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Audio ([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 take a second here to thank those who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal in the past, including this past year. There are a lot of ministries and offices that are served by the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, but one of them is the Communications Office. So this podcast is made possible because of your generosity. So thank you so much.

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

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Billy Atwell ([01:06](#)):

We've got a number of good topics for you today. Back to school is upon us. We're going to talk about the Traditional Latin Mass announcement from a couple weeks ago. And there's been a crackdown on the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, so we're going to speak about that. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how're you doing?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:21](#)):

Billy, I'm doing well. I'm doing real well. I hope all of our listeners are doing well. It's hard to believe that summer is coming to an end and we start back to school, as you mentioned in the opening there, many, many schools next week. And so back to reality. So I hope our families had a chance to have some quality time together this summer, maybe a chance for some renewal and refreshment that it enables us to do the work that God has entrusted to us.

Billy Atwell ([01:50](#)):

Absolutely. Thank you. And you've got a column upcoming here for the Herald on leisure and how to refresh yourself and to renew yourself. So that message, I think, pairs well with what you've got coming up in the Herald here.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:01](#)):

And it's interesting. I'm sure some people say, "Why is he writing about leisure in August?" But leisure, as we know, and St. Benedict's always taught us about, that healthy balance of work and leisure are very, very important in our lives. And through both of them, through both of them, we give glory to God. And so I thought that it was a good opportunity, summer, in a sense, the official vacation time, in one sense comes to a conclusion. Don't forget that what we mean by leisure, healthy leisure, in the life of a follower of Christ, that at all moments we are to be refreshed, and renewed, and recreated so that we can always do the work God has given to us and live out our vocation, so.

Billy Atwell ([02:50](#)):

And in that column, you give great principles for how to do this. I encourage people to go to the Arlington Catholic Herald website and check that out. But you mentioned school. Parents are busy. They're getting school supplies. They're getting physicals for sports. And they're preparing for the morning rush and packing lunches, all those things. You're a pastor to the faithful here, what do you hope for parents and families as they prepare for this next school year?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:11](#)):

It always does bring back memories, though. I remember as a kid, the first time during the summer you saw one of those back-to-school commercials on TV, you went, "No, no! [inaudible 00:03:23]."

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

Immediate panic!

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

So it is a lot. It's a lot of work for our parents. And emotions, I think of the parents who are first time sending their kids to school for a full day. There's emotion there. Parents who are sending their children off to college, maybe it's for the first time that their children are leaving home. And so I know their parents go through a lot of emotions. There's a lot of work involved. But it's parents, we know, who are the first teachers of their children, in all aspects, especially in faith. And they make very important decisions to whom they entrust their children throughout a school day to be their partner. So I am praying for all of our parents. I have a great opportunity to begin our school year here in the Diocese of Arlington next week, by offering a mass for all the Catholic educators in our diocese, all of our Catholic educators. What a great opportunity to celebrate mass for them. What a great way to begin the year.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:29](#)):

And I hope I enable, through the Holy Spirit, to offer them words of encouragement, inspiration, but certainly thanks for the beautiful way they live out their vocation and partner with our parents. And I'll meet with our religious educators the following week. And then I offer mass of the Holy Spirit at our four Catholic high schools. Also, privileged to do so at our colleges and universities. It's always a great joy to offer mass of the Holy Spirit at Christendom, at Marymount, at Mary Washington, at George Mason, and also this year at the Catholic University of America. So it's a great privilege to be able, at the beginning of academic year, through the mass of the Holy Spirit, to speak to our students, to our Catholic educators and praying to God that they will grow and in truth and wisdom.

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

And remembering our schools are not just forming them in excellence in education, which is a priority, but pray God, through our schools, through our homeschooling, through our religious education, that we really are forming disciples, disciples in Christ. And helping them to grow in their relationship with the Lord and giving them the tools to live out their faith in the world that sometimes reject what we believe. So thoughts and prayers are with our parents and our students. And students, remember, I say this every year, each new academic year is a new beginning. That's what God gives us, a new beginning. So if you made some mistakes or maybe you weren't at your best last year, God gives you a whole new year to begin anew. And he has new blessings waiting for you. So approach it with that sense of joy and excitement.

