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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. If you haven't already, please rate this podcast, write a review wherever you're listening, iTunes, Spotify, et cetera. And sign up for our e-newsletter, [@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:arlingtondiocese.org) especially right now with everything going on. Our emails are critical, the most important information that we have to send to you, we're communicating through that e-newsletter. You can also follow Bishop Burbidge, on Twitter, [@BishopBurbidge](https://twitter.com/BishopBurbidge), where every day you can read a short reflection on the gospel of that day. You can also follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and make sure you also subscribe to our YouTube channel and click the notifications bell. You can send your questions for Bishop Burbidge, to info@arlingtondiocese.org. Again, that's info@arlingtondiocese.org. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge (00:56):

I'm doing well, Billy and I hope our listeners are doing well and certainly reassuring them and their families of my daily prayers and remember to... Especially at mass as we continue to persevere through the pandemic. You're very much in my thoughts and prayers, everyone.

Billy Atwell (01:11):

All right, good. We have a very unique podcast today, we're changing up the format a bit. We'll have a guest, but before we bring them in, I want to ask you about, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which will be on May 3rd. Typically, this is a day in which our priests talk about vocations at mass, they share their stories and all of them encouraging people to pray for vocations, to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life. Talk a little bit about this day.

Bishop Burbidge (01:32):

Yeah, it's always an important day of prayer. It's a day that we lift up that universal call we all have to pray for vocations, to the priesthood, to consecrated life, to pray for one another as we faithfully live out the vocation that God has given to us. And to pray for an increase of vocations. We need more priests, we need more sisters and consecrated religious men and women in our church and in our diocese. So, it's a day of heightened prayer and I certainly invite everyone to take advantage of this opportunity and to pray for your priests in a special way, who I know are working so hard to stay connected pastorally and spiritually with all of their parishioners. So, anytime we're united in prayer with a specific intention. What a beautiful intention! Vocations. That's a good thing for the church, it's a good thing for our diocese.

Billy Atwell (02:30):

And you can stay connected with the diocese website, arlingtondiocese.org, we will have information about the world day prayer as we get closer to May 3rd there. Bishop, a colleague in my office was helping in one of our parish food pantries and shared with me that 30 minutes before the pantry opened, there was a line out the block of people waiting to receive a bag of groceries worth about \$10. And they waited a long time for that. And there were social distancing and so on. But that one parish alone, it gives \$8,000 worth of food a week. A volunteer broke down and said the need is so great. I

know Art Bennett with Catholic Charities conveys a similar reality. Share some of your thoughts about the desperate need of food in particular at this time.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:08](#)):

Sure, Billy. One of the greatest tragedies of this pandemic is the fact that those who were previously destitute and are barely hanging on to life each day and those who were previously poor are now. That's the two. It's very, very sad. And we're talking about the basic necessities in life, food. Saint Lucy Food Project distributes 1.25 million pounds of food a year and right now they are running low and this is a grave concern for me. So, I implore anyone who's able to please consider making a gift to Catholic Charities and or your parish food pantry. This is, as you mentioned, such a critical time and we have to acknowledge we are running out of food quickly. So, anything you can give us dear friends will go a long way. Will go a long way to feeding the poor and to keeping families and even our young children from going hungry.

Billy Atwell ([04:07](#)):

Yeah, it spans every demographic. And folks that were once right on the line are now well into poverty and in desperate need. I know the Saint Lucy Food Project alone distributes 1.25 million pounds of food a year and they're running low. And that's a massive food distribution network. So, if you're interested in giving, go to ccda.net, to donate. That's the Catholic Charity site. You can also go to arlingtondiocese.org/give, either way you'll be able to give to Catholic Charities in those important food initiatives. All right, Bishop. So, now we're changing up our format a little bit, we have a guest.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:42](#)):

It's very good. We're very happy because I think one of the things we want to do during our perseverance through this pandemic is to speak to people who are playing some unique roles and offering so much support and service to others. So, I'm very excited to welcome on the podcast, Sherry Longhill. Sherry is the program director for emergency assistance at Catholic Charities here in the Diocese of Arlington. So, Sherry, thank you for joining me on The Walk Humbly Podcast.

Sherry ([05:13](#)):

Oh, good morning Bishop Burbidge. Thank you for having me. Very glad to be here.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:18](#)):

All right. So, Sherry, if we could just maybe just ask a couple of questions. First of all, Sherry, for those not familiar with the emergency assistance program, would you please tell our listeners about your program, what it does and how it actually serves the poor?

