

Bishop Michael Burbidge (00:00):

This is Bishop Michael Burbidge and you are listening to The Walk Humbly Podcast.

Billy Atwell (00:07):

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(00:36):

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(01:16):

Before we kick off, I want to talk about our upcoming pilgrimage to Emmitsburg, Maryland. It's going to be on Saturday, October 7th, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. This is in the spirit of our Jubilee and we're in the second Jubilee year, and so we're going to be going to two shrines in Emmitsburg there. We're going to be led by Bishop Burbidge, but one is the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and just six minutes down the road is the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Transportation is not provided, so you're going to coordinate that on your own, but a lot of parishes are coordinating buses and vans and carpools, so contact your parish to see if maybe they're planning something like that.

(01:53):

But it's going to be a wonderful day. We're going to begin at the Mother Seton Shrine, venerate her relics. There's going to be Mass, there's going to be a visit to the museum there. We're going to have a great outdoor picnic, you could do that at either shrine, actually. And then we're going to do Eucharistic Adoration and recite the Rosary at the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. It's going to be a wonderful event throughout that day. So if you want to find out more, go to [ArlingtonDiocese.org](http://ArlingtonDiocese.org). But again, that's Saturday, September 7th. Go ahead and pencil that in on your calendar and hopefully we can be united as a diocesan family up there.

(02:28):

For today's topics, we're going to talk about World Youth Day, school's going to be starting up soon, Bishop Burbidge had a visit to the Coast Guard headquarters and we have a Mass for Admission to Candidacy and Holy Orders that Bishop Burbidge is going to tell us about in a moment. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Michael Burbidge (02:43):

Billy, I'm doing well. Hope you and all our listeners are doing well as the summer, seems hard to believe, is coming to an end, but hopefully everyone's had a chance to get a little rest and renewal before we get kind of back to the routine. But sometimes getting back to the routine, a schedule is good for us, and I know parents sometimes appreciate that, as do our young people. So thank the Good Lord, doing well. Thanks for mentioning pilgrimage, diocesan pilgrimage.

Billy Atwell ([03:10](#)):

Exciting.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:10](#)):

It really is, and pilgrimage is exactly that. It reminds us that that's what life on Earth is. It's a pilgrimage, it's a journey. We're all journeying to the final destination, God willing, to live with God forever in heaven and to accompany each other along the way. So a pilgrimage is a great reminder of that. And it's a pilgrimage where we can bring special intentions, especially this pilgrimage to Our Lady, maybe diocesan intentions but also our own personal intentions, especially the people we are promising our prayer. So hope many from our diocese will be able to attend, will be indeed a great celebration.

Billy Atwell ([03:48](#)):

Absolutely. You mentioned routine, and it made me think of something that you have to do on a regular basis that I saw on your calendar. Before we get into our topics, if you would share about, you have a canonical visit to the Poor Clares coming up in Alexandria, and I think later this month you're going to have one to the Trappist Monks in Berryville. And then you had a Dominican canonical visit, I think, just recently.

([04:09](#)):

Talk about what that is, because we don't get to see the daily life of the monastics in our diocese. We are in a unique situation in that we have so many. But talk about what a canonical visit would be to the Poor Clares or to Trappist Monks.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:22](#)):

Well, no, you're right. We are so blessed. I mean, how blessed are we to have this faithful witness of cloistered life, monastic life, men and women, as you mentioned, the Trappists, the Poor Clares, the Dominicans, devoted to prayer. Prayer for the Church, prayer for each one of us. I know like myself, I know many in our diocese go right to these monastic, those living the monastic life for prayers. I send prayers all the way to the Poor Clares and the Dominicans and the Trappists, because they're devoting their lives to that.

([04:59](#)):

But a canonical visit is that since the communities are within the boundaries of this diocese, this local church, as a bishop, I make a canonical visit once a year in which the Superior gives me an update on the vibrancy of the community and initiatives, the happenings of updates. And for me in turn to share with the Superior updates from the Diocese and maybe specific prayer requests and intentions. It also gives me the opportunity to go in within the cloistered community. Once a year I'm able to do that, to go behind, in a sense, the walls. In a sense, to be in direct contact with the members of the community, the sisters, the Poor Clares, the Dominicans, and the Trappist Monks. So that's always a great honor and it's a great privilege to have that more intimate contact with them.

