting, encouraging, and even here in our intercessions, during lent, praying for those who are preparing for full initiation into the Church. So my prayers are with all of them and with their families.

Billy Atwell ([27:48](#)):

Very good. And if you go to the new... Actually Arlington Catholic Herald has a new website. So go check that out. That's a good reason to go check it out if nothing else, catholicerald.com. But you just search rite of election, R-I-T-E of election. You can see pictures from past years. And then also, we have an article in there from this year's Rite of Election. We did a two-parter because there were two different Masses for it, and it'll be published in next week's edition of the Herald. So you can check that out there in the coverage.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:13](#)):

Great shout-out for the new website, Arlington Catholic Herald, great job to you and the Catholic Herald team. I really like the look, and it's very user-friendly.

Billy Atwell ([28:21](#)):

Oh, thank you. Yeah. Kevin, our executive editor there worked very hard with the team on that. They did a great job. Bishop, any final thoughts?

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

No, just on this St. Patrick's Day, I suggested that, this morning, that during these challenging and unsettling times we may repeat confidently the words of St. Patrick: "I arise today through God's strength to pilot me, God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's hand to guard me, and God's shield to protect me." And that's my prayer for all the faithful that they will know God's love and protection and guidance so that they may continue to walk humbly with our God.

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

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 at Bishop Burbidge 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.