

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

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

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

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, especially in this Lenten season as we prepare for Easter and all the wonderful liturgies this week, we want to say thank you to those who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, not just this year, but in years past as well. It supports a lot of really important ministries, and hopefully you've heard us talking about some of them, but one of them is the Communications Office. So thank you so much. If you're listening to this podcast on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, wherever, please rate this podcast and write a review.

([00:41](#)):

If you're listening through YouTube, please subscribe to our YouTube channel. We're always posting new content there on a regular basis. Sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org and you can follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter, @BishopBurbidge, where every day you can read a short Gospel reflection for that day. The Diocese is on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Follow us there. Send your questions to Bishop Burbidge to info@arlingtondiocese.org or send us a message on social media. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:10](#)):

Billy, I'm doing well. Thank you so much - praying for all of our listeners and parishioners that this week will truly be holy and one filled with abundant blessings for all of them.

Billy Atwell ([01:22](#)):

Now, tomorrow is one of your favorite days of the year. You've talked about it. It's an important homily, especially because you're speaking to the whole Diocese. Talk about the Chrism Mass and why you appreciate that so much.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:30](#)):

Yes. Tomorrow, meaning Tuesday because we're taping, or we're recording here on Monday-

Billy Atwell ([01:35](#)):

That's right, yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:36](#)):

But tomorrow, Tuesday at 11 o'clock at All Saints Parish is the Chrism Mass. Usually we have it at the Cathedral on Holy Thursday morning, but the Cathedral is under renovation right now, especially with the HVAC system.

Billy Atwell ([01:49](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([01:49](#)):

So we have moved it to a parish and therefore on Tuesday, and it is really truly one of the most beautiful, powerful Masses of the year for me. Of course, that is the Mass within we bless the sacred oils and consecrate the Chrism that will be used for Baptism and Confirmation, anointing the sick throughout our entire diocese.

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

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:15](#)):

Everything is blessed tomorrow at that Mass and then carried home for administering the sacraments. And of course, the sacred oil will also be used for Holy Orders-

Billy Atwell ([02:26](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:27](#)):

The priesthood. And then within the Mass itself, the priests, the wonderful priests of our diocese renew their priestly promises, and it's a very beautiful part of that Mass when the priests, and then I, ask the faithful who are gathered to pray for us. That is actually part of the ceremony, relying on God's grace, of course, but on the prayers of the people. And we are so blessed in this diocese where people pray for their priests so, so frequently and their bishop, and we are all so grateful for that. So the doors are wide open. I hope as many people from the Diocese, all around the Diocese can be there because the Chrism Mass is a reflection of our unity, bishop-

Billy Atwell ([03:09](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:09](#)):

priests, religious, laity from every corner of our diocese, and if you can't be there, please be with us in prayer.

Billy Atwell ([03:15](#)):

It is a beautiful Mass. It really is. And certainly stay tuned on social media for the photos we'll post and the livestream link, all those kinds of things. Bishop, before we dig into our main topics, there's a couple things I wanted to ask you about, but first I want to mention, many have seen in the news that the Alexandria Planning and Zoning Commission, they made a decision recently where they approved a measure that will go to the city council for vote that would reduce the standards for abortion clinics being zoned inside the city limit. It was not widely publicized, unfortunately. So a lot of people are finding out about it after this vote was had. So we're keeping an eye on this. We just want people to know that it was very recently, it was on Thursday that the council had the decision and it's been publicized in the media just this past weekend and today. So we're keeping an eye on it, I didn't know if you had any brief comment to make.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:02](#)):

No, but what you said, it is a bit unusual with something like this going to city council. Usually it involves consultation, pretty extensive consultation. And within the city of Alexandria, of course, we have parishes and schools and Catholic Charities, and obviously those who are representing us on the city council I think should be very interested in hearing our voice and our concerns about not only the process, but of course what is being proposed. So we will stay very vigilant. Thank you, Billy. And we will certainly keep the faithful, not just in Alexandria, but in our whole diocese, to stay vigilant here and find a way to make our voices and our deeply held convictions known.

Billy Atwell ([04:48](#)):

Absolutely. Bishop, there was a shooting in Nashville. As you know, that left seven people dead, including the shooter. Three of the victims were nine years old. We're a little ways out from this now, but what thoughts do you have for us on that tragedy?

Bishop Burbidge ([05:04](#)):

Well, you're right, the incident itself, we're a little bit removed from it, but never from our hearts. I mean, you can never be distanced from such a tragedy and the loss of innocent lives in such a violent way. I know I speak for all who are listening, just, it's heart-wrenching, and we all probably said the same thing. I just can't imagine as a parent to be given such a heavy cross and certainly as family members of all the loved ones who were killed and injured. And it is tragic, Billy, and it does remind us, of course, of the lack of this reverence for human life that is just so innocently taken in such violent ways. And so we have to keep promoting, we can't tire, promoting a culture of life and doing everything possible to protect people, especially our young students. You'd think they would be extremely safe, but we have to continue to do that.