([05:58](#)):

And Billy, every time I go to these visits, what amazes me the most is the joy that you see within the life of the community. To the world, that may not make much sense because they've given up everything that's worldly. But yet they have a joy that is so beautiful to see. And I think it's because of that being freed from sometimes those allurements that kind of take over our lives. And then you can say, "Wow, I can have joy, I can have happiness without all those things?" Of course you can and not all the distractions that fill our lives. So I am just so inspired every time I make these visits. I go there more than once a year, even privately, to pray. But the official visit is a great privilege.

Billy Atwell ([06:50](#)):

So canonical refers to, for those who are listening, canon law, the governing laws of the Church. So do you have to write up a report of what you heard and everything?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:56](#)):

No, I don't have to write a report, but I make my own notes and put that on file.

Billy Atwell ([07:00](#)):

That's good for that relationship, though, between them and the local church here.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:03](#)):

Yes.

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

So Bishop, Our Holy Father recently concluded the international event World Youth Day, this happens every few years. For this occasion, young people around the globe travel to a destination city selected by the Pope for faith, for some fun, obviously, and for worship, for certain. Many people attribute conversion experiences, turning points in their devotion to Christ and even vocational calls to attending World Youth Day. We saw the World Youth Day in Denver changed a lot of the Catholicism in the United States for many, many years and still does.

([07:33](#)):

So this one was in Lisbon, Portugal. You weren't able to attend, but you've been hearing from the group. I know you've been in close contact with those in attendance. I was wondering if you'd share a little bit about what you're hearing.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:42](#)):

Oh, sure. Kevin Bohli in our Youth Office and his team did a magnificent job in leading over 130 people from our diocese. Father Isenberg went with some seminarians and they kept us posted along the way, sending us beautiful photos. Other priests were there as well, sisters, and a lot of our young people. Thanks to your team for making us feel a part of their journey by updating us on what was happening each and every day. Because it's not just the Mass with the Holy Father, it's catechesis and teaching sessions and prayerful moments throughout that time. And it's really wonderful to, I've heard from some who were on the pilgrimage and like you said, they just said, "It's life changing. This is just something I will never forget."

([08:31](#)):

And I think what it is the most is that they're reminded that they are part of something bigger. Something bigger than their parish, something bigger than their school, something even bigger than their diocese. They belong to a Catholic universal Church. And to see people their own age, this was the brilliance of Pope John Paul II in starting World Youth Day, people their own age who are also on fire with the faith, who are enthusiastic, who have virtues and values and beliefs they hold dear - that you're not alone. There's hundreds of thousands of youth around the world who share this. And I think that that's why our young people come home so energized. And that's the prayer. That it's not just an experience for them to treasure, but having been changed, having had this opportunity, then they come back and share this love of the Lord, this love of the faith with others.

[\(09:30\)](#):

Pope John Paul II was wonderful with this, as was Pope Benedict, and certainly Pope Francis, in really encouraging the young people and reminding them that they're not just about the future. The Church needs them now.

Billy Atwell [\(09:44\)](#):

That's true.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(09:45\)](#):

They're a vibrant part of the Church now. I love the one quote the Holy Father said. He said, "As young people, you want to change the world. And it's very good that you want to change the world." He said, "You want to work for justice and peace. You devote all your life's energy and creativity to this, but it still seems insufficient. But don't give up. The Church, the world needs you, the young." And he said, "as much as the Earth needs the rain."

[\(10:13\)](#):

So that's how important our young people are. And then he said, I love this quote. He says, "I would like to look into the eyes of each one of you and say, 'Do not be afraid.' I will tell you something else, also very beautiful: It is no longer I, but Jesus himself who is now looking at you. He knows each of your hearts, each of your lives. He knows your joys and your sorrows and your success and failures. He knows your heart and he loves you." And what a beautiful message to give to our, not just our young people, but to each one of us.

Billy Atwell [\(10:47\)](#):

Absolutely. There was photos where he would pop into confessionals, he would surprise people, so they'd walk into a confessional, there's Pope Francis there. Great photos of the surprised faces, because there were these little walls dividing the two, but there's also transparency and stuff, so there were these photos taken and sent around the world.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(11:04\)](#):

Yeah, it might be a little awkward. Bless me, Father. Oh no, bless me, Holy Father.

