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

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

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

Welcome to the Walk Humbly Podcast. I am Billy Atwell, chief communications officer for the diocese and your cohost. During the times that we've been in, the communications tools available to the diocese have been a tremendous asset for spreading the good news. And we have those to thank who have contributed to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal for making that possible and certainly, making this podcast possible as well. So, thank you to all who have given to that important appeal.

Billy Atwell ([00:32](#)):

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 on YouTube, please subscribe and ring the bell, so you can get notifications. Sign up for our e-newsletter at ArlingtonDiocese.org, and you can follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. More than 19,200 of you actually already do at Bishop Burbidge, where every day you can get a short reflection on the gospel of that day. You can also follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Send your questions for Bishop Burbidge to info@ArlingtonDiocese.org. And I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:07](#)):

I'm doing well, Billy. Enjoying the beautiful weather these days and hope everyone listening and their families are staying safe and healthy, and certainly keeping all of you in my prayers.

Billy Atwell ([01:19](#)):

And as the cool weather comes, so does your visits with high-schoolers, which is great because there was a point where we didn't know if these visits were going to be able to happen, but you're kind of wrapping up the visit of the four different high schools. It's a little different experience, I'm sure, than you've had in the past with the hybrid models and so on. What was the mood of the young people you've been talking to?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:35](#)):

Well, I actually never saw students so happy to be in school. Really.

Billy Atwell ([01:41](#)):

Especially at that age.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:41](#)):

It was just they were saying, and they told me how happy they were to be in school, how much they miss that opportunity to be together, and to be with their friends, and to feel the support of their teachers. I mean, really, the spirit of the students was just tremendous to see, high energy. Most of them are doing hybrid model where they're in a couple of days and doing virtual learning the other days. But again, just a shout-out to our Catholic educators. I mean, what they are doing to allow our students to be learning, to be together in a safe and healthy environment with all of our protocols and beyond in place, ever vigilant, it's just a great credit to them. And I know who else is pretty happy these days too are the parents, because they tell me also, because they know, they know for even the college students,

I've been to our college campuses also, and some of our grade schools. The parents know their children and they know for their own health and wellbeing, this is really a great blessing for them. So, thanks to our Catholic educators.

Billy Atwell ([02:47](#)):

Very good. Bishop, just this past Sunday, you celebrated the mass and thanksgiving for the gift of human life. And a few days before that was the vice presidential debate in which the abortion topic was certainly raised and discussed. Two questions for you, if you don't mind. First, what was your message for those gathered for that important mass? And how should voters think about the issue of abortion as they cast their ballots? Or they're doing that now, but also those who wait and vote on November 3rd.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:12](#)):

Sure. Throughout the month of October, Catholics in the United States, we celebrate Respect Life Month. We know every day is respect life day, but it's a special month to highlight the precious gift of life itself. And I encourage all the faithful to never take the gift of life for granted, the gift of life that is ours, the fact that God created us in his own image and likeness and that his Holy Spirit dwells within us. So, we're temples of the Holy Spirit. And so, I encourage the faithful that one of the ways that we express thanks to God for the gift of life is to take care of this temple that is ours, our body, to live honorably and chastely and purely, to make sure that we take care of ourselves physically and emotionally, to make sure we allow time in our lives for exercise and for proper rest, to pay attention to good nutrition.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:09](#)):

All those ways are saying to the Lord, "Thank you for this gift. You've created me in body, soul, but thank you for this gift of life that is mine. And I want to show my thanks, dear Lord, by living as a temple of your spirit, avoiding substances and behaviors that are harmful to our health and wellbeing." That's a great way of saying thanks to God.

Billy Atwell ([04:32](#)):

That makes sense.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:32](#)):

Yeah. Then this, the theme of this year's Respect Life Month is live the gospel of life. And it's really in commemoration of the pope, Saint John Paul the Second's encyclical in the gospel of life, in which he says that there is no freedom unless life is welcomed and loved at every stage. So, to live the gospel of life means a willingness to defend the sacredness of all human life, at every stage, from conception to natural death.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:06](#)):

With our particular call, I mentioned in my homily to protect the unborn. I reminded the faithful that the bishops of the United States stated clearly that the threat of abortion is the preeminent issue. Well, why is that? Well, it directly attacks life within the sanctuary of the family, because of the extraordinary number of innocent lives in the womb that are taken each and every day to these lives that are unable to protect themselves. So, of course, that is our preeminent issue is defending the unborn, that living the gospel of life must also respect all of life and the dignity of all human persons. So, that is extended,

of course, to the elderly, to those with disabilities, to those who are poor and vulnerable and weak, the immigrant, the inmate, all, all of life must be protected, and the dignity of each human person must be upheld.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:08](#)):

Then, I lastly encouraged, Billy, the faithful to allow their voice, allow their moral conviction, to allow their faith, to be known in the public arena. And certainly, we are given a special opportunity in the next few weeks by our voting to do so. So, I encourage all, all the faithful in Diocese of Arlington to form your conscience, faithfully, to know the issues, and know what the candidates are saying, to know the priorities, to prayerfully discern, and allow your voice and your faith to be known. What a powerful way to live the gospel of life. And if you're going to live the gospel of life, don't be surprised you're going to be attacked.

