

- Bishop Burbidge: This is Bishop Michael Burbidge, and you are listening to the Walk Humbly podcast.
- Billy Atwell: Welcome to the Walk Humbly podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, chief communications officer for the diocese and your cohost. If you're listening to this podcast and you are benefiting from the generosity of thousands of people throughout our diocese who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, the BLA supports many ministries throughout our diocese, including the communications office and this podcast. So thank you to all who [00:00:30] have made this possible. If you haven't already, please make sure you rate this podcast and write a review on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, wherever you're listening. And if you're listening through YouTube, please subscribe to our channel and ring the bell. You can sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org. You can follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter at Bishop Burbidge, where every day you can read a short reflection on the gospel of that day. You can follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as well. Send your questions for Bishop Burbidge to info@arlingtondiocese.org. [00:01:00] I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you?
- Bishop Burbidge: I'm doing well, Billy and I hope all our listeners are doing well and continue, God-willing, to stay safe and healthy and know that ... Please, everyone know that you remain in my prayers.
- Billy Atwell: We have a couple of very serious topics to go through today. Just before we get into that, I want to ask you upcoming here on November 15th is the World Day of the Poor. What should people know about that day as we go into it?
- Bishop Burbidge: Yeah, actually this the fourth year World Day of the Poor of Pope Francis instituted, [00:01:30] with a beautiful theme, stretch forth your hand to the poor, which actually is the mandate of the gospel, right? To help the poor. And we know that in doing so and serving the poor and the needy, we're serving Christ himself. And so every day is a day, an opportunity, we should find ways to share our resources with those who require our assistance, but this heightens that call, designating a World Day of Poor. [00:02:00] Throughout our diocese, I know Saturday, November 14th, I know several of our parishes are holding drive-through food drives for Catholic Charities, our St. Lucy food project. Again, which parishes do all the time, but in a heightened way, as we celebrate the World Day of the Poor.
- I know Catholic Charities will observe World Day of the Poor with a park and receive your flu vaccine for uninsured people and distribution of food and winter coats for those [00:02:30] need. So if you can check your parish website, or Catholic Charities website, or [inaudible 00:02:35] website, you could see in ways that you may participate in this World Day of the Poor. But a word of thanks to all in our diocese, whenever we call upon help to assist those who are homeless or those who are impacted by natural disasters or whatever, our

diocese and the faithful in our diocese always rise to the occasion. So thank you everyone for your generosity.

Billy Atwell:

Absolutely. Go to ccda.net [00:03:00] for more information and we're in particular need of medical volunteers to help administer the vaccines at the Mother Mercy Clinic, ccda.net. Bishop, last week, we held one of the most consequential and sadly divisive elections in us history. Initial results indicate that a Biden-Harris ticket has won. Republicans are contesting, some of that so there'll be some court cases here coming up. But what is your message as we go through this next phase? What is your message for people in this country?

Bishop Burbidge:

Yeah. Well, first of all, [00:03:30] I think that we are reminded of the great blessing that is ours in living in our nation in which what it means to be in a free country, that you can actually participate in the voting process and electing your future leaders and to see the extraordinary, extraordinary number of people who did in fact vote is a good thing. It's really taken hold of the privilege of the duty [00:04:00] that has been ours. And as you mention, at this point in the vote count appears that former Vice President Biden and Senator Harris have won the election to serve in the nation's highest position of public trust. And as you mentioned, we understand that the president is contesting some of the outcomes in various states pursuing clarity in the courts, which is his right as president.

And I think it's been repeated throughout this process. I think everyone wants to make sure that every vote counts and that every legal [00:04:30] protocols have been followed. So I know we've been told have patience, but we do see what the presumed outcome at this point seems to be. But no matter the outcome of any election, we must remember, I think, the way that the strength of our republic lies in our unity as our fellow citizens, as members of God's holy family. I guess in some sense, there is a relief that the election is over. I don't think any [00:05:00] of us are fans of the ads, the attack ads, that highlight the division and negativity that we so often see from both sides. And so, maybe this is now the time to all embark on that message of fellow citizens as members of God's family of the unity that must be ours.