Sherry ([05:34](#)):

Absolutely, yes. So, we've been in existence for over 46 years and we were set up to provide rent and utility assistance for families and individuals in crisis situation. So, if they had a death in the family or a medical emergency, a divorce and they have no safety net. And we'd been continuing to do this all these years and we operate out of a Christ House, Alexandria and an office in Leesburg. And those two offices cover the entire diocese.

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

Wow! We are so grateful to you and to all who assist you in this work. How about you? How did you get involved in this line of work?

Sherry ([06:15](#)):

Well, I actually was IT for 20 years. I was a systems engineer and our company was bought and I went to Herndon-Reston FISH as executive director of their emergency assistance program. So, I was there for three years and saw an ad in the Herald for the Catholic Charities, emergency assistant position. And the rest is history. That was eight years ago.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:41](#)):

It's amazing, isn't it? God has a plan for all of us and he leads us where he needs us to be. And so thank-

Sherry ([06:47](#)):

I know.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:49](#)):

Thanks for your yes, to his call. I know you could certainly provide us with statistics and analytics and they are important, but I'm sure our listeners would appreciate maybe a story or two of someone you've helped recently that represents the types of struggles that people are going through at this time.

Sherry ([07:09](#)):

Okay. Yes. So, most of the people that have been calling have been for rent requests and they'd been in the hospitality and service industries. And they are people coming from 40 to \$60,000 a year paying jobs that have no savings or not enough to make even one month without working. So, we've had for example, a young mother with one child working full time as a receptionist at a medical office. The father of the son's not involved in their lives. She was used to meeting all the financial responsibilities until the shutdown and she had to apply for unemployment, which is half of what she was used to bringing home.

Sherry ([07:51](#)):

For a one bedroom apartment is only 1460, but she has all her other expenses such as a car payment, insurance, et cetera. She contacted her job and they said the office may open in late may or early June. And she shared that she had to go to a food pantry for the first time and she plans to go to the Christ House Food Pantry since she's out of food again. And she needed a balance of \$500 which Catholic Charities provided for her rent. But now she's concerned about May.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:25](#)):

Sure.

Sherry ([08:25](#)):

And so we were able to give her referrals for other agencies that might be able to help her.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:31](#)):

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And I guess there are so many more stories like this. Are you seeing such an increase in requests? People who previously did not require our help?

Sherry ([08:41](#)):

Yes. Actually these are pretty much all new people and they're are people that are not used to asking for assistance, they don't even know what a rent late notice is. They're embarrassed.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:53](#)):

Sure, sure. It's such a challenging time but thank God that we are there to help them and we want people to know that. What would you say is our greatest need at this time?

Sherry ([09:06](#)):

Well, emergency assistance really needs funding if we are to go beyond June. Right now, Christ House has enough money left to help 43 families with \$500 each for rent. And the Leesburg office has enough money to help 37 families.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:25](#)):

Okay. And what is it specifically that maybe you could say to your listeners that would be of most support to you and to your work and your ministry at this time both how we can contribute, how we can pray, what is it that you're asking from all of us?

Sherry ([09:42](#)):

I think the biggest thing is we need your prayers both for staff who are not used to telecommuting and doing all of this with people over the phone. It's very stressful for them, but also to pray for the people that we're helping.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:58](#)):

Sure.

Sherry ([09:58](#)):

Like I said, many of them, they don't really know where to turn and they're looking at it another month or maybe longer before they go back to work. And then the third thing would be, if we could get more funding to help more people with their rent assistance. And like I said, \$500 is helpful, it will pay most of the time half of someone's monthly rent.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:25](#)):

Right.

Sherry ([10:26](#)):

So, we would ask for donations.

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

Well, I'm sure I can speak for the good listeners of this podcast, we can assure you and the people you serve and the people who are helping to minister to them. Be assured of my prayers and I know the

prayers of all of our listeners and I know they're faithful, are so generous in supporting those in need and I'm sure hearing this appeal you will experience such support and know that I and the diocese will continue to work with you and our Catholic Charities to increase our support in any way possible. But we are so thankful to you Sherry, for being on the podcast today, conveying to us the great need that's out there. And it's right at home, it's right here in our own neighborhood, in our own communities and the need is very significant. And we will trust you and to God that he may continue to bless all of your endeavors.