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Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:17](#)):

And I did mention our homeschool families and ever grateful to them for their witness. And just a reminder, I celebrate mass for our homeschool families in the fall and spring. And that mass in the fall is Friday, October 28th. So I hope many of our homeschool families will be able to join us. Our seminarians, Billy, are also returning.

Billy Atwell ([06:37](#)):

Oh, okay!

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:40](#)):

And we have 12. I'm, in fact, having lunch with them later today. 12 new seminarians. So thank you, dear friends in Arlington for your prayers, for vocations, and family life and certainly, the example of our priests, who inspire [inaudible 00:06:53].

Billy Atwell ([06:53](#)):

And are most of them from here in the diocese?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:55](#)):

Yeah, mm-hmm.

Billy Atwell ([06:55](#)):

Wow. That's wonderful.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:57](#)):

Isn't that great?

Billy Atwell ([06:57](#)):

That is great.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:57](#)):

Great news. After ordaining nine, so this is good!

Billy Atwell ([07:01](#)):

You're on a roll here. Very good.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:04](#)):

And if I could, Billy, there's lots of good news, if we can stay on this topic just for a second.

Billy Atwell ([07:09](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:11](#)):

To celebrate in our schools, we're celebrating the 25th anniversary of the founding St. Mary of Sorrow's Preschool, the 25th anniversary of the founding of Holy Family School and the hundredth anniversary of the founding Linton Hall School. And so I'll be at the schools in the fall for celebrations. Enrollment in our Catholic schools is strong, up for the second year in a row.

Billy Atwell ([07:33](#)):

That's wonderful.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:34](#)):

Isn't that great?

Billy Atwell ([07:34](#)):

That's really good to see.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:35](#)):

A total enrollment increase of nearly 10% since the end of 2021 school year, which is a recognition of how great our teachers have been, especially through these challenging times. And we're blessed to have priests in all four of our high schools and our Catholic Campus Ministry programs. And some new developments in a couple of our schools, a dual language Spanish Immersion Program is beginning of St. Ambrose's in Annandale, starting with kindergarten class.

Billy Atwell ([08:07](#)):

That's really interesting. I thought that was interesting, because it made me think of how you had said that our seminarians, you expect them to learn Spanish so they can serve the Spanish population here in the diocese. And to see the first dual language Spanish Immersion Program at St. Ambrose, that followed hand-in-hand with what you were saying.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:24](#)):

And that's when you learn. They always say, the experts say, "You learn the younger you are."

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

Don't wait until you're my age, that's for sure.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:29](#)):

Yeah, exactly. And then the Fully Virtual Program housed within Queen of the Apostles School, which used to be the... We started the St. Isadore Program during COVID. It continues to garner interest from families, not only in our diocese, but often military and other government families, who've been in our schools and then transfer temporarily out of the area. And Catholic education is a big part of our strategic plan. And one of the major goals that has surfaced over and over and over again, which means it's going to be one of our top priorities, is how do we make Catholic education more affordable, more accessible to more of the population here in the diocese? And we have working groups working on all these pillars that are part of our strategic plan. And they're coming up with some really good recommendations. And so, pray God, that is not a plan, but one that we can execute.

Billy Atwell ([09:26](#)):

Perfect. Thank you. Bishop, for those who attend the Traditional Latin Mass, you made a big announcement, a much anticipated one, just over a week ago. And you had forecasted that it would be coming. This is something we've discussed on the podcast a number of times. All bishops had to provide an instruction on how they would locally implement Pope Francis' motu proprio Traditionis Custodes, and his Responsa ad Dubia, which offered clarifications to questions that arose. Now that we're just over a week since that announcement, what are your overall thoughts?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:54](#)):

And number one, first of all, it is my hope that the faithful in the diocese understood that we really took our time with this process to do what we set out to do. Don't forget the motu proprio was a year ago. And then the responsa that you talked about was in December. And it did say effective immediately. So the Holy See was very patient, I think, with bishops saying, "Well, we need more time to get a better understanding of the use of the extraordinary form, Traditional Latin Mass, in our diocese, to hear from the faithful, to hear from their pastors, to read both documents." As I said, from the beginning, we will show fidelity and loyalty to the holy father and to his directives. That's who we are as Catholics. That's what I promised when I accepted to be a Bishop. And so that was always the key.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:59](#)):

And also, to be, as the motu proprio and responsa allows, to be mindful of those who find spiritual nourishment in the Traditional Latin Mass. And so I think with the help of a great advisory committee, a good delegate, Father Bjorn Lundberg, through many listening sessions and lots of emails and letters throughout all this time and most, especially through prayerful discernment, it became time to implement our diocesan plan. And I know that's change. And it's not always easy when there's change. But I think we arrived at a place where I was able to announce that on any given Sunday the Traditional Latin Mass will be offered in eight locations throughout this diocese. And we did it in a way geographically, so that for those who are spiritually nourished by the celebration, I don't believe there's a hardship for anyone to get to one of those locations.

