

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

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

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

Podcasting from the St. Clare Studio in the Diocese of Arlington, welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast. My name is Billy Atwell. I'm the chief communications officer for the Diocese, and your co-host. We want to give a shout-out and a big thank you to all those who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. You make so many ministries in the Diocese possible - critical ministries - but you also, through that collection, you also provide for the Communications Office and the studio that we're recording from. So we want to say thank you. If you haven't yet, please rate this podcast or write a review, wherever you're listening. And if you're listening through YouTube, please subscribe to our YouTube channel and ring that notifications bell so you can be updated on all the latest content posted there. Sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org and you can follow Bishop Burbidge on social media.

([00:52](#)):

He's on Twitter @BishopBurbidge, where he provides a short Gospel reflection for that day, and he's also on Instagram @bishopmichaelburbidge. Follow the Diocese on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as well. If you have a question for Bishop Burbidge, send it to info@arlingtondiocese.org or send us a message on social media. Before we bring in Bishop Burbidge, there's a couple really big events coming up that I want to make sure everyone's aware of. The first is CALLED, it's a conference for young adults, it's going to be on Saturday, September 23rd. Bishop Burbidge is inviting young adults - this is people aged 19 to 35, single and married from parishes across the Diocese - to this conference. It's going to include our annual Mass for young adults, but also inspirational keynotes from Mr. Sam Goodwin, who was trapped in Syria's notoriously brutal prison system. The day will also include breakout sessions, dinner, prayer, live music, vendors, all kinds of great stuff. Great fellowship and social opportunities as well there.

([01:49](#)):

That's going to be at the Sheraton Reston Hotel. Again, that's Saturday, September 23rd. Please register online by August 31st. There is still time to take advantage of the early bird pricing. Next is for everybody. It's the diocesan pilgrimage to Emmitsburg, Maryland. It's on Saturday, October 7th. That's the Feast of our Lady of the Rosary, very fitting. You're going to be joining Bishop Burbidge on a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, Maryland. We're so blessed to have those so close to our diocese. So that's where this pilgrimage is going to be going. Those are actually two separate sites, so there's a short six-minute drive between them. You provide your own transportation, but a lot of parishes are coordinating vans and carpools or buses, even. So contact your parish to see if you can hop on with them.

([02:39](#)):

There's going to be a lot going on that day. Eucharistic Adoration, Mass - there's going to be picnic opportunities. It's kind of like a "bring your own lunch" situation, but there's wonderful grounds there to have a wonderful picnic with your family or with friends. So again, we encourage you to join us on Saturday, October 7th. Go to our website to learn more about that. For today's topics on the podcast, we're going to talk about public schools, sadly rejecting parental rights, multicultural representation at the Cathedral, the World Day for Creation is coming up, as well as Labor Day. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

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

Billy, I am doing well. Again, I think we are kind of back in full gear now. I just yesterday had the great privilege of celebrating Mass for all the Catholic educators in our diocese. How inspiring to see all our Catholic teachers and administrators beginning the year with Mass and in prayer. There was so much joy, faithfulness, zeal represented and asking God to bless them in their initiatives as they assist parents in the faith formation, intellectual formation of their children - later in the day I visited as well, with our directors of religious education. So many of our students who do not go to Catholic schools benefit greatly from our parish religious formation programs, and met with the DREs well. But there's something about school starting anew, that it says, "Yep, we're back." It used to be after Labor Day, but now we started a little bit earlier.

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

That's right.

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

And certainly we're mindful of all of our homeschool families, asking God's blessings upon them as well.

Billy Atwell ([04:10](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah, it's definitely an important benchmark in the year. Before we get into our main topics, I wanted to ask you, you have placed a large focus on mental health issues, and this is in part because of what you saw with our students coming back from COVID, some of the challenges that they were facing, that they were confiding in you about and letting you know - this is where they were suffering. And so you're going to be celebrating a Mass for the Day of Prayer for Mental Health at All Saints Parish on August 26th. And this is open to people in the Diocese, anyone who is either struggling with mental health issues or knows someone who is and wants to pray for them. This is open to the public. Again, it's All Saints Parish on August 26th. Why is this issue so important to you?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:50](#)):

Well, because of the reality that you mentioned. Who of us do not know someone even in our own families or maybe ourselves who are struggling with significant mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, and even, sadly, despair, loneliness, for some? We know that certainly COVID had a great impact, not only on our young people, but on people of every age. And this world with all of its challenges and pressures and demands can be overwhelming. And so we recognize that the whole person - we're body, we're soul, we're spirit, and mental health is part of who we are, and we know that people are struggling. So first of all, we want people to be able to acknowledge that, to talk about it. Before, in a different culture at a different time, it was almost something you didn't raise. But I think that for any healing ever to take place in the life of an individual or even throughout the culture, has to be the acknowledgement that this is real.

