

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'm Billy Atwell, chief communications officer for the diocese and your cohost. You're listening to this podcast and that's because there are many people in this diocese who have been very generous to the Bishop's Lenten appeal over the years, the BLA supports many ministries throughout the diocese, including the office of communication. So thank you to those who have supported that. And also I want to offer a quick plug to the Catholic Charities Christmas collection. That's obviously coming up here right after the Thanksgiving holiday. Please go to ccda.net and sign up for their e-newsletter to get more information about this and to learn how that critical fundraiser is used to help the poor and the needy in our diocese.

Billy Atwell ([00:45](#)):

If you haven't already, make sure you rate this podcast or write a review wherever you're listening, and if you're on YouTube, make sure you subscribe and ring the bell to get notifications. You can sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org. You can follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. More than 19,300 of you are already do @Bishop Burbidge. Each day on Twitter he writes 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. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge, Bishop, how you doing?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:17](#)):

I'm doing well, Billy and certainly extend prayerful best wishes to all of our listeners. As I mentioned, I certainly pray for you and your families every day that God is keeping you safe and healthy.

Billy Atwell ([01:29](#)):

Very good. Bishop, we're right on the doorstep of Thanksgiving here. This has certainly been a year with some strange events and challenges. I'm sure you've thought about what we as a diocese should really be thankful for. What are some of those things and what's your message?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:42](#)):

Well, sure. Sometimes Thanksgiving is a beautiful reminder of the gifts that we can often take for granted. It begins with the gift of life itself, the precious gift of human life. All of us created in the image and likeness of God, his Holy Spirit living in drawing within us the gift of our faith, our Holy Catholic faith. The gift of family and friends are instruments of the Lord to accompany us through the challenges and through the blessings of life itself. As a diocese I thank God every day that he has appointed me to serve with so many wonderful people in this vibrant diocese. So we're thankful for the fact that we're a vibrant diocese who are, we're growing, our faith is made visible, and I'm so thankful for that privilege to serve here. And so thankful for the witness in our diocese.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:34](#)):

I will begin my brother priests and their dedicated service, same with our deacons and consecrated religious, our lay faithful who day in and day out, live their faith and, and bring their faith into the community and the workplace. Beautiful example of married love that we see so visible here and the gift

of family life. So just countless blessings and all of us have the opportunity in a special way. And Thanksgiving day to express our thanks to God. I know our listeners will begin their day that way. It's really, it's in our parishes on Thanksgiving morning now in recent years, especially the Thanksgiving day mass is really one of the ones that we are seeing the most attendance.

Billy Atwell ([03:21](#)):

I remember hearing that last year as well [crosstalk 00:03:23].

Bishop Burbidge ([03:22](#)):

And it's really beautiful because it's not a Holy day of obligation. So it's really wonderful. I think there's just something within us that we know who the source of all good gifts is and to him, we owe thanks and praise. And I do wish all of our listeners are very happy Thanksgiving.

Billy Atwell ([03:37](#)):

That's wonderful. Before we get into our main topics, I mentioned the Catholic Charities Christmas collection in the intro. And for those who missed it, you have some good news, some big news for Catholic Charities.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:45](#)):

Oh yes. We did hire a new director to succeed our wonderful Art Bennett who has served here with great distinction who has done so much to expand our Catholic Charities. And we are going to work together to build upon his great work. And so I'm pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Stephen Carattini as the president and CEO for Catholic Charities. He comes to us with extensive experience, including work in Catholic Charities in other dioceses. And I think he is very excited about coming to the diocese of Arlington. And we're going to continue to do great work in service, most especially to the poor and needy. So a word of deep thanks to Art Bennett and prayerful best wishes to him and his dear wife and family as he retires. And I know God will continue to bless him, abundantly.

Billy Atwell ([04:49](#)):

Yeah, both Art Bennett and Steven Carattini certainly have a lot of life changes. If everyone would please pray for them and that this great work would certainly continue and grow under new leadership.

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

Bishop, it's been a rough week in a lot of ways. And in one week we lost two very well known and certainly well loved priests of our diocese to illness, Father Dobbins and Monsignor Vela passed away leaving many with a feeling of sadness and even emptiness. That's a big hole that they've left in this diocese. They're both very joyful though. So we try to be joyful in the resurrection certainly. And they were devoted priests. What are your thoughts, because you celebrated the masses for both of these, the funerals for both of these priests. So what were some of your thoughts [crosstalk 00:05:34]

Bishop Burbidge ([05:34](#)):

