

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

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

Billy Atwell ([00:08](#)):

Welcome to the Walk Humbly podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, chief communications officer for the Diocese and your co-host. I want to start off by thanking everyone who has given to this year's Bishop Lenten Appeal, and those who have given to previous Lenten Appeals. The funds that you provide support a lot of ministries throughout the Diocese, one of which is the communications office, in which we try to evangelize, and spread the Good News and help amplify the voice of our bishop, which obviously this podcast does. So thank you to those who have made this possible.

Billy Atwell ([00:35](#)):

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Bishop Burbidge ([01:20](#)):

I am doing well, Billy, thank you. We are doing our recording today on Mardi Gras. Nice celebration; I think people may be enjoying some good food today. Of course, all the calories are blessed away today.

Billy Atwell ([01:32](#)):

Of course, of course.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:37](#)):

It's also a day before Lent and so the beautiful reading at Mass today was, "be holy in every aspect of your conduct." So enjoy Mardi Gras, but it's not too early to begin to think, "What is it that needs to change in my life, with God's grace, to be holy in every aspect of my conduct?" And some good news last night by the way; I'm sure many of our listeners are aware of this. I was celebrating Confirmation. I have to admit, shortly after the time with the candidates and their families after Confirmation, I did go to check the score of the Paul VI High School basketball game, and saw the exciting news that Paul VI won the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference. I think it's the first time since 2014. By one point, 43-42. So it must have been such an exciting game. So congratulations to Coach Glen and his players and the Paul VI community. Looks like the fans were a big part of being there to support the team, and to the Paul VI community, I say it's a great accomplishment. So congratulations to them.

Billy Atwell ([02:49](#)):

And based on the picture in the Washington Post, it seemed like they had a pretty good time afterward.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:52](#)):

I can see that, yes.

Billy Atwell ([02:54](#)):

You can barely see the basketball court. Everyone's rushed it, so that's great.

Billy Atwell ([02:58](#)):

Well, Bishop, we have a few very serious topics to cover today. You ended your last podcast with a petition for prayer for the people of Ukraine and for a de-escalation of what seemed to be a potential invasion by Russia. Well, so much has happened since that time. Tragically, Russian forces have invaded Ukraine and working their way toward the capital. We've seen rockets hit apartment buildings and businesses, and so much death and destruction. Yesterday, the AP reported that Belarus was expecting to send troops into Ukraine, to fight alongside Russian forces. President Zelenskyy, of Ukraine agreed to talks with Russia in an attempt to bring about peace. Those began yesterday and continue today. Hopefully that will produce some fruit. Meanwhile, fighting is ongoing and Kyiv, the capital, is still at risk of falling. Bishop, how do you respond to all these developments that have happened since the last podcast?

Bishop Burbidge ([03:51](#)):

Well, I'm sure with all of our listeners, with just grave sadness and almost shock that we are actually witnessing in this day and age, such scenes of the horror of war, and seeing death and suffering, invasion and people just fearing for their lives. And it's devastating; it's crushing. And for all of us, it is a time. As our Holy Father Pope Francis has reminded us, at a time like this, we're not paralyzed, is what I tried to say in my homily yesterday, is that we have God's weapons, and from a distance we can be united in our prayer and fasting for these special intentions, that this sort of violence will come to a swift end, that consolation and strength would be found in the people in Ukraine and in their relatives and families throughout the world, so concerned about them. And that, as you mentioned, that our leaders will pursue peace and stability through diplomacy and be granted the wisdom of God.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:09](#)):

I was very, very inspired yesterday when we announced on Friday that we would be celebrating a Mass for peace in Ukraine at our cathedral yesterday, to see people from all of around our diocese gathered for that Mass. The cathedral was full.

Billy Atwell ([05:25](#)):

That turnout was really impressive. Again, you mentioned, we announced it on Friday. I didn't expect on Monday to see that kind of turnout.

Bishop Burbidge ([05:31](#)):

Right, and it was solemn, but we gathered as a people of faith. We know that the Lord, our Lord Jesus, is peace, the source of peace. And it's only in and through Him, it's only by putting away selfish ambition and the need for power, putting those things away and following the ways of God and His commands, that we will know peace. And so that's what unites us in our prayer. Tomorrow, on Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis has asked all of us to offer our prayers and fasting for these special intentions. And certainly something to continue to do throughout the sacred season of Lent. After Mass, there were a number of Ukrainian Catholics in our area who asked to speak with me.

