

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 co-host. We want to offer a special thank you to those who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. We're approaching that BLA season now, and we just want to say thank you because you have made this podcast and many other ministries throughout the diocese possible. If you haven't already, please rate this podcast or write a review wherever you're listening, follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and make sure you follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. Every day he offers a short gospel reflection for that day, and they're pretty popular, so take a look at those. They're nice short little nuggets that you can use to carry you through the day.

Billy Atwell ([00:46](#)):

If you have a question for Bishop Burbidge you'd like considered for the podcast, email us at info@arlingtondiocese.org or you can call us at 703-831-7013. You could also direct message us on social media if you've got a specific question that you'd like to offer. Now, I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how you doing?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:05](#)):

I am doing well, Billy. I hope all of our listeners are doing well and certainly staying safe and healthy, and my prayers and thoughts are with all of you, with your friends.

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

We've got a few good topics to get into, but I want to jump right into probably the bigger one is you've just returned from our diocesan mission in Bánica, Dominican Republic. Talk about what that experience was like.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:28](#)):

Billy, it was just a... it's one of those life-changing experiences because visiting a mission area and seeing of course, the poverty that exists, being reminded of so many things that we can easily take for granted, but at the same time being so inspired by the faith and the devotion of all those I encountered. This is a year as we prepare for our 50th anniversary with the theme "remember," and I think it's important for all of us to remember that this work in the mission parishes in the Dominican Republic, the mission churches of St. Francis and eventually St. Joseph in Pedro Santana, this all started with our second bishop, Bishop Keating, in 1991. Bishop Keating knew the bishop in the diocese where our mission parishes are and he visited there himself. In fact, the bishop of the diocese was telling me, yes, Bishop Keating came here and I was showing him different places where the Diocese of Arlington could take up a mission. And he kept saying, well, let's see another one. Let's see another one, and actually chose one of the mission areas in most need. In most need. And he said, "Now, this is where Arlington will be."

Bishop Burbidge ([03:02](#)):

And throughout all those years, throughout all those years, we have been sending, Bishop Keating did, Bishop Loverde continued the practice, and I'm continuing the practice. We have sent diocesan priests to serve in the churches of St. Francis and St. Joseph. And what I heard the most during my whole time

there was 'thank you.' Thank you to the Diocese for being so present to us, but most especially, and they mentioned my name, because they remember them with great affection beginning with Monsignor Jerry Creedon, the first to go there. Remember then with great affection the priests, our priests, who have served in the missions throughout the years, and it was just so beautiful to see the inspiration. Father Posey, who was also assigned there for almost eight years, accompanied me. And he was remembered also and people were so happy to see him. And two of our priests now, Father Joe Donelan and Father Steve McGraw are currently the two priests serving these missions and they are beloved by the people.

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

The thing is too, it's not just two churches there.

Billy Atwell ([04:26](#)):

Yeah, it's a little more complicated than that.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:28](#)):

Yeah. They also have like 60 campos or small rural villages. So our priests literally, and I did one of these, literally go up into the hills, into the rugged roads really in the middle of nowhere and sometimes in those areas, priests are only... they can get there once a month or so. But they go there, they celebrate the sacraments, the Mass, and people are so gracious. But it truly is, all of our priests who have been there and Father Jeb and Father Steve now, I just am in awe of their missionary zeal and priestly ministry, and so proud of the diocese of Arlington. And we hope to continue this support in which we help those in need, provide education and all the basic necessities of life, and most importantly, we're there to bring them Christ Jesus. So it really was a powerful, powerful experience and grateful to have that opportunity.

Billy Atwell ([05:42](#)):

Now, I understand taking a truck to those campos is an upgrade from what Father Posey remembered. He was riding mules and stuff into those back-

Bishop Burbidge ([05:48](#)):

Literally.

Billy Atwell ([05:49](#)):

... back countries. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:50](#)):

Yeah. Father Posey said, "You guys have it made now."