Sure. There's sadness, we're a family. And so as a Bishop, as brother priests, we buried brothers and so there's deep sadness, as you said. Father Dobbins, Monsignor Vela, just two beloved priests. It's very unusual in our diocese to have two priest funerals a year, but to have two within one week has brought that sadness, but as you mentioned, Billy, wonderful priests, priests of great faith. I had the chance to

certainly to be with them prior to them going home to the Lord and kind of in different ways. But both said the same thing to me, "Bishop, I'm ready. I'm ready to meet our Lord," and they indeed were. And I know they were accompanied by the love of wonderful family members and friends and parishioners, and both had offered their sufferings for their brother priests and for our church and diocese. And I'm sure that in many ways we will continue to feel their presence and their help and their intercession, but, again, heartfelt sympathy to their family members and friends. Sometimes we forget sometimes that priests are also sons and they're brothers and they're uncles and great uncles. And so we were certainly have their family in mind and ensure them of our continued prayers.

Billy Atwell ([07:03](#)):

Absolutely. Last week, the US conference of Catholic Bishops hosted their annual a plenary session. This one was unprecedented in that it was conducted virtually. That has never happened before. In fact, our diocesan studio here that we're recording in was one of the broadcast locations for Monday's press conference. As you step back and kind of take stock of the meeting and look at it from maybe bird's eye view, what are some of the key takeaways that you would want people to know about?

Bishop Burbidge ([07:27](#)):

First of all, there's nothing, we learned this in our faith, in our church community, there's nothing like being together in person, of the community coming together. We've been able to provide the live stream so people can participate mass from home during this pandemic, but nothing replaces, certainly as people of faith, being together as the body of Christ, as a community to receive our Lord in the Holy Eucharist and in the Bishops' meeting, I have to say, I really missed not being in person, with my brother bishops.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:07](#)):

I'm sure many people who are listening, that when you are together with your colleagues, it's kind of helpful because you speak the same language, you can share your different experiences. And a lot of that takes place outside of the formal meetings. So I really did miss that this year, but I have to say to have 300 bishops participate in a virtual meeting for two days, the technology worked extremely well. And there was a company that assisted with that, but it worked extremely well. Don't get me wrong, we were not spared of the famous line that everyone's hearing these days, "Bishop you're on mute. Bishop, please unmute." "Can you hear me?" So we did have some hiccups there, but it was very, very productive, but certainly not the same.

Billy Atwell ([08:59](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. I'd gone I think two months during this COVID situation without being the guy that was on mute. And then finally I got nailed with it. It seemed to happen like every other time after that, but that's good that it was a productive meeting despite those circumstances. One of the topics that came up several times, including during the press conference that you hosted here, was that a former Cardinal McCarrick. We discussed the report on the last podcast, but the report from the Holy Father had just been issued. And so really you would only had a chance to kind of review the executive summary, maybe dig into a few details. Having come out of the US bishops conference meeting, as well as having more time with the report, what stands out to you now, Bishop?

Bishop Burbidge ([09:36](#)):

Yeah. And we did talk about that as a body of bishops, more from the standpoint, excuse me, of what have we learned? What have we learned from this and how can we apply that to be of more faithful service to our parishioners? So again, Billy, like the last podcast I repeat, there's embarrassment and there's a shame of the behavior of former Cardinal McCarrick and his abuse of power and certainly apology to any victims of sexual abuse or immoral behavior that has just ... There's no words that can express that sorrow. So I do extend that to any of our listeners who are victims of, of such behavior and it's sad and it, again, it makes us so angry. The Church reacted. I mean, he's laicized now, I mean, so obviously the weight of the consequences is very, very real.

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

But we did talk about lessons to be learned. And you've heard me talk many times on this podcast about how has the church, with the charter for the protection of children. We've implemented protocols that have been tested and continuing to improve, but trying to do everything possible to make sure this behavior does not occur again, even with the third-party reporting system, where if people do have concerns about bishops, they are able without any fear of having to go to the Chancery or anything like that, they can make their report and it will be investigated by a third-party system. So holding bishops accountable as we should also. And that was a recent significant change that is so essential.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:27](#)):

But you know, what we see in the report, sadly, is there an abuse of power, sinfulness, immoral behavior? And we have to acknowledge that. I think that certainly a thing that made me very sad in some ways, looking at the report and this is somewhat of an interpretation, I guess, but it was sad to see that in many ways that former Cardinal McCarrick, it seemed like he had many acquaintances, but no friends. Really, that's a red flag. To me, and again, this is my insight, he used money, he used access to power to bridge a gap where friendship and fraternity should be in order to draw people to himself. And whether it was that's the way he had connectedness or influence or approval or something like that. And I thought that was very sad and I think that's one of the things that we are really working with in helping our men who are being formed as priests, that you have to develop healthy friendships where you can keep each other accountable because you're called to bring out the best in each other.