That's actually the bedrock of our society. And it's important that we foster that respect and civility and in the end, [00:05:30] no matter ... And this is just not the election of the highest office, but all elected officials and those who have been reelected, I think we also have the responsibility, especially as people of faith to entrust these officials to the Lord, praying with all of our being that the prudence of the truth, the wisdom that our Lord gives to us will be instilled in these elected officials so [00:06:00] that they can promote all that is true, all that is good and all that is just, and as a people of faith, we don't despair. We never despair. We can be disappointed. We can have different opinions or whatever, but we don't despair. And I think now, in addition to renewing our sense of unity, we have to renew our faith that now and always it is God in whom we place our trust.

Billy Atwell: And you've mentioned many times before that the outcome [00:06:30] of election does not change our mandate as Catholics to uphold the right to life and to advocate for marriage and religious freedom, to fight for immigrants and refugees, all that, for the poor, certainly, the preferential option for the poor. That doesn't change no matter who's in the presidency.

Bishop Burbidge: No, absolutely. Because we're advocates. We're advocates of the gospel, of the service to others, the sanctity of life, marriage, as you mentioned. We never, [00:07:00] no matter, as you mentioned, no matter how things may change as far as elections go, we never tire of that. And we always have to be engaged in bringing, as you hear me say often, bringing our faith into the public arena. And so that just, I mean that involves certainly bishops, as we do as with our individual elected officials, as the conference of bishops does at a national level, but as citizens, all of us have to do [00:07:30] with our local officials. Stay in contact with them, engage them, let your voice be heard, especially for those beliefs and convictions that are at the heart of who we are, what we believe and what we profess.

Billy Atwell: Absolutely. There's just this morning, what's known as the McCarrick Report was issued by the Holy Father and through the Vatican. This report was promised by Pope Francis a while back when the allegations against Cardinal McCarrick became known, he was credibly accused [00:08:00] of sexual abuse of a minor. And then eventually laicized, he was removed from the clerical state. There have been so many questions that people have had, but now we have the report. What is your initial reaction to the report that was issued this morning?

Bishop Burbidge: Well, and the report provides further insight into the extent and scope of the gravely sinful behavior of former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who was laicized, which is the highest form of [00:08:30] punishment of a cleric in February, 2019. And the actions caused profound pain. I feel, you know, my heart goes out to victims, to their families and really to the church as a whole. This is very sad to read. It's embarrassing. And it's a source of anger, actually, that this behavior [00:09:00] was carried out and while no written document can fully capture or convey the scope and impact of the former Cardinal's abuse, misuse of power or breach of trust, it is in a sense helping us to move forward in the right direction because it has to come out into the light, as painful as that may be.

We always know that in order to be healed, [00:09:30] sometimes the wounds have to be exposed, especially in this sense. Such transparency will increase the level of accountability for all involved and help us to move forward while never in any way downplaying the harm and the pain and suffering this has caused to so many people. The report just came out this morning. So [00:10:00] I was only able, at this stage, to read we're taping this podcast at 1:00. That report was released at 8:00 this morning, I did read the executive summary of the report, but I had a school visit today. And so, but it is certainly a priority for me to read the close to 600 pages of the report.

And I would say to our listeners too, and this is the encouragement that the bishops have received, and [00:10:30] I certainly would share it with the faithful. I think it's important for us as we react and form our own opinions to read the entire report. You're not going to be able to fully comprehend what's stated by reading a certain section or headlines that come out through the national media. I do think that, I mean, it's a very lengthy document. [00:11:00] But I do think it, for us who are invested in this, I think that is pretty sound advice and something I certainly will be doing later today.

Billy Atwell: Right. You've mentioned in the past that the safeguards, the progress the church has made, it's certainly imperfect, but we're at a different place than we were 10, 20, 30 years ago. And some of the safeguards are there now. Talk a little bit about, for those who have the question of, could this happen again? What if there was an accusation against the Bishop, [00:11:30] how do we know this wouldn't happen in a similar way, what's changed? That kind of thing. Talk to us a little bit about that process.

Bishop Burbidge: Right. And so we've talked many times on this podcast about what the church has done since 2002 to implement protocols and procedures that help in to safeguard ever, the sexual abuse of minor, of any person, but we're never done with that. It's always being reviewed and how can [00:12:00] things be improved? But the one question that was hanging out there was that the charter and the protection of children and the norms was really directed to priests and deacons and cleric. Well, what about bishops? And in may of 2019, our Holy Father, Pope Francis promulgated Vos Estis Lux Mundi, you are the light of the world, which expanded global mandates regarding the protection of minors and vulnerable adults and established new norms to [00:12:30] ensure reporting and investigation of allegations against bishops. And in 2019, my brother bishops and I voted to implement the new norms, which include a system for third party reporting, which is now in place.

