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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, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your co-host. Those listening to the podcast, you are benefiting from the generosity of thousands of people who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. The BLA, as we call it, supports many ministries throughout the Diocese that we've spoken about on this podcast, but that includes the Communications Office here. And so we just want to say thank you to those who have been generous to the BLA, as well as to those who have given to the Catholic Communication Campaign, which is the weekend of May 29.

Billy Atwell (00:40):

Please keep that in mind, if you don't mind. Thank you to those who have made all of this possible. If you haven't already, please rate this podcast or write a review wherever you're listening. And if you're listening via YouTube, please subscribe and ring that notifications bell. Sign up for our e-news letter at arlingtondiocese.org and follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter @bishopburbidge, where every day you can read a short reflection on the Gospel of that day. The Diocese is available on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and you can send your questions to Bishop Burbidge to 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 (01:21):

I'm doing well, Billy. Thank you.

Billy Atwell (01:23):

So we're starting on a pretty somber note here. People are well aware, but recently there was a shooting in Buffalo that took the lives of 10 people. And then just yesterday, there was a shooting at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas, that took the lives of 19 children and two teachers. And one of those teachers was actually 17-years-old. I think she was a teacher's aide. Bishop, please share your initial thoughts and reactions to these tragedies.

Bishop Burbidge (01:45):

Sure, Billy. I'm sure with all of our listeners it's incomprehensible-

Billy Atwell (01:49):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge (01:50):

That's such a violent act, taking the lives of innocent children and individuals, occurs in this day and age. It's evil, it's horrific, and it is so hard to see such a tragedy. And I'm sure that we are all entrusting those who died, especially the children and the teachers, to God's infinite love. They are his beloved sons and daughters, and they will always be, and I am sure they are resting now in his embrace. This is not a time, of course, for us to be divided as a country, but to be united. It is not a time for us to be political, but to be prayerful.

Bishop Burbidge (02:36):

And we can be united in our prayer as we entrust those who die to God's care and also pray for their parents. I'm sure every parent out there listening is just thinking the same thing. I can't even imagine this tragedy. So we are praying for their parents and their siblings and their families that God will give them strength and perseverance and the assurance that he is walking with them at this time. It is an evil that needs to be addressed and confronted that how this could happen. And I'm sure officials and all will begin to look at this situation there in Texas and throughout our country.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:23](#)):

But it's my hope that we certainly, we don't rely simply on our elected officials to come up with the root causes of this. We need to bring experts in from around the world, experts in mental health, experts in safety and security, experts will know how to act in such dire situations. So I pray that expertise and wisdom that are out there will come together and really begin to see what we can do as a nation and all of us to play a role and part in doing, with God's help, anything to eradicate this evil and violence. But dear friends, let's be united.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:13](#)):

Let's be united in prayer, especially for those who have experienced this horrific tragedy, both in Buffalo and in Texas.

Billy Atwell ([04:24](#)):

Thank you, Bishop, for that pastoral perspective. It's so tragic and I know a lot of people are looking to hear what you have to say about it. Bishop, late last week, news broke that Archbishop Cordileone of San Francisco announced that he has instructed priests of his diocese not to admit House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Holy Communion. Speaker Pelosi is somewhat famous for her adamant support of abortion, as well as increased access and even public funding for abortion. In his statement, Archbishop Cordileone cited numerous attempts to speak with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, but noted that at some point she stopped communicating back with him.

Billy Atwell ([05:02](#)):

So, that had not been productive at some point. And since her advocacy for abortion has only increased, he made a pastoral decision and then shared the details for the first time with the public. You've spoken in the past that this is typically a private conversation. You've also spoken about how it's a very sensitive matter, and it's a challenging one for bishops to deal with. Even in the last episode, you spoke about that. I was wondering if you'd offer your general thoughts about this decision and the announcement that was made.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:28](#)):

Yes, Billy. Thank you. Thank you for asking. I do know Archbishop Cordileone very well, and I know that he is a pastor. He loves the Lord, he loves the Church, and he loves his people. And I think we can commend Archbishop Cordileone for the careful way he announced this, as well as for giving a full context of what transpired up until this point. Speaker Pelosi, as you mentioned, has been actively pro-abortion for years and years and years. So for the Archbishop to make this decision now demonstrates that he did what he could, but felt that she had no desire to align with Church teaching.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:16](#)):