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

Now, what some people have misunderstood, even those who in the media who reported in our implementation plan, is that some of what you see in our implementation plan is right, directly from the motu proprio or the responsa. In other words, some said, "Bishop Burbidge, did..." No. This is what we received worldwide after the holy father consulted with every Bishop throughout the world.

Billy Atwell ([12:45](#)):

Right. And you have footnotes in the document pointing to exactly which document it's referencing. Your policy shows where those come from.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([12:51](#)):

Right. And so one of those things were that where the Traditional Latin Mass would continue, it would not be in the church. It would be moved to another location. That is what the holy father asked. But he did allow room in special, special circumstances where for extraordinary reasons, there was no other option for the Bishop to request that in certain churches, could we continue in the church? I requested three, in my dialogue and consultation, which was a little bit beyond, I think, what was the initial intention. But the Holy See was very gracious and granted us three churches. Again, geographically in different regions where it also, the Traditional Latin Mass, can continue within the church.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:50](#)):

So we have eight locations on any given Sunday. And priests, any priest, who has that ability and has been celebrating Traditional Latin Mass, even if it's not one of the eight locations, now, all he has to do is request that faculty from me to continue to do so privately, or as we need him to make sure that all those eight locations are covered.

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

And when we say private mass, you mean mass in kind of the rectory chapel or something like that?

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

Right. Yeah. But then also, publicly, because there's eight locations, a priest may be on vacation. But we're fortunate that we have priests who have learned to celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass and provide for the people. Well, we're going to call upon them to make sure that those masses are covered. So any priest who was ordained prior to the motu proprio who requests that faculty, I told him just do his ask, write for the permission, the faculty. And I will give that to you, in the locations that have been identified in our implementation plan. So I think we accomplished our goals of showing fidelity to the holy father, to the Holy See, and also mindful that we are still providing the celebration of this mass throughout our diocese.

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

I do want to thank my priests, who have been extremely supportive through this. They know this has been a difficult process in trying to balance everything that we have to balance. Had a Zoom call a couple of times, even before the announcement of this implementation plan. Of course, I know there's disappointment. I know there's maybe disagreement. But I have to say, I'm so grateful to my priests. But that's who they are, too. They promise respect and obedience. And it's so wonderful to see that, especially at a time where there is maybe again, as I said, change brings its own trials. I would like to thank those in the diocese who have written to me and expressed their prayers and support, knowing that this is not that easy for any Bishop or any diocese at this time, because it's change. It's transitioned.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([16:18](#)):

I do maybe offer a respectful challenge, as a spiritual father, that sometimes when there is there's change or something we don't like, or we disagree with, there are two paths that we can follow. And one is that of anger, and writing, or calling, or emailing without really thinking of the weight of the words that became somewhat hurtful. Not only to me, but to my staff, who had to read such a tone. But the other path that we see, and we've all experienced this in life, when something happens that we disagree with, and whether it's in our workplace, or superior, in military, in the church, as long as we're not asked to violate our conscience, of course, I'm not talking about matters like that.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([17:20](#)):

But a style or a decision, the other path, instead of being angry and bitter, is to say, "Wow, the Lord's given me an opportunity to grow in holiness, because I'm letting go of my will here. I'm trusting that the Lord is at work in his church, that the Holy Spirit's guiding its church. It's not what I would do if I was the Pope. It's not what I would do if I was the Bishop. But I'm a faithful follower Christ. And I trust that he is acting always through his church. His spirit is guiding us." And sometimes giving into that will takes away any bitterness. And it leads us, our own lives into a sense of peace. And then we can be part of that

unity that is so much needed in our church. Always wanting to be that source of unity. That's why I concluded our implementation plan with the words, may we pray together that the Holy Spirit will always enliven us through the beauty of the sacred liturgy with the grace and the mercy of our Lord.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:36](#)):

And just a final word, just as a guidance, I would always suggest that people read the documents, read the motu proprio, read the responsa. And also read the most recent apostolic letter of the holy father to the Bishop's priests, deacons, consecrate men and women, and lay faithful on the liturgical formation of the people of God. It is really a beautiful apostolic letter.