Billy Atwell ([05:53](#)):

You young kids got it all.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:54](#)):

"I was taking mules up there," and so we were actually celebrating on Wednesday evening of our visit with the Bishop, the current Bishop and the Bishop emeritus, the 30th.... well, it's a little bit beyond the 30th, but we were celebrating our 30th anniversary. So there was a beautiful Mass with the three bishops, the bishop emeritus, the current bishop and myself, with a beautiful full reception afterwards, and in thanksgiving to all those who have served.

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

A lot of lay people have come up throughout the years as well.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:25](#)):

Yeah, that's a great point to mention. A lot of lay people, a lot of our college and high school students make mission trips to Bánica. In fact, we have a site there, I visited there, where when our students, or any groups, spend a week serving in Bánica, more like a work camp type thing. I saw where they stay and things like that. They're roughing it a little bit. But so many, in fact, last night I met two people who were telling me that they made those mission trips and they said, again, what I said earlier, it just changed their lives. And two of them, a gentleman I heard about last night actually, accompanied the priests up into the chapels into the campos and there were baptisms. And so they served as godfather.

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

Oh, that's great.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:23](#)):

So they have godchildren there in Bánica.

Billy Atwell ([07:25](#)):

Oh, that's wild.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:25](#)):

Yeah. So they're very, very proud of that. So we're called, Pope Francis is reminding us all the time to be a missionary Church, and those who serve there are missionaries. But all of the people here who support the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, who support special collections, two missionary dioceses, and our priests come home in the summer, and we ask the people for support of these [crosstalk 00:07:56]-

Billy Atwell ([07:55](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:57](#)):

But all of you who contribute, who give generously to allow us to continue this work, you're missionaries. You're participating in the missionary work of the Church, and to all of you, I'm also very grateful.

Billy Atwell ([08:12](#)):

When you talk about the priests that are assigned there, you do priest assignments each year and they'll go to different parishes, and you've talked before on the podcast about you find where their strengths

are and what parish needs that strength and those kinds of things. What are some of the strengths that are needed for a priest who's going to serve in a community? This is such a unique assignment.

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

Right. And there are unique talents and gifts and not everyone has all those gifts, and so when it was time to send a priest this past year, I actually asked priests if they were interested because it is such a unique assignment. I would not just assign a priest out of the blue. So I would say the first thing that you would need is a sense of adventure because you're leaving your country. You're going to a different country, a different culture. You're going to missionary territory to the unknown in many ways. You're separated from family, from brother priests for much of the time. I think it is helpful for someone to be able to speak fluently Spanish. I think that's a big help and who have an understanding of the culture. And quite honestly, the health and the energy to be able to do it. And like their predecessors, Father Jeb and Father Steve, reflect all those qualities and I see their joy. So seeing that joy is always a sign that this is what God is asking you to do, right?

Billy Atwell ([09:55](#)):

That's wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:56](#)):

And it was such so wonderful to see how beloved they, and all our priests are.

Billy Atwell ([10:00](#)):

Well, I'm glad it was such a good experience for you. You speak about bringing the Eucharist into the mountains. That's obviously the theme of our first preparatory year for the Jubilee. And there's a really interesting series going on right now called the Mass Explained, part of this year of remembering, this year of do this remembrance of me. Talk a little bit about what this series is and why you thought that was important to include in this first year.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:24](#)):

Yeah. It's really... some of our priests have done videos on the Mass Explained and we have a catechetical series now that will be offered in the coming months by priests in four parishes throughout our diocese, and I'm really excited about it because we could be Catholics for a long time, and there's maybe some things that we do at mass or we say at mass or our posture or whatever that we don't understand. Like why do we do that? I know we always do it, but why? What is the meaning of this and how did it find its way into the liturgy? There could be simple questions, answers about why we wear vestments or the significance of the color of the vestments, but theological questions we may have and the connection in the mass and the Passover and the Last Supper and what it means to go forth from the mass.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:26](#)):

So this is a tremendous opportunity, and really the priests are doing a really great job with this. And I would say anyone who watches or participates in this catechetical series, I guarantee you, you will learn something, one thing that you didn't know about the mass, at least one, I guarantee you. So I'm really excited that this is part of our year dedicated to the Eucharist.