Billy Atwell [\(11:07\)](#):

Yeah. Well thank you for that update. All right, so this is one of the busiest times of the year, the start of school is just around the corner. You celebrate Mass at dozens of schools around the Diocese, these

masses of the Holy Spirit, as they're called. I'm curious for those who don't attend a Catholic school, what is your message to young folks as they begin a new school year here in the Diocese?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:32](#)):

Yeah, it's just so hard to believe. I'm sure many of our listeners are like me. We used to begin school after Labor Day, remember? It's like, now we begin so early, it seems like. But we're back, we're ready to go in just a short time. And in all our four high schools and our colleges, I will offer the Mass of the Holy Spirit, asking the spirit of God to lead and guide us in all of our future endeavors with the wisdom and the grace that we need. So it's always a great opportunity to do that.

([12:02](#)):

And I guess my basic message is, as you mentioned, this is a new school year. So I always try to encourage the young people that that word 'new' is important. Maybe you look back on last year or maybe some things didn't go your way or maybe you didn't work to your potential or whatever. Okay, well God gives us a new year. He gives us a new beginning that passes behind, that's over with. So embrace this as a new opportunity to grow in wisdom and knowledge and grace and friendships and give the Lord your very best. That's all he asks.

([12:37](#)):

Sometimes I do worry that our young people put so much pressure on themselves. Sometimes I think parents have to acknowledge that maybe we also put too much pressure on young people. Because all the Lord asks is that we give our very best. He's not so much worried about the results, the grade itself, but did you give me your best and did you enjoy the experience? I don't like it when I see that the pressure is taking the joy away from learning. This is supposed to be a really uplifting moment in the lives of young people and our schools do everything to make that possible.

([13:16](#)):

But I always say, it's a new school year, it's a new beginning. Get off to a great start, but please, please, that's why we have this Mass of the Holy Spirit, do not try to go through the school year relying on your own resources. Entrust it to the Lord, ask for his divine assistance. He's there at every moment to help you. And God has placed great people in their lives, their parents, their teachers, their counselors, so many people who are there to help them. And look to them. Don't ever feel that they're alone.

Billy Atwell ([13:47](#)):

That's wonderful, yeah. I'm going to jump ahead for a moment, actually, because this back to school theme, this was one of the questions we got this week. So the question was asking advice you would offer first-year college students as they begin a new life with far more freedom than they have now. I think this was a parent. They're imagining their child going ahead and having this unrestricted schedule and no parent there to look over their shoulder. This is scary for some parents, but what advice would you have for someone that's about to embrace a whole new level of freedom than they've ever had before?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:16](#)):

And so to see freedom as a gift. It is a gift. And so like any gift, it is to be used properly. It is to be treasured and not to be abused. And so with this new freedom comes responsibility. Appreciate it, welcome the opportunity to say, "Okay, throughout my life as a young person, as a high school student, all these seeds have been planted in my life and now I get to bring them to fruition." And people are not watching over me the same way, I don't have the same accountability. It's a personal accountability and

responsibility. And so I'm going to keep the bar pretty high for myself and make sure that this freedom is a gift that takes me to becoming a better person and not to abuse that gift.

[\(15:05\)](#):

And I always think it's very, very important to, I encourage our young people to right away, get involved in Catholic campus ministry. Every secular college has Catholic campus ministry. Because the freedom does not mean you're alone or you're going to succeed just merely as an individual. We're meant for communion, and COVID taught us that a great deal. We're meant for communion. Be part of a community, a healthy community, a Catholic community, like campus ministry, that has faith formation and Mass and the sacraments, but also social time together, new relationships, new friendships. So to make that and to make sure you choose the right friends. Friends who are not going to take you down the wrong path, make you less than who you are, but the best person that you can be. And always just evaluate - why are you there? Why are you there? What do you want to be able to say you accomplished after four years? Hopefully not just, "Well, now I did everything I needed to get a good job and good salary." That's not going to bring you happiness. But I used these four years to grow as a person, to grow my love of the Lord, and in my commitment to serve God and one another.

[\(16:21\)](#):

And so it's a lot. And so we send forth our young people going to college. You have so much potential and we believe in you, we're proud of you. And know of our prayers, know our support, make this the best four years that it can be. And parents, relax. You've done your part, you planted the seeds, now entrust your son or daughter to this new moment in their lives. Let them have that freedom. Let them have those wings.

Billy Atwell [\(16:48\)](#):

Yeah. You've got to let them go a little bit.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(16:50\)](#):

Yeah, right? And trust that God will use all those seeds you planted to bear much fruit in their lives.