([06:15](#)):

I know in our diocese, we have implemented increased numbers of security protocols and I'm so grateful to our administrators for doing that. And it's a shame, you have to think that way. But you have to, you have to be vigilant and of course, you deal with the individual who shot and killed others. Obviously there must be emotional and psychological concerns there.

Billy Atwell ([06:49](#)):

Absolutely.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:49](#)):

That someone's even capable of doing that. So that issue of not only gun violence but also mental health is also another issue which we have to stay proactive in addressing. So deep sympathy. And of course, please, I've asked in the statement we released, I asked all the faithful in the Diocese of Arlington to be united in prayer for the eternal peace of those who have died, for healing and strength and grace for their family members.

Billy Atwell ([07:18](#)):

Absolutely. And thank you for doing that. On a lighter note, before we get into other topics, I wanted to ask - you recently joined Instagram and you're gaining some traction as well, especially over the weekend. You've got a strong presence on Twitter and you've been offering your Gospel reflections each morning. That Instagram account will be a little bit different, but what made you want to venture into those waters?

Bishop Burbidge ([07:40](#)):

Yeah, well, first of all about the Twitter, I've actually been doing that since 2010.

Billy Atwell ([07:45](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:46](#)):

And it's always a Gospel reflection. I'm not telling people I had a hamburger somewhere or something, but I always like to do a Gospel reflection. First of all, it's very good for my own spiritual life and prayer life. It inspires me to do the readings for that the night before so I could think about and pray for what message I want to give. Most of my priesthood, I always celebrated the 6:30 AM mass, and I would always give a brief, very brief homily because people were on their way to work. And so I've always been in the practice of just giving the thought of the day. So I thought the Twitter would allow me to do it. And so it's helpful for me. Pray God, it helps others in some ways also.

([08:31](#)):

But I think as we often talk about with communications, it's a tool and it's just a tool, but as Pope Francis always says to us, you have to go where the people are. So some people are on Twitter, but I learned from you and your staff about Instagram. I said, "Well, it looks like we should be on Instagram too." So on Twitter, I personally write out my tweets and post them myself. But with Instagram, I have your great team helping me with the creative elements.

([09:04](#)):

So in addition to my daily Gospel reflection, they'll draw from some homilies and other messages but the goal is to take thoughts that seem to resonate on other platforms and share them on Instagram as well. As with anything new, there's trial and error and we'll see what works and we'll see what should we be investing time in. And as you always say on our podcast, let us know and let us know if this is helpful. Is this way of communication helpful? If it's not, we'll move on and try something new. So thanks to you and your team for getting me on Instagram. I couldn't do that myself.

Billy Atwell ([09:38](#)):

Well, I think you could. You give us great content. I mean, the reason this works is you have great homilies and you offer statements and messages and quotes on important issues that we can use. And we said, "There's a whole another audience that is maybe not seeing this. How do we get this out there?"

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

Thanks, Billy.

Billy Atwell ([09:57](#)):

Bishop, there has been a synodal process taking place in Germany, which we've discussed previously on the podcast at least. And in January, we highlighted the fact that the Holy Father was speaking out against much of the process going on there in that synodal process in Germany, because there were issues being raised and discussed which contradicted doctrines of our Catholic moral teaching. Participants voted in favor of draft documents calling for priestly ordinations of women, the blessing of same-sex unions, and changing Church teaching regarding homosexual acts in particular. Pope Francis

expressed concern about heresy, schism and disunity. You speak regularly about the issues of disunity and how we need to be fortified and unified in the faith. Almost three weeks ago, maybe four weeks ago, Bishop Bode of Germany announced that he would implement resolutions passed by the controversial process, including the introduction of liturgical blessings of same sex unions. That's really what made this international news at the time. The Holy Father hasn't responded yet, but we do know what he thinks about much of this because he spoke about it in January. What are your thoughts on what you're seeing in these reports?

Bishop Burbidge ([11:01](#)):

Yeah, I know I share the sentiments of our Holy Father, especially concerns he has expressed about heresy, schism and disunity. Whenever we as church leaders listen to the needs and desires of the faithful, we should and we should, and in the last couple years in our diocese with our strategic plan and the Pope's request, we've had numerous listening sessions. But when you listen, it must be with the understanding that we cannot change the timeless Church teachings and doctrines. And so we should not act as if we can, because then it's not authentic listening. So let's listen to how we can embrace our church's teachings in this day and age, how we can communicate them, how we can explain them. All those things are very important, but there are certain doctrines that cannot be changed. And the German synod has allowed, I think, for open conversation of topics that would really fly in the face of basic Catholic teachings on sexuality and human dignity.