I trust that he did everything possible. And we should bear in mind, this is important that he has offered Speaker Pelosi a path back to the Church. There's a beautiful path back to the Church. It's to come to understand what is true, to embrace the Church's teaching that the unborn need to be protected. All of life is sacred, is to be treasured and cherished and welcome. And to embrace that and to express sorrow, as we all need to do, when we fail to uphold that which we profess, our faith, and to know God's mercy and to find that path back to union with the Church and thus the reception of Holy Communion.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:09](#)):

So those doors are open to her, to any of us who wander away from the Lord and from what he teaches. When it's time to act, I know about Archbishop Cordileone, he does not hesitate, but he discerns as a pastor first and foremost. And he states that the dialogue, which we all are encouraged to have, Pope Francis encourages all bishops to really offer to dialogue, especially with elected officials with these issues. And let me tell you, all the bishops I know, myself included, we take that very seriously, and you always offer and sometimes people don't even acknowledge the offer.

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

Sometimes they reject the offer. Sometimes they accept it but don't dialogue. They only restate their position. And there are some moments, and I've had that in my tenure as a Bishop, where the dialogue really led to something very fruitful. So we can never tire of doing that offering to dialogue. And so I think that it's important for our listeners to know that, certainly in this diocese and I think in dioceses throughout the country, that goes on constantly behind the scene. I know people ask, Billy, sometimes if I would do the same thing with pro-abortion politicians who live in my diocese.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:39](#)):

As I have stated and just repeated, my first goal was to work with the politicians privately. And in both dioceses I've served, I've seen some fruits from doing so. If they're willing to engage in a dialogue, we may be able to make progress. But if they cut off contact, then other pastoral actions may be necessary. I have not publicly announced that someone is not to receive Communion my diocese, but I have privately shared that directive with individuals who have continuously scandalized the Church by holding a personal Catholic identity while also publicly advocating for abortion or other inherent moral evils.

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

And I would encourage people to understand that when a Bishop does or does not announce that someone is or is not to receive Holy Communion, it is done for the good of the individual and the good of the Church. A bishop is also responsible, of course, for his own sanctification, his own holiness, but also for the souls entrusted to his pastoral care. That's the reason we act in both cases, but it's a pastoral decision that includes many factors, most of which are private and unknown to outsiders.

Billy Atwell ([09:56](#)):

I appreciate you providing that, highlighting some of these key points. I think in most stories, this gets missed. And as a pastor, you obviously have a unique perspective on this and you've also been in the same position, working with politicians. Given that we are on the border of Washington, D.C., We've been asked via social media and otherwise, if you would uphold Archbishop Cordileone's decision should Speaker Pelosi attend Mass in our diocese. What would be your response to that?

Bishop Burbidge ([10:22](#)):

Well, in short, yes, I would. I would respect-- He is her bishop. And as that bishop, the direction and guidance he provides is not limited to just a geographical area. So in short, yes, I would respect the decision of Archbishop Cordileone and be consistent with that decision here in the Diocese of Arlington should that situation occur.

Billy Atwell ([10:46](#)):

Okay.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:46](#)):

So, again, Billy, these matters, although it doesn't seem that way sometimes, these are not political for bishops. They're moral and they're spiritual, and they're a result of prayer and discernment. And again, I can't say it enough, decisions are made for the good of individuals to guard the faithful from scandal. Because there is scandal when people in high offices like this not only take a position that is so contrary to the Church, but they connect it to their faith.

Billy Atwell ([11:23](#)):

Yeah. That's when people feel particularly offended.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:25](#)):

Well, that's so wrong. And that is even of even greater concern that they say something that is totally contrary to what the Church teaches and do it in the name of faith, and that's scandal.

Billy Atwell ([11:40](#)):

Yeah.

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

And that leads people down the wrong path, and that confuses people. And a bishop has to guard against against that. That's the goal. It's not to punish someone or to keep them from the Sacraments. Speaker Pelosi and all of us are always given that chance, that opportunity to be reconciled. And she has that path to reunite with our Lord and the Eucharist. And then she has to discern if she's willing to accept that. I know for Archbishop Cordileone and all the attention that he's getting, not all positive, I recognize that this, and he knew that.

Billy Atwell ([12:21](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:21](#)):

He knew that was coming. He knew the attacks were coming.

Billy Atwell ([12:24](#)):

He's a courageous man though.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:24](#)):

He is. And he knew that decision was undoubtedly painful to make, which he noted actually in this public statement. But all people, including those who are not public individuals, have to approach the Sacraments truly in communion with the Church and our Lord. That's true for all of us.