Billy Atwell ([11:52](#)):

And I attended the first parish listening session for the synod of bishops that's going on, and just a reminder for everybody, every parish is going to have one. So contact your parish if you'd like to participate in one of those. And I heard a number of times people asking questions about catechesis, understanding the teachings of the church better. And this seems to fit right into that, even though it was really planned before it.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:13](#)):

Right. And I believe the parishes are St. Agnes in Arlington, St. Mary of Immaculate Conception in Fredericksburg, St. Leo the Great Fairfax and Sacred Heart in Winchester.

Billy Atwell ([12:21](#)):

Exactly.

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

Billy, there's a place I think people will find the-

Billy Atwell ([12:24](#)):

Yeah. If you want any more information about this, go to ArlingtonDiocese.org, certainly for the Jubilee, there's all kinds of events coming up related arts and culture and our multicultural events and all kinds of great things. Just go to jubilee.arlingtondiocese.org, and you can find out information on every event that's happening. And there's a lot, definitely go check that out.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:43](#)):

Yeah. And I'm really excited. Father Miserendino and his committee has done a great thing. We talk about one of the ways we proclaim our faith is through truth, beauty and goodness, through art, through sacred art, through music, through different expressions of our faith and culture, and there are really creative, exciting, and I think enjoyable events that our people would like. So please, I thank you for encouraging people to go to that site.

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

Also something we can continue to get good feedback on is the forty hours devotions. Those are happening in parishes throughout the Diocese, and there's a full schedule of that on the Jubilee website as well. We're also emailing these events out, so if you're not on our email list, please go to ArlingtonDiocese.org and click on the e-newsletter in the footer there. We're providing these on a monthly basis. So you can see all the upcoming events and the 40 hours we're getting continued positive response to those. So please check that out. I think you and your family would really enjoy it.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:40](#)):

I'm convinced, Billy, that we have all of our parishes, 70 parishes, committed to conducting between now and October forty hours of Eucharistic devotion, where people throughout those forty hours, of course, there's prayer services and mass and maybe lectures, but most especially the ability to visit church with our Eucharistic Lord present on the altar in the monstrance just to be alone with Him. I cannot help but to believe that every parish in our diocese doing forty hours this year will not bring a source of abundant graces, not only to individuals, but to our diocese.

Billy Atwell ([14:17](#)):

Absolutely. And certainly one source of grace and blessing at our diocese is our schools. And so every year, the last week of January is dedicated to Catholic Schools Week. It runs from January 30 to February 4. I know how much you love our schools, but I also know how busy your schedule is. Are you able to get out to some of the schools during that week?

Bishop Burbidge ([14:36](#)):

Yeah, that's always a priority. I try to get to maybe five or six schools each semester, Catholic Schools Week. I try to do at least three, three of the five days to be at the school. Two of our parish schools, and one of our high schools, which I'll be doing this week. Just did one yesterday. It is such a delight. Such a joy. Our theme for Catholic Schools Week in our country this year is "faith, excellence and service," and I can say with complete confidence, I've visited all our schools, those three qualities radiate in our schools. Faith, excellence, and service. And again, another shout out to our teachers for what they have done, all our Catholic educators, and continue to do during these continued challenges of going through a pandemic of allowing our children to keep our schools open.

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

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:32](#)):

To be together. We did it through the most challenging times.

Billy Atwell ([15:35](#)):

We've led the way really in the whole region.

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

Really. And kept people safe, our children safe and healthy. It's just been absolutely incredible. Lots of good news to report. First of all, just so people know, we have 37 parish schools, four high schools, four free standing preschools and five independent Catholic schools and reached an enrollment, a 15-year enrollment high this year with 18,000 students. That's an increase of approximately 1,100 students in our Catholic schools.