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

That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:51](#)):

It's going to happen. But you know what? That's what Jesus told his disciples, from the very beginning. "If you're going to follow me, you're going to take up a cross." It's not going to be easy. So, don't be afraid. We have the truth and we proclaim the truth. We do it lovingly. We do it always in love, but we stay firm and steadfast in what we know is truth. And it's only that truth that will bring freedom, and freedom is only ours when life is welcomed and loved.

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

Very good. So, Bishop Burbidge directly, or indirectly mentioned a couple of resources there that I want to point people to, if you're listening. There is a side-by-side voter guide for the presidential election available on our website, [ArlingtonDiocese.org](#). It was put together by the Virginia Catholic Conference, in partnership with other state Catholic conferences to ensure that it was fair and all that. Again, go to [ArlingtonDiocese.org](#), and you can check that out. If you want to learn more about what the Virginia Catholic Conference is working on, to get on their email list, to be aware of issues at the state level that you should be aware of, maybe want to even take action on, go to [VACatholic.org](#). Also, on our website, [ArlingtonDiocese.org](#), you can find the document from the US Conference of Bishops, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. It really helps you kind of think and pray through these issues, as we get up to this election here.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:12](#)):

Yeah. Thanks for mentioning that, Billy. And again, it's important to note with the Virginia Catholic Conference voters guide, the issues are listed and the positions of the candidates are quotes.

Billy Atwell ([08:24](#)):

Yeah, in their own words. It's not our paraphrasing.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:26](#)):

It's not. Right.

Billy Atwell ([08:26](#)):

Yes.

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

Okay.

Billy Atwell ([08:28](#)):

Bishop, Pope Francis, he surprised the world with a new encyclical called Fratelli Tutti, On Fraternity and Social Friendship. What was your initial reaction to this text?

Bishop Burbidge ([08:38](#)):

Well, I mean, it's very timely because the pope speaks about, within the world and certainly within our nation, a growing culture of disunity, disrespect, incivility, that's impacting politics, social networks, communities, and all of society. We see that every day. So, he's calling us to a new way of living, to examine our society, to work toward a common future, in which all are included and treated with respect. We can productively, the Holy Father says, unify the human family, to which we all belong. We're all members of God's family, Holy Family, and bringing justice and compassion and mercy to those who need it the most. So, I think it's just a very timely message. I mean, it's an evergreen message in a sense. It never changes. But I just think it's one that we need to hear more than ever.

Billy Atwell ([09:34](#)):

And I know it's a message that you've been upholding throughout your episcopacy. You routinely take us back to the need to be respectful of each other, treat each other with dignity and civility, especially around election seasons. But I know that's been a common theme of your episcopacy.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:49](#)):

Right. Even today, I tweeted a reflection on the reading from Saint Paul, basically saying that we all can do our part to permeate where we live and where we work with the fruit of the spirit. And Saint Paul says, he lists them, and I put it in my tweet today. The fruit of the spirit: kindness, gentleness, patience, love, self-control. Imagine, imagine our nation, imagine our communities, if we all lived in the life of the spirit.

Billy Atwell ([10:28](#)):

Absolutely. And Pope Francis refers to the parable of the Good Samaritan. That's one of those parables that we've heard so many times before. And yet, each time you read it, you wonder, where am I in this story?

Bishop Burbidge ([10:37](#)):

Right. Who are you exactly?

Billy Atwell ([10:39](#)):

Yeah. And I think it was a very timely time to reflect on that. Heads up for listeners, we are going to be hosting another Uplift Arlington holy hour. You all maybe recall, we did one a little while back, in the

Cathedral of St. Thomas More. It was live-streamed, and it was dedicated to those who are experiencing stress and anxiety, especially during these times.