Billy Atwell ([12:40](#)):

That's a good reminder for all of us that we're not exempt from this, but neither is Speaker Pelosi or any other politician. We all have to approach the Sacraments with that honesty and really reflect on our own souls. Moving on to a happier topic. In the last podcast, this is the last podcast before you will ordain eight men to the priesthood, eight men that you know well and have been very involved in their formation and seen them grow as individuals. Many will see it via livestream or even maybe attend in person. It is open to the public.

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

But if you would walk us through what that week or two leading up to ordination looks like. Are they in ministry during that time? Do they spend time with family? Do they do a retreat? I'm sure you remember this well in your own life.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:27](#)):

Sure. Well, they go, they're still in that final semester up until May with papers and exams. So, that helps keep minds off some details, I guess. But once they complete all the requirements of the seminary, they do have time for a little relaxation after a long semester. It gives them time to ... They have classmates being ordained on different dates from other dioceses. They went through the seminary together, but different dioceses have ordinations on different Saturdays, some in May, some in June. So it gives them the time to attend their classmates' ordinations.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:11](#)):

We'll welcome many here to the Diocese of Arlington for ours. But most importantly, and this is canonical, but it's not the reason you do it, but it's essential that there is time for the retreat before ordination. So they are on a private retreat, a quiet retreat for the time, the week before they're ordained. There's a speaker that will guide them, but most of the time is spent in silence for them to be alone with the Lord and to prepare spiritually for the graces, the sacramental graces and blessings that God would be still upon them as they receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:54](#)):

The night before is a great night that I get to spend along with the vocation director with the men about to be ordained. It gives me a chance to give them a little fervorino and some instructions because I know they probably won't hear me during the homily that day, so I might as well get it in the night before. But most importantly, it's a time that we pray together. We pray together before the Blessed Sacrament. We entrust them to the Blessed Mother. I bless their chalices, which is really beautiful, and then we have just a dinner together.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:34](#)):

And then I tell them, go home. Be at peace. You're ready. The Church has called you forward, get a good night's sleep, and know that you'll be surrounded tomorrow by the graces of God, the love of parents and family and all in this diocese. And so I'm so excited about the eight men to be ordained. I assure, if

anyone listening wants hope for the future of the Church as you invited them, watch the Mass livestream or come, if you're able to, and get to know these wonderful men God has sent to be our newest priests. Maybe many people saw in the announcement of the assignments-

Billy Atwell ([16:15](#)):

Yeah.

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

We have plenty of work for them once they're ordained.

Billy Atwell ([16:18](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:18](#)):

They're going through some pretty busy and active parishes. But they're ready. They're fired up. They're filled with zeal. They're ready to go. I know they're going to be a gift to the people they're sent to serve and also to our diocese. And a word of thanks to their parents who have supported them and loved them and encouraged them along the way. We're so happy for their parents and family members also.

Billy Atwell ([16:44](#)):

It's such a joyful and hopeful time for the Diocese, especially eight men, that's a wonderful number. For those that don't know these seminarians, we are going to be putting out little one-minute kind of mini profiles to give you a window into the heart of these individuals who will be ordained. So stay tuned for those, stay close to our Facebook and Instagram for that. But if you would like to attend the ordination or follow the livestream, it's going to be at Saint Thomas More Cathedral at 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 4.

Billy Atwell ([17:15](#)):

And just go to our YouTube channel and you can get a reminder for the ordination Mass there and watch that with the rest of the Diocese. And then another, before we get to a question from a listener, the Diocesan Family Festival was called "Arise" last year. It was a wonderful event. A lot of fun. It's going to be held on June 11, from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. It's at the Warren County Fairgrounds. It starts at 4 p.m. with a vigil Mass and then followed by food and games, rides, inflatables.

Billy Atwell ([17:44](#)):

There'll be Catholic vendors there. The band Scythian is playing. That's been a big hit. I had not heard of this band before, but everyone else has.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:51](#)):

I've heard of them. They're great. I've been at one of their events. Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([17:55](#)):

I've heard more about Scythian than anything else related to the family festival. So attendance is free. Music is free. The games, rides, all that. Food is for purchase. So, there's going to be food trucks there and options, or you can bring a picnic if you would like.