Billy Atwell [\(16:55\)](#):

I remember when I was in college reading a book from a Catholic author, and he said that freedom is the ability to do good. And I thought of that a lot because the people I would see in college that were making really bad choices and making mistakes, I thought to myself, "Well, they have unrestricted freedom. They're not allowing themselves to be 'bound' by God's moral laws." But they were never happier than other people that were making good decisions. They were not really free. They were unrestricted, but that's not freedom.

[\(17:22\)](#):

And so by the time college was over, they were kind of a shell of their former self sometimes. They had allowed their integrity to go by the wayside and so on. I thought, wow, that is so true, that freedom is the ability to do good. And the further you go through college, the more you realize that. What's a tragedy is when people get to college and they kind of let this unrestricted action take over and they just go wild and then they pay the price for it in one way or another. But if they just waited it out, the wisdom sets in of, "Oh, wow. There's a reason we're called to act in a certain way." And the older you get, the more evident it is. Unfortunately, it's like my dad says, "youth is wasted on the young sometimes." And so I just remembered that line coming back in my mind many times.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:02](#)):

No, that's great, Billy. That's a great, great point you made.

Billy Atwell ([18:07](#)):

Bishop in our diocese, we have so many people who serve in the military in one form or another. And you celebrated Mass at the headquarters for the U.S. Coast Guard, where we have a priest chaplain in ministry, and hopefully you'll share a little bit about that. But what was that experience like? Because most people don't see the generosity of our military chaplains, the folks that are around the world are being served by some Arlington priests. And if you could also talk about the nature of what a military chaplain does on a day-to-day basis, what's the nature of that?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:38](#)):

Yeah, no, it was a great privilege yesterday. Father Dan Mode is head of chaplains and gave me kind of a private tour of the headquarters, the U.S. Coast Guard was able to meet the admiral who is the head of the Coast Guard. First female to hold this position. A very impressive person who made time for me. I was very happy to meet her, very proud of Father Mode. And also, we are the Diocese who sends the most priests for service in the Archdiocese for Military Services right now. We have six priests in service in the military. And that's a generosity of God blessing us with vocations that we do have that freedom because that's the greatest need. Archbishop Broglio talks about, he's the Archbishop for Military Services, the need for priests to serve our young Catholics who are going forth to serve our nation is tremendous. So I'm so, so proud.

([19:41](#)):

Father Mode was also telling me that the Diocese of Arlington, really, if you look at the world, has one of the highest concentration of military personnel in the Diocese. I know that not only because of the bases and things like that, but families. So I celebrated Mass at the Coast Guard headquarters yesterday, too, and it gave me the privilege to thank the men and women who were there and their families for their service, their selfless, sacrificial service to our country. But not only service to our nation, but doing so as faithful witnesses. Bringing their faith into this beautiful sacred duty that has been given to them.

([20:26](#)):

So it was a joy for me to be at the headquarters, to be mindful of the men and women from throughout our country and from our diocese who are giving of themselves to protect our nation, to give us the freedom that we treasure so very much. And to know that some of the priests from the Diocese of Arlington are there serving as their spiritual guides, I know makes not just me, but our whole diocese very proud. But we have to pray for all those in the military every day. I know that many, many individuals and parishes do that, especially through the intercession of St. Michael the Archangel. So please continue to do so and pray for our priests who are offering their priestly ministry on behalf of this great duty.

Billy Atwell ([21:17](#)):

Now we have six, I think we're about to add a seventh with Father Koehr, is that right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:20](#)):

Yes. Yeah.

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

Wow, that's pretty interesting. I have a cousin who just retired from the Coast Guard, and he talked about how wonderful it was to have that presence there, and I know others in the military, too. With the Arlington Catholic Herald, we have our subscription list of people who receive the Herald, and we try to make sure it's relatively within the bounds of the Diocese. And then all of a sudden, we'll see some that are around the globe. And I remember when I first got here, I'm like, "Okay, why are we sending them to Japan? We're sending them here, we're sending them to Germany." It's like, well, because we have people who are parishioners here that got deployed, so we don't want to cut them off from the paper. That's an important connection to their home diocese. So we send a lot of the newspapers internationally because of deployments and so on, and other areas of the country, as well.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:00](#)):

That is great. I'm really happy to hear that.