Billy Atwell ([11:00](#)):

This one is themed One Nation Under God. It's going to be on October 28th at 7:30 PM. Again, so mark your calendars for October 28th, 7:30 PM. You can come live up to the capacity of the cathedral. We are still observing social distancing and all the restrictions, but you can also follow it on the live-stream as well. So, you can check out our YouTube channel, youtube.com/ArlingtonDiocese, or go to our Facebook channel, just search for Arlington Diocese there. To get a reminder on it, either be on our email list, because we'll send out a reminder the day of, or ring the bell on YouTube, get the notifications. And then YouTube will notify you when we start the live-stream, because we start it 5 or 10 minutes ahead of time, at least.

Billy Atwell ([11:41](#)):

If you can't make that one, or you would like to do an additional one, the family life office of the diocese is hosting a holy hour for healing and conversion and families. Bishop Burbidge is going to be the celebrant of that one as well on October 20th at 7:30 PM. So, again, they both begin at 7:30. Uplift Arlington is on October 28th, and for healing and conversion, that holy hour will be on the 20th. The second one is at St. Leo's Catholic Church. So, you can go to ArlingtonDiocese.org/HealingAndConversion for more information on that.

Billy Atwell ([12:13](#)):

Bishop, thank you back on that first holy hour, that Uplift Arlington holy hour we did for healing for peace, for those who are suffering from anxiety and stress. What was the reaction that you received from that?

Bishop Burbidge ([12:25](#)):

Well, it was very powerful, both from people who were in attendance and also who joined us virtually. Just saying, I heard so many people say, "It's exactly what I needed, because I had been feeling a great deal of stress and anxiety and I just needed to come into the Lord's presence." And that's why I liked the theme that it's a great branding in a sense, Uplift Arlington, uplift because we're all down a little bit. But we're going through a pandemic. It's radically changing the way we live and worship. It's bringing in additional burdens and emotional stress, the uncertainty, and so uplift. And it's a reminder to really let's lift up our eyes to the Lord.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:08](#)):

That's what we do when we come together in holy hour. Our focus is not on ourselves. It's not on all the problems surrounding us. It's just on the Lord. And when we are able to lift up our eyes and our hearts to the Lord, we always will find that serenity that we need and also the strength to go back out into the world.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:29](#)):

So, this next one that you just mentioned, One Nation Under God, I think is really an important holy hour because we're all feeling the tensions that are around us. We can't deny it, as the very important elections will be taking place shortly, just in a few weeks. And there's, in this political climate, it's very

fierce. So, I think the holy hour is just, first of all, to remember, no matter what, this is always God's nation, this is God's land. It belongs to him. We're just entrusted to be stewards, in whatever time he gives us. And so, we pray that people will prayerfully discern and vote and get out and vote. That's important.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:12](#)):

And then we entrust the outcome to the Lord. Ask him for his blessings, upon our elected officials and also for the grace we need. In the end, whatever the outcome may be, to make sure that we become peacemakers, because our land, no matter what the results will be, I think it's pretty certain that our land is going to be, in whatever way this goes, in need of healing, in need of peace. And so, we want to be witnesses of God, who bring that peace and light to others. So, we need this holy hour. It's a very important time. And I hope people are able to join us in-person or virtually.

Billy Atwell ([14:59](#)):

Absolutely. Again, it's Uplift Arlington, the holy hour for One Nation Under God on October 28th, 7:30 PM, either on live-stream or at St. Thomas More Cathedral.

Billy Atwell ([15:09](#)):

All right, Bishop, a couple of questions. The first is from Catherine. She didn't mention her parish. She said, "How does an individual maintain optimism while trying to uphold one's Catholic values in today's political climate?" It's similar to what you're saying, but how-

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

Yeah. It's a theme, it's a question. Many people are asking Catherine's question. So, it's a very good one. And to maintain optimism, as you stay true to who you are and what you believe, you can only do so, ever convinced that you have the truth. So, you have the truth on your side, no matter what ridicule or rejection or false labeling you endure. You have optimism, but this is the truth.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:51](#)):

And the other thing is when you're experiencing some difficulties or disagreements with others who may be fierce in their criticism, just say, "Thank you, Lord. Thank you for letting me share your cross. This brings me closer to you. This makes me a little bit holier. I'm enduring something for your sake and for your gospel." But don't be apprehensive. Don't allow the pressure that you may be feeling from other forces or institutions or organizations to keep you from confidently sharing with others your convictions and what you believe. Again, never, never in an uncharitable, threatening or any way like that. Because you have the truth, you can be confident, you can be serene. And so, and no, I would say to Catherine, the optimism comes in knowing that ultimately, this is always God's creation and it's God's land, and he's not going to abandon us. That's where I find my optimism. God has always been true to his promise. He's not going to abandon us.

Billy Atwell ([17:01](#)):

Yeah. Absolutely. That's wonderful, Bishop. Thank you. Tom from Alexandria says, "Do pastors and parochial vicars receive training in financial and business matters? I have to think it must be a real challenge during the pandemic to keep churches and schools running smoothly, although I presume most need financial advisors."