Billy Atwell ([06:25](#)):

What was that like? What was the conversation like?

Bishop Burbidge ([06:27](#)):

It was so moving, and sad, because you see so many of the photos, but these were Ukrainian Catholics telling me about their siblings or their parents, who they were talking to the night before, who are right in the midst of that, seeking shelter and security. It becomes so real. It becomes so real. And so our prayers need to continue. And in our own lives, to make sure that in our own words and deeds, we're always trying to be an instrument of peace and unity and harmony as a witness and as an example. And sometimes we take the gift of freedom for granted. Sometimes we forget those in our own country who offered the ultimate sacrifice so that we could enjoy freedom. And you see the people in Ukraine right now, the courage of what they'll do just to hold on to their freedom. And we ask God's protection upon all of them, upon everyone involved in this situation, that we will come to our senses and that God will lead us to the peace that only He can give.

Billy Atwell ([07:48](#)):

Absolutely. One thing: people ask what they can do. Obviously you've employed them to pray and to fast. Another thing that happens each year is on Ash Wednesday, we have the collection for Central and Eastern Europe. And it's a tragic reminder that the reason that collection was set up was because it needed rebuilding from previous invasions and situations like this in war. And here we are again. And if one tangible way you can support everything from the refugee efforts to the practical need. Some of the Ukrainian Catholics you spoke to, I spoke to as well. And they're talking about, food is becoming short. Water is inconsistent. Basic things. And so humanitarian groups are trying to figure out ways to assist. That collection for Central and Eastern Europe, this is a special year. And really encourage everybody to please consider that when you go to Ash Wednesday Mass.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:32](#)):

Thank you, Billy, for mentioning that. That's a concrete way of offering help and support.

Billy Atwell ([08:36](#)):

And if you want to give online, usccb.org, you can go to link directly from there. Bishop, our friend at the Virginia Catholic Conference, Jeff Caruso, was always on the front lines, keeping an eye out for legislation. And he sent out an action alert recently about, not a state law, although last podcast we did discuss some state laws of concern, but the U.S. House of Representatives introduced what was referred to as "the most radical abortion bill ever." And I knew this was serious because Jeff, one, has seen every type of abortion legislation imaginable. He's been in this game for a while. And, two, he doesn't overstate the seriousness of a situation. He's very direct and clear. For those who are not on those VCC action alerts, which we encourage people to sign up for, provide an overview of this bill. And there was some update last night, if you can give us the update as well.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:22](#)):

Sure. And Jeff Caruso's our executive director of Virginia Catholic Conference and helps us to be vigilant in what the realities are right in our midst. And he did share dire news. The bill in question, as you mentioned, is deceptively named "Women's Health Protection Act." The good news last night is that the Senate voted this bill down. However, I hope our people are aware of the seriousness of this bill. It would've imposed an abortion on demand nationwide at any stage of pregnancy through a federal statute.

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

It's radical.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:00](#)):

It's radical. It would've eliminated modest, and widely supported on both sides, pro-life laws at every level of government: federal, state, and local. Types of laws that would have become illegal. These laws would become illegal. Parental notifications for minors, can you imagine?

Billy Atwell ([10:17](#)):

Unbelievable.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:17](#)):

Yeah. Informed consent. Health and safety protections for abortion facilities. With this one bill, all Americans would have been supporting abortion in the United States and globally with their tax dollars.

Billy Atwell ([10:32](#)):

And that's one of those issues that, polled time and time again, even some people who are pro-choice are not in support of tax dollars going to support this one particular thing.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:40](#)):

Exactly right. And it would've stripped away religious freedom from healthcare providers, I believe, and professionals who do not want to assist in or refer for abortions. It would've forced employers and insurers to pay for abortion. I thought I've seen it all, but this bill was worse than anything previously. And the reason I am providing, especially in this podcast with all the details, despite its failing in the Senate, is this is not the last time we will see bills that are this radical and anti-life. I implore you, really all listeners, please, to get the Virginia Catholic Conference, USCCB action alerts, that you can act. As soon as this kind of bill was introduced, you need swift responses, and they do make a difference. As I always encourage our listeners, please speak up. We need each person listening to contact your U.S. representatives and senators and tell them how much you oppose this kind of bill.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:39](#)):

Encourage them to vote in favor of the most vulnerable, the unborn going forward, and pray for your elected officials, that they are not misled, and for the grace and the wisdom that they need from God. Last night, Bishop Knestout and I issued a statement, and we also expressed our disappointment that Virginia's two United States senators voted in favor of moving forward with this radical legislation. So with firm resolve, we call on them, our senators in Virginia, and on all in Congress who continue to promote extreme abortion measures to reverse your course, to redirect your focus toward policies that fully recognize and support both mothers and their children. And please dear friends, join me in this very, very serious advocacy and prayer.