Billy Atwell ([19:03](#)):

It is. It really is.

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

It really, really is. And I think it comes at a good time. And you know what the holy father, basically, is saying, that first of all, the Eucharist is a source of unity. The mass is a holy sacrifice, where Christ is truly present to us. And do what the church asks. And do it beautifully. And do it faithfully. Whenever we do what the church asks, as the church asks, it's just so beautiful. And many of the aspects of the Traditional Latin Mass are certainly incorporated into the ordinary form, the Novus Ordo. And our priests have a great reputation in the diocese of really saying the mass beautifully, celebrating the mass beautifully, paying attention to the details, the way the church looks, the vestments, the music. And so have to celebrate the sacred. And the holy father goes to great length in this document. So I think it's a good document for people to read.

Billy Atwell ([20:10](#)):

Absolutely, Bishop. Thank you for that.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:12](#)):

Thank you, Billy. I know. I went on for a while there.

Billy Atwell ([20:15](#)):

No, no, it's worthwhile. It's an important topic.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:17](#)):

Yeah. And there's an article coming up in the Arlington Catholic Herald that I think gives a really beautiful summary. I hope people get a chance to read that.

Billy Atwell ([20:26](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. Bishop, there's a situation that Nicaragua that I think needs a little bit more attention. There are some articles about that in Catholic media and so on. But it was really fascinating. I wanted to get your take on it. Nicaraguan police have forcibly shut down at least five Catholic radio stations, which were a key communications tool of the Diocese of Matagalpa. On August 1st police broke into Divine Mercy Parish. And that raid was actually captured on the parish's livestream broadcast, as was a separate raid on Infant Jesus of Prague Chapel there. Bishop Ronaldo Álvarez has been a very critical

voice against the government there and the country's telecommunications regulatory agency, which is kind of the banner under which they did this raid.

Billy Atwell ([21:07](#)):

Bishop Álvarez is also in charge of the communications initiatives of the Nicaragua Bishops Conference, a similar role that you held here in the US not long ago. And he said that what the government wants, "is a mute church that doesn't denounce the hope of the people and doesn't denounce personal sin and structures of injustice." That was a quote taken from Catholic News Agency. You've spoken many times about issues related to free speech and religious liberty, overreach of government. When you hear news like this, what comes to mind for you?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:38](#)):

Well, first of all, great respect and admiration for the courageous and heroic and faithful witness of Bishop Álvarez. How providential we're talking about this as we record this on the Feast of Saint Lawrence, deacon and martyr, someone who gave his life for his faith.

Billy Atwell ([21:57](#)):

And he's under house arrest right now, actually. I just read that last night, that Bishop Álvarez-

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

Oh, yeah. Yes. Yeah. And so, I mean, just a source of inspiration, his courage and all those things. And no matter what problems we face here in the United States as significant, and they are significant, as they may be, I'm grateful that we are not facing these horrific situations that you just outlined. But what a warning to all of us, in whatever country we live, ignoring religious freedom can lead to a slippery slope. One step at a time, a nation can, Billy, lose its rights and its integrity in the allure of something else. The cost is high. And that's why we always say, and we cannot take it lightly, that is why we must pray, and act, and advocate for our freedoms here and not ever be forced to violate our conscience and our deeply-rooted moral beliefs and convictions.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:58](#)):

God bless, Bishop Álvarez. We're certainly keeping him and all his faithful in our prayers. We look at his situation as a warning to be vigilant here in the United States, especially as we continue the battle to defend the unborn and the sacredness of all human life and not to be compromised. We're going to pay a price for it. No doubt about it. We're going to have to suffer and be persecuted, even for that right now, as we move forward. But let's remain strong. It's the greatest of freedoms, the religious freedoms, to be the person that God has created us to be. So, certainly, praying for Bishop Álvarez and all those entrusted to his care.