Sherry ([11:30](#)):

Thank you very much Bishop Burbidge.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:30](#)):

All right, thank you Sherry. Thanks for joining us.

Sherry ([11:32](#)):

Okay, thank you for having me.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:34](#)):

All right, God bless you. Thank you.

Sherry ([11:35](#)):

God bless you.

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

Thanks.

Billy Atwell ([11:36](#)):

And again, as a reminder for folks, if you want to give to the direct assistance ministry, these people who were able to make it until now and now they're in need, you go to ccda.net/donate and you can give to that. Specific ministry, you can give to Catholic Charities in general. But again, CCDA, stands for Catholic Charities of Diocese of Arlington. ccda.net/donate.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:59](#)):

And Bill, you know what's very providential, the day we're recording this, the gospel mass today is that beautiful story about the disciples are overwhelmed because they see a crowd that that needs food, but the crowd was so large and it didn't have much to feed them with. And the Lord said, "Well, you do have five barley loaves and two fish. Give me that." And then Lord multiplied that in miraculous ways where the people were satisfied in abundance. And sometimes dear friends, when we hear such great need as Sherry just explained, we can get overwhelmed and we can feel inadequate. Well, what can I do to help that? But don't forget that the Lord only asks that we give him our barley and our fish, whatever it is, whatever donation it may be, whatever sacrifice it may be, whatever prayer may be. And then we can trust that God will miraculously use it. Whatever we offer him to sustain and to nourish his people. So, there is nothing too small.

Billy Atwell ([13:03](#)):

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Very good. And Bishop, before we get into questions from the faithful, the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops made a big announcement this week about the consecration of the United States to Mary Mother of the Church. Talk about that a bit.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:14](#)):

Well, yeah. An act of consecration is meant to be a reminder to the faithful of our blessed mother's witness to the gospel and to ask for her effective intercession before her son on our behalf of those in needs. And this follows a similar consecration by the bishops of Latin America and Caribbean, Canada doing the same thing also in the same day, May 1st. So, after May 1st, all of North America will be reconsecrated in a sense to Marry the Mother of the Church. It's planned, as you mentioned for May 1st, it does not change the designation of Mary as the Patroness of the United States under the title of the Immaculate Conception. It has not changed, rather this prayer reaffirms and renews previous Mary entrustments and unites us in solidarity with our Holy Father, who recently established the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church as a source of protection and strength.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:09](#)):

So, what will happen is Archbishop Gomez, who's the president of United States Conference Catholic Bishops, will lead a brief liturgy with the prayer reconsecration on Friday, May 1st at three o'clock Eastern Standard Time. And he has invited the bishops of the country to join in from their perspective diocese and ask them to extend an invitation to the faithful in the diocese for their participation. So, I'm doing that now on this podcast, but I think we also will be getting this word out with Billy through our social media and all.

Billy Atwell ([14:41](#)):

Absolutely. We'll be spreading the word. So, you'll see this again, but if you want to follow that live stream, you just go to facebook.com/usccb. That's U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops. But if you go to their Facebook page, it'll be live stream from there. You'll see it in other places too, but if you go there, you know that you'll definitely see it. So again, you can join Archbishop Gomez in that brief liturgy, that reconsecration on Friday, May 1st at 3:30 pm, Eastern Standard Time. [Facebook.com/usccb](https://facebook.com/usccb).

Bishop Burbidge ([15:07](#)):

And participation in something like this is that other reminder that we are in this together, that we are part of the universal church and we're God's family and it is the Lord leading us and we know his blessed mother will protect us.

Billy Atwell ([15:21](#)):

Absolutely. All right. So, we have some questions from the faithful. The first is, what are some of your favorite stories that you've heard about families within the diocese during this quarantine?

Bishop Burbidge ([15:31](#)):

Yeah, well, it is great to hear that our families are speaking about spending some real quality time together.

Billy Atwell ([15:39](#)):

Like it or not.

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

Yeah. But even the nice traditions that many of us remember of family meals together. I know in our busy times, sometimes everyone's running in different directions but it's so great to see some pictures people are sending me of family sitting at the table together and enjoying meals, I'm learning of some new games that people are playing, having some fun together. One very cute thing was a trend where kids are writing down religious motivation, chalk art. And I see that their parents are... It's really cute posting on our social media like, "Hope is contagious too." And different quotes from scriptures. I love seeing some people are posting and have sent me pictures of their families sitting together for mass and their actual participation. One had two little boys, maybe four or five. It was cute. They had their own little altar and they were celebrating pretending that they were with the priest and offering the prayers or whatever.