Billy Atwell ([16:11](#)):

And I think we have to imagine that the way our schools, our teachers and our parents, certainly their participation in the school leadership, that collaboration and the way they led through the pandemic has to speak to why we're at a 15-year high in enrollment.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:24](#)):

Absolutely. There's no doubt about it. And I think also, our great reverence and respect for the reality that our parents are the first teachers of the children in the ways of education and the ways of faith, we have great respect for that. What we consider a privilege not to take their place, but to assist them in the education and formation of their children, and we actively encourage collaboration, cooperation, participation with the parents. I really think that is so key, and I think that became recognized and I think people are seeing that when other forms of education are not consistent in promoting the truth and moral convictions and beliefs that are sound, but we never waver, really gives parents a sense of

confidence. So our schools exist to lead students to a closer relationship with Christ. That's faith. That's the most important thing, but also excellence. We want to be proud of our excellence.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:44](#)):

Over 60% of our Catholic schools have been recognized as Blue Ribbon schools, and that's not an easy-

Billy Atwell ([17:49](#)):

It's amazing.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:49](#)):

... thing to do.

Billy Atwell ([17:50](#)):

That's a high bar.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:51](#)):

And as you've heard me say, we have a strategic plan, and two goals under in our strategic plan related to Catholic schools are number one, we have to find a way to make them more affordable for more people. We've distributed more than 6 million financial assistance to support those in need the 2020/21 academic year alone. That's great, but this is such a precious gift. We have to find ways of making it more available to others. The other thing is that our ultimate goal, we have I think over 15 or 16 schools now that do this, all our high schools do, is that we include within the school community those with learning disabilities or other disabilities. Not just a separate segment of the building for them, they're included in the program.

Billy Atwell ([18:50](#)):

It's a beautiful [inaudible 00:18:51].

Bishop Burbidge ([18:50](#)):

Walking side by side with their fellow students and friends. And I love... one of our strategic planning goals is that we were able to say one day soon all of our schools do that. And we know it's not... there are some challenges and-

Billy Atwell ([19:05](#)):

Right. There's a process to-

Bishop Burbidge ([19:06](#)):

... the resources and all that, but we have to find a way to do it. We've considered it a priority though in our strategic plan. It's also an opportunity to say that we recognize that many of our parishioners, the students, go to non-Catholic schools, and we also want to improve and build upon the goodness and success of faith formation programs. But we're looking at ways that we can enhance those programs also, and so grateful for our catechists and teachers who lead that way.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:41](#)):

And our homeschool families, we see our homeschool families as part, a very integral and real part, of our Catholic education in our diocese. And our Catholic school's office, which I want to thank Dr. Vorbach and his staff for the great leadership they've been providing, especially these two years. They are working hand in hand with homeschool families saying, we're here to help you too. And I think a lot of parents learned these past two years, who were doing homeschool without planning to do so, they have a little extra admiration for parents that do it every day. So we want to be there to support them.

Billy Atwell ([20:19](#)):

Yeah. Again, another shout out to Joe Vorbach and this team there, because they have done such a great job with that. And I've personally just heard great feedback from homeschool families who really have seen a major shift where the Catholic School's Office clearly is looking to every form of Catholic education that's going on. And you mentioned two goals, but the strategic plan has an entire pillar of goals related to Catholic education, both home schoolers and religious education, because most students are receiving their faith through religious ed.

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

That's right.

Billy Atwell ([20:48](#)):

But a whole pillar is dedicated to that. If you're listening and want to see more of that strategic plan, go to ArlingtonDiocese.org. We've got this strategic plan there. You can see all of the pillars associated. We've got six different pillars, but then there's goals under each one of those. It's really good to look at it, because that's the road app ahead. We're getting more specific with exactly how we're going to reach those goals, but we're painting a road ahead and we want you to be a part of it and see if there's ways that you can participate.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:14](#)):

Yeah. If I could just jump in on there, Billy, because I've always said that this strategic plan is not just going to be some binder sitting on a shelf.

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

Right. We've seen those before at other places.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:24](#)):

And just to show how far we're moving forward, is tonight I am having a Zoom call with our working groups. So you're right. So we have these six pillars and we have five goals under each one. So now, okay, they're great goals. How are we going to accomplish them? So we've reached out to priests, to laity, to consecrate religious, to deacons saying are there any of these pillars that you have a particular passion for or interest because we'd like you to be part, not of a committee, not of a study group, but of a working group.