([06:02](#)):

It's nothing to be embarrassed about, it's nothing to be ashamed about. It impacts us just like physical ailments do. But I like - this is a conference. There's skills to learn. We have good speakers. There's coping skills. There's ways that we can progress and deal with the situation and help others. But most importantly, this is a day, as you mentioned, of prayer. We know that the Lord heals us. He wants to relieve our anxiety, our distress, and he wants us to express our belief in his power to do so. It's also a reminder that we're in this together, that we're in this, everyone is part of this body of Christ, helping each other to move forward with a healthy balance, a joyful life. So it's a day of certainly intellectual

formation on this issue, but rooted in the spiritual formation, knowing that, ultimately, the one who heals is our Lord Jesus, who knows us, who knows us well and wants to embrace us in his love.

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

That's wonderful.

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

So I do invite everyone, whether you're experiencing this issue yourself or it's with your family, but it's part of our whole community, our whole diocese. So let's join together in prayer.

Billy Atwell ([07:15](#)):

Absolutely. So that Mass for the Day of Prayer for Mental Health is at All Saints Parish on Saturday, August 26th at 11:00 AM. As always, you can find out more on our website, arlingtondiocese.org. Bishop, last year - this is a background for folks who are listening - the Virginia Department of Education offered new model policies that corrected really erroneous and damaging practices related to students with gender dysphoria offered under the previous administration. Regrettably, some local public school districts have rejected these values and determined that they will not use the model policies. Bishop, many of your parishioners, we talk about Catholic schools a lot, but many of your parishioners are sending their children to public schools in Alexandria City and Arlington, Fairfax and Prince William, where they have most recently come out stating that they will not implement these model policies. So when you think about your parishioners, your faithful being subjected to this in these areas, these very well-populated areas, what is your response to their decisions?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:14](#)):

Well, that rejection causes me grave concern. I'm very, very worried about what it means for parents and for students. The new policies that were given enhance transparency in schools for parents and restore their primary role in the education, the wellbeing and the health of their children. That's why I'm so proud of our Catholic schools. That's at the forefront, that we see ourselves as privileged to play a role in assisting and helping parents, not removing them from the formation of the entire person of the children they send to our schools. The new policies also affirm and protect the dignity and safety of every student while also respecting the religious liberty and conscience rights of all the members of the Virginia Public School community. So how these are being rejected in significant districts and counties is really hard for me to understand. We should all want to protect parental rights.

Billy Atwell ([09:23](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:24](#)):

I mean, that should be fundamental. Respect the role of a mother and a father in addressing their child's education and their mental health challenges. We just talked about that, what our young people are experiencing. And what these school districts have done is to defy, I believe, to defy the rights of parents who are the first and primary educators of their children. And once we get away from that, then education is heading in a very, very wrong direction. So I really do, I am using this moment, because I am really concerned about all the young people and parents in the Commonwealth in a special way, those

entrusted to my care, pastoral care. So I call parents of all local public school children and interested residents to contact their school districts to let your voice be heard and speak against these decisions.

Billy Atwell ([10:18](#)):

Every taxpayer is paying for this. Every taxpayer is paying for public school. So whether your kid is in homeschool or Catholic school or some other private school, we're still paying for this. We all have a right to speak up and have our voices heard. So Bishop, thank you for providing that. Those who - you're maybe struggling with how to speak on these issues regarding gender identity and gender dysphoria, and it's complicated. Our bishop has written a catechesis on this. This is a while back now, but you can find it on our website. It's "Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology." You can just type in actually to Google "Bishop Burbidge and gender ideology," and it's one of the first things to pop up. It's a great resource that's very accessible for the average person like me. I'm not theologically trained, but I can read this, understand it, and then utilize it if I'm ever asked about it or need to defend what it is that I believe. This was written for you.

([11:05](#)):

So again, please look that up as "Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology." Bishop, we've got so many events going on, especially this time of year. The Mass for Multicultural Ministries is going to be held at the Church of the Nativity in Burke this Friday, and it made me think about the Cathedral, the construction that's going on there and how you would affirm that within these renovations, we would see physically the diverse cultural representation of the Diocese. And this Mass makes it so evident, but it's going to be reflected in the Cathedral as well. I was wondering if you could share a little bit more about what that is going to look like in the future. We know it's not there yet, but it's all coming.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:40](#)):

No, thanks, Billy. I really always welcome every year this celebration of the multicultural event beginning with Mass and then a nice social afterwards where we really get to celebrate the gifts that various cultures bring to our Church and to our diocese. And we do it in a fun way. We celebrate the culture with music and dance and food. It's always a great night. And as we celebrate the unique gifts that these communities bring to our diocese at the Mass, of course, most obviously we celebrate the unity that is ours as brothers and sisters in Christ. And so yes, there's so many gifts that the various communities bring to our diocese. I very much want it represented to those gifts in our cathedral. So I've invited six of these major groups to help us in the Cathedral with a statue and a stained-glass window.