Billy Atwell ([12:34](#)):

Yeah. I want to provide a little context for people about the USCCB and the VCC, that's Virginia Catholic Conference, action alerts. Sometimes Jeff will alert us that, hey, this bill just moved forward, because you don't know the timing of these things sometimes. This just passed through the House; the Senate's going to hear it tomorrow, right?

Bishop Burbidge ([12:50](#)):

Sometimes it's that fast.

Billy Atwell ([12:51](#)):

Yeah. So being on those action alerts is critical. Because he can send out an alert, you get it via email, and in two minutes you can send a message to both of your senators, or to your representative in the House or whoever it is that needs to see it. And obviously in state legislature works similar, the same way. The speed is critical. And if they suddenly get... If they know this bill's coming up and they suddenly get 50 emails from people saying "do not support this," that means something. That has a value. And that would be a low number. Usually these action alerts turn out much larger numbers than that. But it gives them pause to think about, should we delay this, and that gives us time to work. Those emails are so critical, and they have to be fast.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:28](#)):

They have to be fast, and it's not by accident that they are all of a sudden going through quickly. It's a strategy. So if we're not vigilant, we're going to miss the opportunity to be the voice for the unborn and for those who need our support.

Billy Atwell ([13:41](#)):

Yeah. So for the USCCB action alerts, and they deal with the national federal issues, usccb.org/take-action, and go to vacatholic.org to sign up for the Virginia Catholic Conference alerts that deals with state issues. It's so critical. So thank you for all who have signed up, but if you haven't, please consider signing up.

Billy Atwell ([14:02](#)):

Bishop, this year we're moving quickly. Tomorrow begins the Lenten season. I'm stunned. I feel like we just had New Years a couple days ago, but here we are, approaching Ash Wednesday. For those who are as equally surprised as I am and feel almost ambushed by it, what advice do you have for Catholics who are preparing for Lent and feel maybe like they're not quite ready for it?

Bishop Burbidge ([14:22](#)):

Right. And just to see, we in our Catholic faith can often refer to this as a joyful season, because it's grace-filled. It opens us to radical transformation and conversion in our lives as we make this journey for the celebration of our Lord's resurrection, and provides so many beautiful opportunities for us to grow in holiness. And the practices that we highlight, of course, are time tested. They work. And that's fervent prayer, fasting. Fasting, reminding us that the things of this world are never enough, will never satisfy our spiritual hunger and thirst. So that fasting reminds us that, and whatever we're willing to give up, God will fill with the gifts and the spiritual blessings that we need. And almsgiving, that support of people in need. And as I always say, here in the Diocese of Arlington, our faithful are so, so great in being very mindful of how their support of the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, or the Catholic Charities, or many other charitable works. They're so generous in helping people. But even in your own home, how you can be more of service to those you love, and be more available to them.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:55](#)):

So prayer, fasting, almsgiving. I always suggest that it's really a good idea to begin the season of Lent with a good confession. You don't have to wait till the end of Lent. Why not begin in the beginning? Get rid of any of those sins, or any feeling of guilt or shame that's weighing you down so that your heart is open to the new blessings and graces that God will no doubt bestow upon you throughout this Lenten season.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:26](#)):

And many times we start the season of Lent with firm resolve. "I'm going to do this, I'm going to do this. I'm giving up this. I'm not going to do this." And that's good. We want determination. We want to be intentional. But, realize that you can only do that with God's grace and God's help. And do it day by day. I always say, don't look at this as 40 days in a sense of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, but, "How am I doing this Lenten day? Have I improved? Have I grown? Have I taken a step forward in my relationship with the Lord?" So day by day, with a sense of humility, that I can only do this with God's grace. I am weak. To acknowledge that is a spiritual gift, because then you realize how dependent you are upon the Lord's grace.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:21](#)):

So I hope and pray, everyone, that this is a time of many blessings for you, that you deepen your relationship with the Lord, that you turn away from sin and embrace the ways of God, for in doing so, we do find our peace. If at all possible, consider, maybe, even if it's one day during the week, to attend Mass. I know many people during Lent make a promise to attend every day. That's great. But maybe you can do one day, but anything you do offered for the Lord's glory and in your desire to grow closer to Him, God will receive, and it will never be in vain.