Billy Atwell ([21:59](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:59](#)):

To help us to get this done and incredible response from all those groups. I think there's like 17 or 18 people under each pillar to say this is how we can do this. Or maybe they end up saying that right now this is not manageable. We have to maybe look in a different direction. We don't know, but we've identified them as priorities. We see them as we want to get this done, please help us to show us how to do that. And then we would have more decisions to make guided by the Holy Spirit. But again, I emphasize this is working group. This is a working group. We're not just evaluating.

Billy Atwell ([22:44](#)):

And there's a lot of work to get done.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:46](#)):

There's a lot of work to get done and I look forward to close to the hundred people who I'll be meeting with tonight to kind of say, let the games begin. We're ready to go.

Billy Atwell ([22:55](#)):

That's great. You'll have to give us a follow-up next time on how that goes. Bishop, this year on February 9, you and folks from around the Diocese are joining with Bishop Barry Knestout and the Diocese of Richmond and a special day of advocacy with Jeff Caruso who heads up the Virginia Catholic Conference for Defending Life Day. Talk a little bit about what this is and why you want people to come and attend in numbers.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:16](#)):

Yeah. Well, it was so great to be with so many of our young people and faithful throughout the Diocese, as we participated in the annual March for Life in D.C., which is a public witness to our belief and the sanctity of all human life. But we made that known on a national level, so we're very, very happy to do that. And we're called to be faithful citizens and continue to bring our faith into the public arena. But we've all heard the saying that politics is also local.

Billy Atwell ([23:52](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:53](#)):

So what's happening in our local and state government will have a critical impact on the lives of the most vulnerable. So that's why parishioners from both diocese are invited, but Diocese of Richmond, Diocese of Virginia to not only invited, but I'm really encouraging to come to Richmond on February 9. The day will include a day of prayer, both Bishop Knestout, and I will be present for that, offer some remarks, but it's also a day when they will be meeting with their state legislators, delegates and senators, urging them to support legislation and policies that uphold the dignity of every human life. And we will also have Mass that day, and so I think we'll get word out on that, about the schedule.

Billy Atwell ([24:39](#)):

Yeah. There's a full schedule available at vaprolifeday.org. There's a number of things going on. So even if you can't make it right away or you've got other things in the morning, there are things throughout that day, but it's really critical, especially in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Obviously we want to make an impact locally. We want our state laws to reflect our values, but people are watching Virginia, and

we've seen that over the last couple years. In in some eyes it's so goes Virginia, so goes the country. So the better impact we have locally, and the more impact we have with our local legislators, that maybe echoes in other states, that maybe has an impact in other areas. So the more numbers that turn out, the more impact we have. It goes beyond Virginia.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:19](#)):

Oh, it really does. You're right. And again, what we always say on how we are defenders and promoters, joyfully of the gospel of life is through prayer, through witness, but also what we're doing that day advocacy.

Billy Atwell ([25:31](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. So again, we implore you to please attend. At least go check out the website VA pro-life day.org to see the full schedule, you can register to attend. We hope to see you there. Bishop, you've got part of the Senate of Bishops, which I mentioned before is including different listening sessions that are going on throughout the diocese. You've begun those, you you've attended one, and you've spoken about this synodal process in previous episodes. When you go to these listening sessions and you get these feedback from priests, what are you hoping to learn?

Bishop Burbidge ([26:05](#)):

Well, first of all, I've done some listening sessions with various groups. I will be doing it at the men's conference and the women's conference with our women religious. We're also going to have listening sessions with our deacons, with ecumenical leaders, but also, I've asked every pastor in every parish to conduct a listening session. So every parishioner should be having that opportunity to participate. Now, I can't go to all 70, but I'm going to a number of parish listening sessions, which I began on Monday night. First of all, I was driving to the listening session on Monday night. Usually when I'm driving to a parish at night, I'm practicing my homily or my remarks or whatever. And I'm like, why am I so relaxed tonight? Because I don't have to say anything. It's like such a-