([12:40](#)):

Each statue in our cathedral will be represented in the background with stained-glass windows telling a little bit more about the story and the life of the saint. And I asked our communities, well, I asked the members of the African-American, the Filipino, the Vietnamese, the Korean, the Hispanic and African community, "Who is the one saint you want to lift up so that when people come to our cathedral and for the devotion or to learn more about the saints or to tour, we can tell them that this saint means so much to your community?" I'm so grateful for the enthusiastic response I received. We're in the process of designing the statues.

Billy Atwell ([13:16](#)):

Oh, that's great.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:17](#)):

And the members of the communities are helping us. That's always interesting because everyone has a little, "Well, no, I like the arm going this way and this one, but I like the hand in this one." So we're trying to put it together, but it's all many voices, but it will come together as one. These will be beautiful statues, and again, along with many others, but will represent the multicultural communities in our diocese that we always look for ways to celebrate.

Billy Atwell ([13:48](#)):

That's wonderful. And at this Mass that you're going to do, so there's going to be a Marian procession at 6:15 PM at the Church on the Nativity this Friday, with Mass starting at 7 PM. But in that procession I hear there's going to be 20 Marian statues reflecting the various communities and families within our diocese. I had a hard time believing 20. That's going to be quite a visual. I'm looking forward to seeing that.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:10](#)):

It really will be wonderful. It will be wonderful.

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

Bishop, the Church is celebrating the Season of Creation, and that's designated from September 1st to October 4th, with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1st. Our parishes have received resources from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on this. We also have the teachings of Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*. But I was wondering if you could comment a little bit more about what that looks like here in the Diocese, this effort to preserve and hold up the care for creation?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:41](#)):

Yes, we know this is a major emphasis of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, reminding us that we all, as children of God, are stewards of creation and we must have a common care, care for our common home, and we must be united in that. And I'm so proud of the many ways we are doing that in our diocese. Pope Francis says that "The renewal of our relationship with creation is essential so that we no longer," he says, "see it as an object to be exploited, but cherish it." And to see this as "a sacred gift coming from our Creator." And so we should realize that an integral approach and respect for the environment involves four relationships, he says. Our relationship with God, with our brothers and sisters of today and tomorrow, nature - through which God does show signs of his presence, and certainly with ourselves. And in our diocese, we want to have this message of *Laudato si'* in front of us and we're doing some great work.

([15:47](#)):

Currently, our diocese has four parishes with operational solar rooftops. Our diocese currently has currently signed five power purchase agreements, meaning a joint contract to collect the bargain on energy pricing. Roofs will be solar, if the feasibility study is successful, and savings will be significant. The Diocese has supported numerous parishes with energy-saving facility projects across Northern Virginia. And our office for parish construction is also doing audits. How can we be more conservative with our use of energy? How can we take good care of the environment and even save some funds along the way? And people sometimes ask me, "Yes, of course, I believe God is the Creator. So everything we see around us, this beauty is from the God who loves us. But how can I, practically speaking in my life,

respond to this call that Pope Francis has given to us?" And my first response is, keep your eyes wide open.

(17:01):

How easy it is to walk through a day and see such beauty around us that you know - how could this be possible without a loving God - but to give thanks for the creation and how we see God's presence. But there's also, and this is on the USCCB website, there's also what we call the St. Francis Pledge. So I'm going to just mention this, Billy, if it's okay.

Billy Atwell (17:23):

Yeah, that'd be great. Of course.

Bishop Michael Burbidge (17:24):

I think it's a very practical response to this subject. So here's the St. Francis Pledge. I think we should all consider, and as I said, it's definitely on our website and we've shared this with all of our parishes. So here are the steps. You pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's creation and protect the poor and vulnerable. You pray. Number two, you learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change. Number three, you assess how we as individuals and in our families, parishes, contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, et cetera. So assess, then you act, act to change your choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute, maybe to not a good stewardship of the environment around us. And then you advocate. You advocate for Catholic principle and priorities as it is related to this issue. So maybe that St. Francis Pledge is something helpful for our listeners.

Billy Atwell (18:22):

Absolutely. And I remember someone pointing out one time that the difference between being an environmentalist and caring for God's creation is the starting point of respecting the gift that God has given us. Because sometimes when the topic of preserving the environment and so on enters the political arena, it gets very negative and divisive. But they made the point that any gift that God gives us, even if there's no doomsday attached to it, which is a better reflection of us as Catholics, to preserve it and cherish it or to exploit it? You mentioned that in that quote from Pope Francis as well, that it's not there to be exploited.