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

It's going to be a great celebration. The team here in the Diocese, they have been working so hard with all these details to make this, like you said, Billy, a fun event and for us to be together. There's so many challenging issues we're dealing with and we're still hurting and everything we've been through, we need to be together as a diocese and family. And so we're going to begin with Mass and be strengthened by the Lord and his Word and the Eucharist, and then we're going to have fun, and it's going to be truly a festival.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:45](#)):

So I hope many families come. We'll put a lot of work into it, and I think it'll be a great event for you.

Billy Atwell ([18:51](#)):

I remember a child on the way out of last year's event said to you, "We should do this every month."

Bishop Burbidge ([18:56](#)):

Exactly.

Billy Atwell ([18:56](#)):

That's how much fun it was.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:57](#)):

Exactly. And my staff passed out at that moment.

Billy Atwell ([19:02](#)):

All right. So we have a question from a listener here. It relates to the clergy assignments you mentioned a minute ago. What are the protocols you follow in making clergy assignments? Is there a collaborative or consensus process, or are you provided recommendations to make a decision, or both?

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

No, it's very collaborative. We begin in January. We send out a questionnaire to the priests that the priests are able to fill out just asking about their disposition and their current assignment. Are they open to a transfer? Is there a particular gift or talent or ministry they would like us to consider? So the priest fills out a questionnaire. We read all of them and take that very seriously. Then we look at the needs of the Diocese where maybe priests are retiring or being sent for further studies or something like that, which creates openings.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:58](#)):

And then when there's openings, then there's domino effects.

Billy Atwell ([20:01](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:01](#)):

And so the goal is then number one--and the priest know this--number one is how best to serve the needs of the Diocese, of the Church. And then we try to do so by respecting the wishes, the gifts, the talents of the priests, but ultimately through the collaboration of a personnel board, they are the deans, who are we whenever we choose the dean, I receive the recommendations from the priests. So they know the priests, they know their regions and the areas of the Diocese very well. And I receive their input and there's much prayer and there's much discernment and discussion.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:46](#)):

And there probably have like three or four meetings before the final assignments. And there are moments where those dots are just not connecting and you feel like are we going to figure this out or not? So then you come up and somehow it all comes together, there's consensus and we have the plan. And so now we have to execute the plan. In other words, we got to call the priests.

Billy Atwell ([21:12](#)):

Right. Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:12](#)):

And we got to say, "Listen, we need you to do this." And I think I said in the last podcast, as I've said throughout my tenure here in the Diocese of Arlington, executing a plan here is very easy because our priests are so generous and they take very seriously the yes they offered on the day of the ordination. And very, very rare occasions, and there are usually for very significant reasons, first response I get in calling the priests who may be transferred, "Yes, Bishop, whatever the Church needs, whatever the Diocese needs." That's the heart of a priest.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:57](#)):

That's who we are. And I commend our priests. Now, the faithful, not always the case.

Billy Atwell ([22:07](#)):

Maybe we have some work to do in our generosity.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:11](#)):

Once the announcements were made, they became public, I looked and sure enough, I was going to a parish where one of the priests was being transferred, who was like all of our priests, but who was very, very beloved. Sure enough, that's the parish I was going to that night. And I would say in a very respectful way-

Billy Atwell ([22:32](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:33](#)):

The faithful told me that they weren't thrilled with that decision.

Billy Atwell ([22:38](#)):

You got to wear a helmet to some pastoral visits.

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Bishop Burbidge ([22:41](#)):

As I always say, I say, I'd be more concerned if you were thanking me for the transfer. Yeah.

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

That's right. That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:48](#)):

And then when I can reassure them, which I can in this great diocese, when I can reassure them, Father's needed somewhere else, his gifts and talents. You've been blessed to have him these years, but he's needed somewhere else. But let me assure you, the priests that I'm sending you you will also love-

Billy Atwell ([23:04](#)):

That's wonderful.

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

And he will love you. And the people understand that.

Billy Atwell ([23:07](#)):

That's great. Yeah. Bishop, any final thoughts? And then if you would send us off with a blessing.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:11](#)):

No, Billy. But, we began our podcast on a very somber, very sad note, and just ask all of our listeners to continue to offer prayer and fasting and sacrifices for all the families who have lost loved ones, both in Buffalo and in Texas. God will grant them strength and peace. And together, like I said in the beginning, dear friends, let's remain united, let's remain prayerful, and together let us walk humbly with God.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:46](#)):

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