Billy Atwell ([26:50](#)):

There's usually a lot expected of you. Here you just got to listen.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:52](#)):

... a strange feeling. And that is really important for the pastor or myself that we're not asked, in fact, we're asked not to comment on what we hear. We're just encouraging for people to bring their voice and we are simply to listen, and then to summarize what we have heard, which eventually when we put all this together goes, I have to have a 10-page report that will eventually to the Holy See. And so it is really that of just listening, but there's a focus. It's not going to be productive unless there's a focus. And so the Holy See has given us a number of questions considered. We narrowed them down to six or seven that would be part of any listening session. And it there's a facilitator, so that facilitator has a tough job because if it's going to be productive and effective, we have to stay focused on what the questions are and also the time limit. So we're allowing suggested three minutes for each person to speak. If not, we're not going to hear from a wide variety of voices, nor will we get to all the questions. So the facilitator has the toughest job.

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

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([28:11](#)):

He has to kind of keep the line there, he or she. And so that's very important. But for example, the power session that I attended to the other night, there was a great turnout of people from various ages. There was no hesitation in people wanting to address the questions and I learned a great deal of what people were saying. One of the interesting themes that came up the other night, was that the church maybe has to do a better job in letting people know what we do. They say that sometimes when they speak with their friends or their colleagues or family members, they see us, the Church, only as what we're against. You're not to do this or you're not to do that or we're against this or that. And he said it would be so helpful for us to be able to talk about truth and beauty and goodness, for example. I mean, what a beautiful story we can tell about Catholic Charities and all the great works it does, providers of Catholic education, our presence to those in need and things like that. Sometimes that's the door that opens people to maybe eventually coming back to church or whatever.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:36](#)):

But that was just something that a number of people heard and I was very, very happy to hear that. And of course, as the Holy Father mentioned, we're asking parishioners if you know another parishioner or a neighbor or a family member maybe who has wandered away from the Church, maybe who's angry with the Church or whatever, invite them to come because the Holy Father just does not want to hear from those who are fully actively engaged, but it would also be helpful to know why people are not. And so in a sense, I encourage our parishioners maybe think about bringing someone with you and just say listen, you're going to be respected. You're free to talk. We're going to... respect should be the theme of the whole session. So people should speak respectfully. We should listen respectfully. But people should be free to see what they say. So these listening sessions are continuing throughout April, and I hope everyone has the opportunity to participate paid in their parish listening session.

Billy Atwell ([30:43](#)):

And I was pleasantly surprised in that first one that I attended on on Monday, that there are a number of people that got up that said, "I don't really practice the faith anymore." I was like, well, good. They heard about this and felt open to come and not just come and attend, but offer a question or offer a comment about what they think or concerns they have, those kinds of things. It's like that's good. So the intent of the Holy Father is being lived out here. We're seeing that actually happen, which was nice.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:06](#)):

Right. It was a dialogue. It was like we could talk to each other and be respectful, even though what maybe what we say was difficult to hear or maybe there was disagreement with other people in the room, but it was carried out in such a respectful tone. And that's what we should be doing as a church and as a country.

Billy Atwell ([31:27](#)):

That openness could be what brings them back.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:28](#)):

Yeah. Of course. Of course.

Billy Atwell ([31:29](#)):

Yeah, it's the first step maybe. All right. So I've got a pretty intense question for you here. You got to get yourself ready. All right. I know your beloved Eagles are not going to the Superbowl, but do you have any predictions here in this home stretch this last week?

Bishop Burbidge ([31:44](#)):

I know. I'll tell you, anyone who's a sports fan, may agree with me that this was probably the most exciting postseason that I've ever seen in the NFL. I mean, it seems like every game came down to the final play and it was like by three points or so.

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

Yeah An overtime kick or something.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:03](#)):

It was a great season, and I don't think anyone in the beginning of the year said in the Superbowl will be the Los Angeles Rams and the Cincinnati Bengals.