Billy Atwell ([18:04](#)):

That's wonderful. We have a couple questions from the faithful here. The first says, "I've heard of people getting Anointing of the Sick before surgery, or for those on their deathbed. I also hear about people getting 'last rites.' What's the difference between those, if any?"

Bishop Burbidge ([18:19](#)):

Yeah. What a beautiful sacrament to celebrate. The Anointing of the Sick is given to those whose illness has put them in danger, even if death is not imminent, that it's a significant illness. Very often before surgeries to address such illness, people are anointed. The anointing is to unite them more closely to our Lord so that their souls are strengthened in the face of physical suffering. The anointing also helps them unite their suffering with His and enter into the mystery of redemptive suffering. In other words, when our sufferings, our crosses, are united to the Lord's, as I just said previously, that's not in vain. I often say, when you are suffering physically, and you do so in faith and united to Christ, how much holier can you be? It's like being on the cross with Jesus. And that's what we mean by redemptive suffering, which will always lead to glory.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:22](#)):

'Last rites' is a phrase, Billy, that describes when the Sacraments are given specifically to those who are at the point of death. So it involves not only Anointing, but also Confession, Communion, which in these situations is often called 'viaticum,' food for the journey, and the Apostolic Pardon that brings the remission of all punishment for sin. It also involves specific prayers for the dying. I'm sure many of our listeners have been there when this has been celebrated. It is a ceremony that's beautiful and moving.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:01](#)):

I know when my own dear parents were at that time, we were entrusting them to the Lord. And that ceremony just brought such comfort and consolation. And I'm sure many of our parishioners can say the same. So Anointing of the Sick should be sought by any whose illness has put them in danger. For those who are approaching death, one of the best things the faithful can do is call priests and visit them. Our priests, let them know. Let them know, and they'll be there to help you. And even when the doctors say, "There's nothing more to be done," the priest room enters the room and brings something even greater, the promise of eternal life.

Billy Atwell ([20:39](#)):

That's wonderful. All right, the next question is, "With the violence in Ukraine, I wonder where all the refugees will go. We took in refugees after the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. Are we preparing to take in Ukrainian refugees as well?"

Bishop Burbidge ([20:52](#)):

Well, you're right. Since the invasion of Ukraine, as we've seen reported, tens of thousands of Ukrainians, mostly women and children--because many of the men 18 to 60 have to stay--have fled to Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia. Our Church, as you know, has a long history of aiding and resettling refugees, and it's no different in this case. International and local Catholic agencies in and around Ukraine are actively assisting displaced families through Catholic Relief Services and Caritas. Here at home, our Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services in partnership with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has resettled refugees for decades.

Billy Atwell ([21:30](#)):

Yeah. We've talked about this in the past on the podcast.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:33](#)):

And our Diocese of Arlington has just done that from the beginning. Should be so proud of those who have gone before us, especially who have participated in that ministry. Even since the fall of Afghanistan last summer, Catholic Charities has resettled more than 800 Afghans, mostly Special Immigrant Visa holders and parolees who had supported the U.S. operations from Afghanistan. So United States administration has said that the United States is prepared to accept Ukrainian refugees, and if Ukrainian refugees eventually are brought to United States, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington might have a role in that resettlement. However, what we're being told now, at least, it's more likely that refugees will be resettled in countries neighboring Ukraine initially. But any possible resettlement in the United States is not considered likely to occur in the immediate future. But again, we stand ready.

Billy Atwell ([22:32](#)):

Yeah, we will see. Bishop, we've covered some serious topics here, and you're preparing for Lent. Any final thoughts? And then if you would send us off with your prayers as well.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:40](#)):

No, just that, again, we are one family, God's holy family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. And our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, especially at this time, are in need of our help and our prayers. And I know all the faithful are united in offering those prayers. And also my prayers for all of you, dear friends,

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that this Lenten season is a time of many graces and blessings for you. Trust in God's infinite mercy. He wants you to be freed from your sins, from any way of behaving that is not of God. He wants you to start anew, to become a new creation in Christ, and to be ready and prepared to celebrate with great joy His Resurrection. So may this sacred season of Lent be a time of spiritual conversion and transformation, a time of peace, and a time of tranquility for you, a time that you deepen your relationship with the Lord. So, many blessings to you and your families. Stay safe and healthy, happy, and holy as together, we walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:47](#)):

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