So anyone who has a concern about behaviors of bishops that is something that you have observed that is something that you think needs to [00:13:00] report it. This system is in place and all you have to do is register a complaint and it goes to, not directly to the Bishop or to his delegates, it goes to an outside system. And that every single report is handled and taken seriously.

Billy Atwell: Absolutely.

Bishop Burbidge: But that was not in place. And so, I know that certainly you read a report on sadly, as we're seeing this McCarrick report. That's a question. It's a normal question. Is there another McCarrick [00:13:30] out there? God forbid there's any Bishop who is violating the promises that he's made to the Lord and to his church, especially in the form of abuse of minors or any other person. And so the church has acted again. And again, these protocols, these procedures must always be reviewed and improved upon.

Billy Atwell: Absolutely. If you want to learn more about these protocols that Bishop Burbidge is talking [00:14:00] about, whether it's the background checks, the trainings, the list of credibly accused priests from the history of our diocese, go to arlingtondiocese.org and click on protecting our children at the top of the page. All of that information is there. You can find it and learn more about what it is that we do, because it is a very robust and thorough system that we have in place. Bishop, you regularly meet with victims and survivors who suffered [00:14:30] sexual abuse as a child not just by clergy, but by maybe family members, friends, anyone who suffered abuse. And you've mentioned how reports like this and announcements like this, reopen some of those wounds. How can we as a diocese, pray for those who are really suffering as this report is put out and they feel that wound reopened a bit? How can we pray for them?

Bishop Burbidge: Yeah, and again, my heart goes out to all such individuals, my deepest [00:15:00] apology. And I know a day like today is a reminder in a very, very powerful way of how the church failed them and how their trust in someone that they should have been able to trust was violated. And I know this is a very, very difficult day for all of us, but especially those who have been victims of abuse. And so very much my thoughts, my prayers are with all of you. And I think that's what I can ask the faithful to do. [00:15:30] That these are our brothers and sisters who have been hurt by the church, and we need to pray for them. Don't underestimate the power of those prayers. As bishops, and I think as faithful, the diocese, is a time that we can even offer our sacrifices and do penance in the name of healing for those who have [00:16:00] these very deep, deep wounds. And that's a lifelong process of trying to address them. So I think we participate in not by our prayers, by our pennants, by our sacrifices.

Billy Atwell: Very good. Bishop, any final thoughts, and then if you would send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge: I think you mentioned at the end, at the beginning of this podcast, these are, especially the last topic, is very serious. And I know it's a difficult time [00:16:30] as members of the church to see that the Lord entrusted his church to human beings and throughout its history and to the present day, we have failed the Lord as a church and as individuals, and especially those who have been entrusted to be shepherds and people who care for his people. And it's a very sad day. And for me having a brother bishop at [00:17:00] the center of this attention, who failed in such a significant way, it's embarrassing. It's sad. And, but it has to lead me to even a deeper commitment, firm resolve every day and to be faithful as we all should to the vocations that God has given to us and know that we can only do it with God's grace.

[00:17:30] And so above all else, we have to draw closer to him knowing how much we need his help, but it is the Lord's church and nothing will destroy. He promised that, and he is with us, even at this very dark moment. It's his church. He will see us through this difficult time and pray that as the Lord always does, he [00:18:00] will touch us and touch and transform our hearts so that we may

become ever holier and faithful to all that he is asking all of us. So a day of prayer, a day of sadness, but also pray God, a day of renewal for all of us, because what we need now and what our world needs now, more than ever is a holy church and a holy families and holy bishops and holy priests and holy individuals, [00:18:30] and that responsibility needs to be renewed today.

So I do extend my apology for everyone listening, but we are people of faith. We do not despair and we entrust our nation and we entrust our church to the Lord, his infinite love and his divine mercy. Together let's pray for each other and for that grace to every day to walk humbly with our God.

Thank you for listening to the Walk Humbly podcast, [00:19:00] make sure you check out more episodes on iTunes, Google play, Stitcher and Spotify. You can follow me on Twitter @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.