Billy Atwell ([22:02](#)):

So last topic before we get a question from a parishioner here. This coming weekend, you're going to be celebrating a Mass for Admission to Candidacy and Holy Orders. This is a unique Mass. Most people don't know what this is. Until I worked for the Church, I'd never heard of this before. I was wondering if you could describe what that Mass is all about and the role that it plays in the formation of a seminarian.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:21](#)):

Yeah. So candidacy is the formal recognition by the Church that the seminarian has reached a certain point, a certain maturity in his discernment that coincides to begin his study of theology. And so during this Mass, the bishop formally accepts this candidate, this aspirant, as an official candidate for Holy Orders. So it's a formality, it's a deepening of a seminarian's configuration to Christ, our Good Shepherd, as he continues his formation, his studies. And I always say that it's also a reminder that before you become a priest, you have to be admitted to candidacy. You have to be instituted as a lector, instituted as an acolyte, ordained as a deacon and then, God willing, as a priest.

([23:10](#)):

But I always say, and by that you receive an official call from the bishop to come forward based on the recommendations he's received and observations. And I always say that this admission to candidacy or this installation or whatever, each step, is a reminder to the candidate that you're not the only one discerning, right? The discernment to priesthood is your discernment, but the Church is also discerning. Is this the candidate that would make a good and holy and faithful priest? So every time that individual receives a call from the bishop, "Come forward to candidacy, come forward to lector or acolyte." It's really, I tell them, it's really the Lord himself speaking through his Church, speaking through the bishop. Saying, "Yes, I affirm this call I have given you."

([23:55](#)):

And so even though it's not ordination, it is a celebration that is an affirmation that the candidates receive from the Lord himself, I believe. And so it's always a great, these are joyful events that's always great to do. And as you know, I'm so proud of our seminarians and I know as many of our parishioners are getting to know, our newly ordained priests and recently ordained priests, I think they're saying, "Wow, these men are coming out ready. Ready and prepared."



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

That's wonderful. That's great.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([24:29](#)):

And plus, they get the great benefits of learning from our fine priests throughout our diocese who serve as their pastor and mentors and fellow parochial vicars.

Billy Atwell ([24:38](#)):

That's a huge reason for our strong numbers. All right, I have a question from Keith at St. Louis parish. What spiritual reading do you do to deepen your faith? Are there any particular saints' writings or authors that you like in particular?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([24:51](#)):

Oh, that's great. Yeah. I have the go-tos that I keep in my pew in my chapel. Some of the classics and timeless writings that are always great to go back to. I love the Introduction to the Devout Life of Saint Francis de Sales. The Imitation of Christ. I love the Confessions of Saint Augustine. The Rule of Saint Benedict is something I always find helpful to read. Blessed Colomba. I'm reading a book now and it's one I read before, but just going back to it, called Christ: The Ideal of the Priest, which is really, really beautiful. I also like the writings of the preacher of the papal household. In other words, Father Cantalamessa does a lot of the preaching for the Popes going back, I think, to John Paul II and gives retreats and things like that. But his writings are very, very helpful to me, especially his work on the Holy Spirit.

([25:52](#)):

There's a book, another book that I've read and rereading. In fact, I think we give to all of our priests: From Christendom to the Apostolic Mission, which is really a great book on pastoral strategies for how to bring the Gospel of Christ to this day and age. Basically the New Evangelization. And I always like reading the talks of our Holy Father. So I'll always go back to some of the things that John Paul II wrote and Benedict wrote, and right now I want to make sure I read the full text of Pope Francis from all the different talks and the homilies he gave at World Youth Day. I think, again, it's a message not just for young people, it's meant for all of us.

([26:36](#)):

And I love the breviary. Priests are required to pray the breviary every day, the Liturgy of the Hours. But part of that prayer includes two readings every day that the Church chooses for us. And they're classics from the various saints and church fathers and things like that. And many times, especially the second reading is always, sometimes one you just, it takes a while to go through because each sentence just seems to have a meaning to it.

Billy Atwell ([27:07](#)):

That's wonderful.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([27:08](#)):

But then I got to get to work.

Billy Atwell ([27:09](#)):

That's very good. Bishop, any final thoughts before we close out here?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([27:16](#)):

No. Just, again, it is an exciting time of year for back to school, and I do wish all of our students going back to all the various schools to which they'll be attending many, many blessings. Go with a positive attitude and embrace this as a new year. Know that God believes in you, he sees your potential, and that the great people, your parents and teachers, will be those to help you to reach that potential. But always, always with the grace and the assistance that God provides.

([27:49](#)):

So let's continue to pray for one another as we walk humbly with our God.

([27:54](#)):

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