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

Very, very true, Tom. We do, especially during a pandemic where financial, parishes are being impacted, of course. The diocese is, as families are, with financial burdens at this time. The needs are still great, but the resources are not as strong as, in light of this pandemic we're facing. But again, people have been so extremely generous in our diocese, especially to Catholic charities and helping them to continue to do their good work. I'm so grateful for that. And many, many are doing what they can to... They know their parish is in need right now. And those who can help are doing so. Those who say, "Well, maybe at a later time," we understand that too. So, yeah, do pastors and parochial vicars receive training in financial and business matters? That was the question.

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

And a lot of times when I was rector of the seminary, that was always a big one question. These seminarians need more training in finances and counseling and all of these kinds of things. And I would say, well, the problem is, there's a curriculum. There's a... And it's a very fierce curriculum, where there's only so many hours available for them to have all their theology courses, all their philosophy courses, all their language courses, all those things that are necessary. You just can't be squeezing in everything that may be necessary. So, what we do is we make sure that for example, our seminarians in the summer are in parishes. We encourage the pastor to allow him to go to finance council meetings, for the pastor to share with him the basics, all those things. So, maybe not so much the training in the seminary, but certainly while they're out in the parishes. Our pastors are given ongoing formation opportunities to speak with our diocesan finance office.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:15](#)):

We have a great diocesan finance office, great stewards who help our pastors, who go out to the parishes. Our pastors are very bright and wise, and asking for that support when they need it. Every parish pastor is required by canon law to have a finance council, and that finance council is made up of experts in the field of finance from the parish, who get the opportunity to review the books, review the spending, the revenue, everything like that. And to guide the pastor. Again, that's a requirement. So, while maybe not the extensive training that would be helpful, certainly the support that would be needed.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:05](#)):

I know when I was in seminary in canon law, the canon law professor, he made the last question of the final exam worth like 25 points. And the question was, what is the chancellor's phone number? So, in other words, what he was trying to say, if you know that, and you know to call that, and you know what you don't know and where you need help, you're going to be okay.

Billy Atwell ([20:30](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:31](#)):

I do feel I have that same confidence with my finance office here. If our pastors have any question, need any guidance, in addition to the finance council, I'll give them 25 points if they call the finance office.

Billy Atwell ([20:44](#)):

Yeah, I regularly speak with our CFO, who mentions that he's in the parishes regularly, helping a pastor who have a question. "I need some help understanding this." They're an immediate advisor and resource. It's one of the greatest areas maybe where we see direct partnership with the faithful and the priest, because it's an area that overlaps every... Every business owner has to manage finances, whereas they might not have to manage canon law, or there's the sacramental needs of a parish. Well, that, the priest might feel more on his own, but when it comes to finances, he's got not only a council, but diocesan folks that he can speak with. And just the faithful in his parish that might have a good sense of something when they're getting into a project.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:19](#)):

Absolutely. And I think it's very important for our faithful to have the assurance that we take extremely seriously the responsibility to be good stewards of their funds. That's why audits. We have parish audits consistently. And then what we do at the end of the audits, we share the best practices. "Here's some best practices that you might want to put in place," or "here are some things that have surfaced, not anything serious or anything like that, but here's what we have to pay a little bit more attention." So, we're constantly in communication. And again, I think really good stewards of the finances and gifts and generosity we received from the faithful.

Billy Atwell ([21:58](#)):

And it's worth clarifying too, you have a similar structure in that there's a diocesan finance council and folks who helped you in reviewing these things and audits for the diocese.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:05](#)):

It's required meetings. And it's, again, this is canonical. It's not a choice. This is kind of law.

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

The church has been through this before.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:12](#)):

And why not? Why not, I mean, why not surround yourself with the experts? In this diocese, I am so blessed with our wonderful diocesan finance council also, so.

Billy Atwell ([22:24](#)):

Really top-notch folks.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:25](#)):

Yeah. Thanks.

Billy Atwell ([22:25](#)):

Bishop, any final thoughts? And then if you'd send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:28](#)):

No, Billy, I just encourage our faithful. I do know we are all experiencing some heavy crosses and burdens and challenges at this time, but again, we don't walk alone. God is accompanying us at every

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moment and certainly, we have each other to lift up and encourage in faith. So, let's stay strong in our faith. Let's encourage one another and stay, even during these difficult times as believers, we can stay joyful in hope. And that's my prayer and blessing for all our listeners, asking God to keep you and your families and loved ones safe and healthy, so that together with his grace, we may walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:09](#)):

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