Billy Atwell ([23:43](#)):

Wonderful. Thank you, Bishop. A couple of questions from the faithful here. Last summer you mentioned some good movies you saw with friends on a trip you took. Did you see any good movies this summer?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:52](#)):

Yeah, I did. I like going to movies, especially in the summer where things are just a little lighter. So, like many others, I saw Maverick. It was one of those things you had to see. I rented it the night before, the original Top Gun. And it's like, remembered what a classic that is. I saw Father Stu, the true story, Father Stu. It was a powerful movie, a great example of perseverance. And I wish the language was toned down a little bit. But that was a good movie. And I have to admit, Billy, my family, maybe my priest friends will give me a hard time with this one, but they should not because it was a great movie. I also saw Elvis.

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

Oh! That one's a surprise to me! [inaudible 00:24:38].

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([24:38](#)):

No, I like that kind of music. I was in Memphis and all those kind of things a couple years ago. I really liked it. The actor is just, I think his name is Austin Butler. I think the actor who performs him, I mean, he is just absolutely incredible Elvis. But it was a dark movie in many ways. You see a man with so many gifts and talents and yet with some not good influences in his life and some bad decisions. Just all that crumbles so quickly. It's a reminder to all of us that the gifts that we have are meant to be used to give glory to God, to bring joy to others. And as Jesus warns, the more gifts we have, the more talents, the more riches, all those things, the more vigilant we have to be. But no, I actually enjoyed that movie.

Billy Atwell ([25:32](#)):

Oh, very good.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:33](#)):

It's a long movie, though, I got to tell you.

Billy Atwell ([25:35](#)):

Very good. All right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:38](#)):

The other thing, too, I always do every summer is All Saints does a musical production, All Saints in Manassas.

Billy Atwell ([25:45](#)):

Oh, yeah. The Upper Room Theater, I think?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:47](#)):

Yes, the Upper Room Theater. And all the money they raise goes to youth ministry. I think the same thing at Nativity. But I was able to see All Saints production of West Side Story.

Billy Atwell ([25:59](#)):

Oh, wow. Talk about a classic!

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:01](#)):

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It was tremendous. I really just commend and thank all those who participated and worked behind the scenes to bring such a timely message in such a beautiful way, but a classic. So that was really fun.

Billy Atwell ([26:18](#)):

I've seen some of their performances, plays and so on, at our high schools.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:22](#)):

They're great!

Billy Atwell ([26:22](#)):

And I always feel like I'm sitting at the Kennedy Center.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:24](#)):

I know. I know.

Billy Atwell ([26:25](#)):

The acting is so impressive. You don't think they are high school students. Some of them are even freshmen and sophomores. They don't act like it, though.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:31](#)):

I often go back to them afterwards and say, "Now, when you go to Broadway, I don't have to pay for my ticket, right dude? You're going to get me there."

Billy Atwell ([26:36](#)):

Don't forget us little people.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:37](#)):

There's such talent there. Oh, my goodness.

Billy Atwell ([26:40](#)):

All right. The next question is, have you ever gone on any pilgrimages, let's say, to the Holy Land, Assisi, Fatima or Lourdes? And if so, what were the highlights?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:46](#)):

Oh, yeah. One of my greatest pilgrimages was the Holy Land, shortly after I was ordained a priest, about four or five years after I was ordained as a priest. And it was with just priests. And a scripture scholar was our director. Anyone I know, even some people here, in our staff here, have been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, you're never the same after that. You never read the Bible the same. You have such a deeper appreciation and understanding. That was a beautiful pilgrimage. And yes, I've been blessed to go to Assisi, which is a beautiful pilgrimage. And I've been to Lourdes. Pilgrimages are beautiful. It reminds us that we're on a journey. This is a pilgrimage, it's a earthly pilgrimage, leading us to heaven, God willing, with the help of the saints and those who have gone before us.

Billy Atwell ([27:47](#)):

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Wonderful. Thank you for that. Bishop, any final thoughts? And then if you would send us off with your blessing.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([27:54](#)):

No, just again, just thanking everyone in our diocese for your prayers, especially at this time in the life of our nation and the life of our church. That we offer strong, courageous and faithful witness to who we are and what we believe. And that we also give witness of unity within our church, which is what the Lord asks of us. And praying for all of you, especially my young friends, as you begin new academic years, that you will grow in truth, and wisdom, and your love of God and one another. And that together we will walk humbly with our God.

Audio ([28:32](#)):

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