Bishop Michael Burbidge (18:56):

Yeah, it's not.

Billy Atwell (18:57):

But to be cherished, which is a better reflection of our integrity.

Bishop Michael Burbidge (19:00):

Yeah. It's not an agenda, or it should be a positive response. We're stewards of God's creation. That's who we're meant to be.

Billy Atwell (19:08):

Beautiful. Bishop, this is the last podcast before the Labor Day weekend, and some economists are saying that we're maybe on the front end of a economic downturn and prices are going up on a lot of things. And people are seeing that. And I know Catholic Charities is - every day they see more and more people who have been pushed into poverty that weren't there before, but there's also a growing segment of society that is working, but they really don't like their work. They're not enjoying the job that they have. And so I was wondering if whether it's the pay or the environment, for those who feel stuck in their jobs, not enjoying it, what advice would you share for them? What pastoral message would you share with them?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([19:48](#)):

Yeah, I always encourage our young people as they discern their future to make sure that the work that they will undertake or embrace or the vocation they follow is something they're passionate about. Something that is just not a grind or just a duty or anything like that. Something that energizes you when you wake up every morning. But the reality is, as you mentioned, that sometimes the thing we're most passionate about is not the most effective way that we can get the salary that we need to take care of our family. So we're also not as motivated as we would like to be when we get up. And it's hard. It's hard work. And so I encourage people in those situations to, first of all, thank God for the gift of work, and to be motivated by the good you can accomplish in doing that correctly and faithfully.

([20:44](#)):

And the ultimate purpose is that no matter what work we're carrying out, if we offer it for God, to God, for his glory, if we say, "Well, this is so I can be supporting my family, making sure that they have the gifts they need." To be motivated by those kind of factors, even if it's not the job you long dreamed of, but to carry that for God's glory and for the good of others. And if we give God our best efforts and give him a hard day's work, God rewards that. And he will use that in ways that we do not even know, for our own happiness and for the wellbeing of others.

([21:29](#)):

But I do ask people to pray for those who are unemployed, those who are underemployed, and those who are not given a just wage. Work is so much associated with the dignity of the person. It really is. It's part, Pope Francis says that "work is an essential component of human life" and even the path of sanctification. And we should always remember the ultimate purpose of our work is to praise God and to serve one another, whatever that work may be.

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

That's right. Wonderful. Thank you so much. So we have one question from the parishioners here before we close out. They said, "I found it nothing short of a miracle or a message from God that," and I'm going to mess this name up, "Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Maui was unscathed by the wildfire." So few things were. The surrounding area just seems to be ruins, but this church has remained. They were curious. Your thoughts on that?

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

Yeah, Billy, and first of all, let me just begin by saying that as soon as this tragedy occurred, we immediately called for all the faithful of our diocese to be united in prayer. It is just devastating to hear the number of lives that have been lost, including so many children, the number of people who are still missing, the total loss of property and homes. It is just - every day that you see this, it just seems to get worse, the news. So we are very, very much united in prayer for all the people so tragically impacted by

the situation. Loss of life, loss of property, the basic necessities in life. In addition to that, we've asked all the parishes to invite the faithful in our diocese to contribute financially, to support that as necessary. And we have given our pastors the instructions of how those funds will go directly to assist those in need.

[\(23:26\)](#):

So everyone has the opportunity to do that as well. And the question that was just asked, and the fact that that one church seemed unscathed, I don't like to predict what things mean or don't mean, but I can't help but to think that the fact that that's still standing is God's way of reminding that "I never leave you. And even in the midst of chaos, even in the midst of tragedy, I'm there. I'm there in the midst. I'm there in your midst." And that's the sign that I'm taking from that.

Billy Atwell [\(24:02\)](#):

That's wonderful. Bishop, any final thoughts? And then if you would send us off.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(24:04\)](#):

No, but I do want to give a little shout-out to all of our students who are returning to school to do well, to do your best, to enjoy it, not to get stressed, just to do your best, to do your best. And maybe I should say that to parents too, but embrace this new school year. I love new school years. It's a reminder, it's a new beginning. What occurred last year is done. Maybe you learned from it and things like that, but God gives you a new opportunity to begin again. So I pray that our students and our teachers and our parents all get off to a great start. And we will if we walk humbly with our God. 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 @BishopBurbidge, where I offer Gospel reflections each morning and share photos and updates of what is going on in the Diocese of Arlington. Stay up-to-date with news, event information and inspirational content by subscribing to our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org.