Billy Atwell ([16:53](#)):

You never know that picture might come up again someday.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:54](#)):

I hope it does. [crosstalk 00:16:55].

Billy Atwell ([16:54](#)):

You might see them again.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:57](#)):

I hope it does. I might see that. Some people are staying off social media rather than each going in separate rooms with their iPhones and all the different social media tools just to spend some time together. So, people are being creative. As I said, when we have additional time in our hands, certainly the world creeps in and there'll be worldly ways that want us to fill that time with destructive, not life-giving things that take us a path we don't want to be on. So, let's do the life-giving things that puts us in contact with the people we love and care for and the healthy things. Spiritually, spiritual reading, prayer, our own... It's easy to get off a good diet when you're just lounging around, but to stay, we're temples of the Holy spirit and respect our body. So, to eat well, to exercise. So, to do the life-giving things during this time. And it's wonderful to see how individuals and families are doing this.

Billy Atwell ([18:04](#)):

Yeah. And if you're one of those folks that are posting pictures of your family watching mass or whether it's chalk art or whatever, tag us on social media. For Instagram and Twitter that's @Arlington Church and you can find us on Facebook as well. But tag us, let us see that. We'd love to be able to share some of these beautiful witnesses of the domestic church around our diocese. Archbishop Chad, from st Bernadette's asked, "How have previous financial crisis impacted our diocese financially and how well postured are we to survive the current crisis, which some economists predict may lead to depression-era unemployment numbers?"

Bishop Burbidge ([18:35](#)):

Sure. And it's a good question Chad. It's obviously a question being entrusted with the wellbeing of our parishes and their stability that I'm having frequent conversations with, with our chief financial officer, our diocesan finance council and other advisors. The good news is that the faithful of this diocese have

been incredibly generous through every economic downturn. I wasn't here in 2008 during the real estate collapse at that year, but I was told that the overall offertory in BLA, the Bishop's Lenten Appeal giving increased during that time.

Billy Atwell ([19:15](#)):

That's so incredible.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:16](#)):

Yeah. So, that's really good news. And again, this is because the Catholics throughout our diocese are invested in the ministries of the church. They know the church in no matter what times we are in, but especially in times of need, the church continues its ministries, especially our outreach as we just heard from Sherry to the poor, to the needy, in evangelization, in spiritual constellation, in comfort. So, I think the faithful understand, we can't stop. We can not shut down doing our ministries, but how can we continue with their goodness and generosity. But we've never had anything like this, right?

Billy Atwell ([19:54](#)):

Yeah. Closing the churches is a whole different world.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:55](#)):

I know. And so not having the regular collection in parishes is impacting every parish and we're taking a hit on that. We understand that. And with some parishioners out at work giving is not where it normally is and we respect that and we're very sensitive that. We don't want people... We don't want to be imposing upon people asking them to do something they're unable to do at this time. We understand that, we have that sensitivity. But where there is the ability to help and to support, maybe to consider faith direct or making sure you somehow find a way to allow your parish to continue to work. And certainly the 40 plus ministries in our diocese are supported by our Bishop's Appeal. And what we're saying here, these are ways that yes, there is something you can do. Allow these ministries of the church and its care for the poor and our willingness to assist others to continue. And again, with respect and sensitivity to the specific needs as they vary from one person to another at this time. And if you're someone who needs help, please contact us.

Billy Atwell ([21:06](#)):

Exactly.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:07](#)):

Or contact your parish, contact your diocese, contact Catholic Charities. Okay? So, we want to be there to help others too. And then Billy, with the assistance of my finance council and our finance officer, we're doing everything we can to assist parishes and schools in navigating these unwavering uncertain waters. We're in constant contact with our pastors and with our business managers. To begin with for example, we've created tools to help parishes project their needs based on the changing income. And again, we're working with our parishes. We're not trying to put more work on them or give them more burden, but this hyper focused budgeting in a sense helps pastors, administrators with looking at the week to week needs of each of the parishes.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:54](#)):

And so that's something different, where are we right now? I think this is what we have to be doing, where are we week to week. We're helping pastors effectively communicate with parishioners about online giving. We're trying to find ways to support and to help alleviate the financial burdens that people on our parishes are experiencing. The diocese does not since want to add to that, we want to try to alleviate that and we will continue to do it. We continue to help. And this is very, very important. We continue to help our parishes and school apply for the recently funded paycheck protection program through small business association.