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

And certainly as priests, as bishops, we have to examine our own lives. Do I have people in my life where, God forbid, if I'm acting in such a way that is not faithful to who I say I am or what I'm doing, that I have close enough, people close enough to me that are not going to allow that to continue. And I think that's very important. And we tell our seminarians, if you see these warning signs, you have to bring them to your superiors. We have to hold each other accountable that was lacking in the life of Theodore McCarrick.

Billy Atwell ([13:40](#)):

And you've spoken in the past about how the human formation of seminarians has been something that's really re-evaluated over the last probably 10, 20 years or so in seminary life. And you ran a seminary, so you know that very well, that formation, how that's important. And it sounds like you're speaking to the human formation, kind of the social connectedness that a person can have.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:59](#)):

Right. Yeah, absolutely. And that's something that's always being evaluated and provided. Our seminarians, even within the seminary, a number of them belong to small groups where, they pray together. They talk to each other about how Jesus is alive and acting in our lives. They're not spiritual directors to each other, they're not counselors to each other, but they're talking about living their vocation and where the Lord is present in their lives. And they hold each other accountable, which is a very good thing. And we have to have good protocols. We have to have good systems, good accountability structures, but we want to also be building that culture where bishops and priests and seminarians are men of integrity. They do the right thing. They do what they say they promise.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:52](#)):

We're all sinners, and we're all going to fail in all those things. But we want a culture where we are living the life that we say. And I do, I pray every day. I want the faithful in this diocese to know that for the grace to do so. It's my intention. I want to be a good and faithful Bishop, but I know my own weaknesses. I know I need God's grace. I know I need the prayers of the faithful. But systems and protocols are important, but what has to be is a deep rooted, integrity, and a holiness and faithfulness of life that seemed to escape former Cardinal McCarrick.

Billy Atwell ([15:32](#)):

That's such an excellent point, Bishop, thank you for sharing that. I know reading the report that you said it's embarrassing.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:36](#)):

It is. [crosstalk 00:15:37]

Billy Atwell ([15:37](#)):

Thank you for all the work that you do, though. On more positive news, last Saturday, you blessed yet another medical clinic for the poor, the Second Mother Of Mercy Free Medical Clinic. This one is in Woodbridge. The first one is in Manassas, and this is the second one, as I said, and it's for the poor and the uninsured. It started, seemed like just a dream a few years ago. And then here we are with the second, what was your message when you blessed that second one? What are you hoping this clinic to purpose to serve as we move forward?

Bishop Burbidge ([16:05](#)):

Well, it's really just carrying out the works of mercy, right? That we just heard in the gospel this past Sunday, our Lord said, "Listen, at the end of time, I'm going to judge you mercifully, not on what you accumulated in life, but what you gave away and how you share your gifts, your time, your talents, resources to help others, especially the poor and the suffering. And whatever you have done for them, you have done for me." And so because of our donors, because of our volunteers, doctors, nurses, physician assistants, staff, we are able to provide quality free health care to those who are under-insured or uninsured, to those who are poor in a very safe and healthy environment.

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

But we can only do that through the generosity of people who share their gifts and time and talents. And I would like to put that out there, that if there are doctors, and if there are nurses and physician assistants who would like to offer their services, please be in contact with our Catholic Charities. We

have a very, we're following all the protocols and all the safety regulations and all that stuff so that those who come through those doors can be treated in such a way. So please [crosstalk 00:17:31] we need the help.

Billy Atwell ([17:32](#)):

I remember when, Bishop, you blessed the ultrasound machine I met, there was a nurse at the medical clinic in Manassas, and I was talking with her and she said, "I started out feeling like I really don't have a lot of time. I'm just going to do one shift a week." And she said, "And before I knew it, I was asking, can I do more? Can I serve?" There was a joy, I think for people who are able to serve in a different medical environment, where it's a religious environment, it's run by Catholic Charities that makes them want to just do more and more. So if you're a medical, in the medical profession and you would like to assist, just go to ccda.net and you can find information on the Mother Mercy Clinic, and there's a button there to send your info in, to learn how you can volunteer. And again, it's as much or as little as you want to do, but we really think you're going to love [crosstalk 00:18:13]

Bishop Burbidge ([18:13](#)):

Yeah. And I used in my reflection on Sunday for that gospel was the fact that if you, in the very difficult and challenging times, if you're the one who needs that help, if you're the one who needs that assistance, you are reflecting the presence of Christ because he is certainly found in the poor and the suffering. If you're the one who is able to give help and assistance, you are reflecting the presence of Christ because he is certainly found in good and faithful servants.