Billy Atwell ([32:12](#)):

Yeah. Not especially after last season.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:15](#)):

I kind of like that story of the Bengals. They were going into Kansas city as a big underdog. I mean, no one expected them to win. They were down by 18 points at one time. And I always think that there are lessons in sports that we can apply to our lives. Don't let anyone else tell you can't do this or you're the underdog, and don't give up. Sometimes there's a setback or something like that and it looks like it's, wow, how am I ever going to overcome that? I think there's lessons to be learned that we just pick ourselves up and try again and sometimes the outcome is what we have hoped for. So it's always fun watching. I'm not going to feel any great pressure watching the Superbowl because I don't have any real connection to the Bengals or to the Rams, but-

Billy Atwell ([33:16](#)):

Do you have prediction though?

Bishop Burbidge ([33:18](#)):

Yeah. I think the Rams are home, in their home stadium and I think that gives them a big advantage.

Billy Atwell ([33:24](#)):

All right. So you you're picking the Rams.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:26](#)):

Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([33:28](#)):

All right. We have a question from a parishioner here. Mike asks fellowship is an enjoyable part of my current college life in my school's Catholic campus ministry, but I feel like my prayer life is not as strong. What are some of the best ways to grow in faith at this point in life and how do we balance fellowship and prayer? That's a good question.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:47](#)):

Yeah. That's a very good question. And it does, I think it hits two key points. It's a very good question from Mike. There's a part of our spiritual lives that is between God and me, right? Like, so I have to have that time alone with God, that personal, that intimate relationship. And so I have to make time for that in my life. I have to create that space where it's just me and the Lord in quiet, in front of the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer. And so that relationship can only deepen. But the Lord never expected us to grow in discipleship and holiness all by ourselves. We are meant for communion. And so that fellowship that Mike was mentioning is also important, and we see that fellowship carried out in many ways in our diocese where people's prayer lives on college campuses, their growth and holiness, same thing in parishes, are supported with fellowship and communion, whether it be in, in a Bible study group, whether it be in small groups that many of our parishes are doing or service projects that are being offered.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:15](#)):

So I think Mike's hitting a good point that growth in the spiritual life is that balance, and neither one can be ignored. The personal and the fellowship. And I would say that so pleased in our parishes and in our campus ministries, that support, that fellowship is also part of what others can experience.

Billy Atwell ([35:40](#)):

Yeah. In each of the campus ministries you sort of get that sense. Bishop, any final thoughts? And if you would then send us off with you blessing.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:46](#)):

No. Just the fact, Billy, that we're recording this podcast on the presentation of the Lord. It's a beautiful day. We light candles on this day and it's a reminder to us. We bless candles on this day. A reminder to us that Jesus is the light that has conquered the darkness. So although we see evil and so much darkness in our midst, we're believers, we're faith that the light that we celebrated at Christmas has come into the world and has conquered the darkness. That's truth and His glory, we pray will be fully revealed to us as we meet him in heaven. But in the meantime, there's a journey that we're on. And our call now is to radiate His light, the light that has conquered darkness through the integrity of our lives, through the witness, through our practicing what we preach and through our own holiness. And so I even suggest light a candle today. Just be reminded that the light has conquered a darkness and that light has to be burning brightly in your life.

Bishop Burbidge ([36:58](#)):

And as you know, tomorrow we'll be blessing throats with the candles on the Feast of St. Blaise. We do pray for the, through his intercession, the healing of any ailment of the throat. But I always also think that the Feast of St. Blaise is a day also that asks for his intercession to help our speech. You know, that our speech is never bringing down others or insulting others or talking negatively about others. But our speech is used to lift up, to encourage and to console one another, and to avoid those trappings of gossiping and all those kind of things that are not helpful. So I think certainly you can pray for any,

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through his intercession, relief from any element of the throat, but also that my speech is seen as a gift in which I can uplift others.

Billy Atwell ([37:57](#)):

Very good.

Bishop Burbidge ([37:58](#)):

So I hope everyone continues to do well, continues to be safe and healthy. I pray for all of you, dear friends, and thank you for the prayers and support you offer to me. We pray together so that we may walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([38:14](#)):

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