Billy Atwell ([22:33](#)):

Yeah, this is a big deal.

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

This is a big deal. And at first when it was first being discussed, we weren't sure because of our status and our structure and set up, would this apply to our parishes and to our schools and to Catholic Charities and other institutions.

Billy Atwell ([22:46](#)):

It does. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:47](#)):

And it does. And while this program now in its second funding is a highly sought after program, is very competitive, we know that. Part of it was getting those applications and those loans in quickly. And I'll tell you, we did as a diocese and many of our parishes did and we know already of 15 parishes who have received the funding they asked for.

Billy Atwell ([23:08](#)):

That's remarkable.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:08](#)):

So what a great, great source of income that will be. And that's just to help us get by. That's not giving us a cushion.

Billy Atwell ([23:14](#)):

No, no.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:15](#)):

It's to help us get by. But we recognize this is a challenging time for our parishioners and parishes, we're just going to continue to do the best we can, but we as a diocese are going to assure our listeners we're here to support your parishes and anything you can do to help us we would be most grateful or if there's anything we can do to help you know of our willingness.

Billy Atwell ([23:38](#)):

And if you were one of the folks that Bishop Burbidge, mentioned a second ago that you're not in a position to give at this point, don't forget our churches are open, go and pray, pray for the health of

your parish, pray for the health of the diocese. There is certainly something that you can do to assist during this time, even if it's not financial. Our churches are open, there's confessions available and you can go over there for private prayer. All right, Bishop, one last question is, what is something that you have learned about yourself during this time?

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

Oh, my goodness.

Billy Atwell ([24:06](#)):

Are you more extroverted than you thought you were?

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

Yes I am. I am more extroverted than I thought. I always knew I love being with people and I get energized by being out and engaging with the people. I always knew that. But I guess I'm learning the opposite of that, of how it brings me down not to be. So, I was a little surprised that actually the impact this had on my mood, my spirit in a sense. And so like all of us, you have to say, "Okay, well, we got to address this. We can't stay down, this is the moment we're in and God's going to see us through it." And so find other ways to stay engaged in which I've been doing, but nothing replaces the actual that. So, I'm really surprised at the level of impact that that has had. And I saw last night how desperate I am in being able to go to our parishes and schools and even on other television to watch sporting events with them all being canceled. I was so excited that the NFL draft was going to be live last night. I was fully into it. I'm like, "This is pretty desperate."

Billy Atwell ([25:32](#)):

It is Christmas [crosstalk 00:25:33] day.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:36](#)):

But I really do miss being with our people. I know how much they miss being in their churches and my brother priests and I really miss being with you and I just can't wait until we can get started. I have established a reintegration plan, a task force that is going to guide me and it's made up of some pastors and staff and lady throughout our diocese. Obviously, I think we all know we're going to be moving to a gradual phase reopening and we don't know specifically when and what those details will be phase by phase, but we've already initiated preparation for that and what that will look like. I'm also in consultation with the bishops of our region and province too, so that as dioceses in this area, in this geographical area maybe to the extent possible it varies from state to state, but we can be on the same page.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:30](#)):

So, we're thinking ahead dear friends and I am like you, I just can't wait. Even if it's gradually that will be fine. We will continue to let the science guide us because we don't want to come this far and then not be prudent and responsible for stopping doing our part to help stop the spread of this virus and to be compassionate in taking care of one another.

Billy Atwell ([26:55](#)):

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Absolutely. Bishop, any final thoughts? We've gone through a number of things that changed up our format a little bit, how to grasp on, but any final thoughts and then we close this up?

Bishop Burbidge ([27:02](#)):

No. Just how edified I am and inspired by our priests and by the faithful in this diocese to just see their love of the church and their faith and how they're persevering and not giving up. I know it's not easy. It's not easy for any of us. It's difficult, but I see a lot of people encouraging and inspiring and helping one another and that's edifying. And so I just think the witness and the example dear listeners that you and so many others are reflecting. And as I mentioned, mass is being offered every day in this diocese by me and by our brother priests and we are praying for you and we are praying for your families and certainly asking our risen Lord to bless you with his peace and the grace and the strength that you need so that together we continue to walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:55](#)):

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