Billy Atwell ([18:46](#)):

That's wonderful. That's wonderful. Before we go to our question from a parishioner, I want to plug real quick an Advent, Christmas campaign that we're doing this year. We did it last year as well, called JOY. It stands for Just One Yes. So this Advent and Christmas season, it's the full Christmas season we're encouraging you to grow closer to God by picking one thing that you can do now that you're not doing. So it might be a short prayer each day. It could be a rosary. It could be an act of service for someone in need or to volunteer some of your time, big or small, it matters. Taking just the opportunity to make Just One Yes to change your life. And through God's grace, that can change the world. So if you would like to participate in that and sign up for daily reflections that are sent out during that season, arlingtondiocese.org/joy. Bishop, I know this is one that you were really excited about last year.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:34](#)):

Yeah. How many [crosstalk 00:19:36].

Billy Atwell ([19:35](#)):

It was like 70,000.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:38](#)):

70,000 commitments last year of Just One Yes. They were beautiful. Those little gestures that you had mentioned. And our faith tells us that whatever yes, whatever it is we offer, if we offer to the Lord, he's going to use that in ways that we can't imagine. So it's not corny to say just one yes. Can make a difference. It's our faith that allows us to say it, because God will use it in miraculous ways.

Billy Atwell ([20:07](#)):

Absolutely. So definitely consider that. Arlingtondiocese.org to learn more about the campaign and to sign up for the daily emails. Bishop, we have a question from a member of the faithful. Joe from Ashburn says, "I saw that you preached at a mass in Richmond for their 200th anniversary. I know we were formed out of the diocese of Richmond. What goes into the decision to create a new diocese out of an older one?"

Bishop Burbidge ([20:27](#)):

Yeah. Many times it's the size and the responsibilities have increased in such a way that it cannot just remain under the care of one Bishop. And when this was all, the entire state, the Commonwealth was one diocese.

Billy Atwell ([20:46](#)):

I can't imagine.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:48](#)):

Things were a little slower back then. Maybe. I guess, I don't know. This is some traveling. I mean, these bishops were real missionaries and I mean, God blessed them, but because of the growth that we've experienced, there was a need to divide the responsibilities. And so we'll be getting ... Richmond is a little bit older. It's 200, we'll be getting ready to celebrate our 50th in 2024. And I'll be having some exciting news in coming podcasts that talk about how we'll go about celebrating that and then using it as a moment of evangelization and grace. We were just talking about Monsignor Vela and who passed away, but he was the first priest ordained for the diocese of Arlington, May the 10th, 1975. So the timing of the question is appropriate. And actually it's many factors that come into that, just to answer Joe's question. And ultimately it goes to Rome and it's the Holy Father who makes that decision. So I thank God diocese of Richmond, diocese of Arlington are both vibrant dioceses and the faith continues to grow, but I'm glad, I'm sure Bishop Knestout says the same thing. I'm glad there are two dioceses now.

Billy Atwell ([22:06](#)):

I'm sure that's the case. So, Bishop, this is our last podcast before the Thanksgiving holiday and before Advent begins, so if you would ... any final message you have, and if you would send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:16](#)):

Yeah. But again, just yes, a renewed Thanksgiving to all the faithful in our diocese and all my brother priests and all those serving here for all of your goodness that is made visible in so many ways. And I do hope ... It's been a challenging and difficult time for all of us. And, but we know there are reasons to be thankful. And mainly because God was true to his promise, he is with us and he is not going to abandon us and he will protect us and deliver us. So we're thankful to God for the source of all good gifts. And then we're beginning Advent on Sunday. And that's a beautiful time. Or we say that tomorrow ... Some people say tomorrow is a very dangerous word to learn because it helps us to delay and procrastinate and put things off. And Advent is the season that reminds us, no it's about today is now the time to act, to stay vigilant, to stay ready, to stay prepared to meet our Lord.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:18](#)):

And so it is my hope and prayer that Advent is a time of great spiritual renewal for all of our listeners, getting our hearts ready to prepare to celebrate anew the birth of our Savior. I suggest it's always good I think to begin the season of Advent, maybe with the sacrament of penance, like "Lord, I really want this to be a time of new life for me. And let me give to you because I know you forgive me. Let me give to you anything not of you so I can really celebrate this season worthily." And maybe here's a suggestion for Just One Yes. Maybe just one person you might invite to return to the Lord, to return to the church because our God is always there ready to welcome us home, ready to embrace us in his love and mercy.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:06](#)):

So wishing you all dear friends a very happy Thanksgiving an Advent filled with abundant spiritual blessings, and let's pray together that we stay safe and healthy and together and walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:19](#)):

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 @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, inspirational content by subscribing to our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org.