([12:09](#)):

It's a failure in justice to give the impression that unchanging teachings can be changed. And I think that's what this synodal process in Germany has done. It's not fair. I don't believe it's fair to the faithful to be unclear about such critical matters. And in addition to the doctrinal errors, what troubles me a little bit about the news from Germany is, as you mentioned, the disunity that we're seeing. And to act as though some Catholics can stand on Church teaching about homosexuality or homosexual acts or any other topic and others can do as they please or form a false compassion and understanding is wrong. And so we must remain rooted in who we are and who we worship and ever faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. They're not two churches.

Billy Atwell ([13:01](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:01](#)):

One upholds Christ's teachings and one does not. We are united in and through our faith, and any synodal process should reflect that unity. Sure, we can have different ways of expressing our thoughts, our ideas, our hopes, and all those things, but we can't do anything to fracture the unity that is ours as faithful followers of Christ. So my hope is that behind the scenes, things are being done to right the wrongs and we'll pray for clarity and courage within the German synodal process and certainly within the church.

Billy Atwell ([13:37](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. Thank you for your reflection on that. Bishop, last week, actually, I think maybe a little more than that actually, you celebrated the eighth grade vocations Mass. I know vocations and helping young people pray about where God is leading them is something that's very close to your heart and something you do regularly with them. What was your message, I'm curious, for those eighth graders?

Because obviously they're not ready to go to seminary or the convent or anything, but what do you say to a group that young about vocations?

Bishop Burbidge ([14:04](#)):

Yeah. No, first of all, it was so inspiring to have 1,300 eighth graders from around the Diocese in one church. And we had a dynamic speaker. I mean, to engage eighth graders sitting still in a pew for an hour and a half you have to be a pretty dynamic speaker. We had a really great speaker. The young people seemed to really enjoy him and he had them riled up of course and let them get their energy out. But he had a great message to deliver and I was very pleased to see how attentive they were. And I had the great privilege of preaching the homily to them and just reassuring them that God has a special plan for each one of them. He created them uniquely. And their call in life right now is to be a good son, a good daughter, a good brother, sister, but God will lead them in that path to holiness.

([15:08](#)):

Some will live out that call to holiness in single life, many in the married life, some in priesthood, the consecrated life. I just encourage them, it's just an imitation of our Blessed Mother. Just open your heart to what God's asking of you. Don't be saying, "What am I going to do with my life?" But, "Lord, what are you asking me to do with my life?" And let God speak to you. And I assure them, he does speak to them in the prayer, in silence and through other people, through their gifts, through their talents, through those things that they're passionate about. All these things are given to them by God because he wants them to be happy and to use that in service and to wake up every morning thrilled about the opportunity they will have to live out this call to holiness. So I pray that they will continue, that the Holy Spirit lead and guide them.

Billy Atwell ([15:59](#)):

That's wonderful. Speaking of vocations and people following their call, we've got a couple ordinations I want to just plug for people right now. Put these on your calendar. It would be wonderful to see you there. With the ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, these are young men who, God willing, will become priests in a year or so. That's going to be held at St. Mary of Sorrows Parish on Saturday, April 15th at 11:00 AM. Again, that's the Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate, St. Mary of Sorrows Parish on Saturday, April 15th at 11:00 AM. And then the Ordination to the Priesthood, that's going to be at Holy Trinity Parish on Saturday, June 3rd at 11:00 AM. Again, these are normally at the Cathedral. With some of the renovations, we're holding them in our parishes. Those are two very large parishes and beautiful parishes.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:41](#)):

They are, they are.

Billy Atwell ([16:42](#)):

These are going to be wonderful gatherings. So we really hope to see you there.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:47](#)):

Yeah, and thank you. We're blessed. The two transitional deacons, two wonderful young men, as you mentioned are called transitional deacons because, God willing, they will be also ordained priests and nine wonderful young men being ordained to the priesthood for our diocese. And I assured them we have plenty of work for them. I assured them.

Billy Atwell ([17:09](#)):

I don't doubt that. Bishop, we're in the midst of Holy Week. I can't believe it's already here.

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

I know.

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

It seemed like a fast Lent in some ways. So Palm Sunday, again, we're recording on Monday, Palm Sunday was yesterday, but we've got several liturgies ahead of us. You mentioned the Chrism Mass, but this is a beautiful week to journey through. What advice do you have for people to help them prepare spiritually for Easter? Whether they had a great Lent or maybe they didn't feel like they did everything they should have, how do you prepare in the next several days for Easter Sunday?

Bishop Burbidge ([17:36](#)):

Yeah, and that's a great way of asking it. Maybe our Lent was not as strong as we had hoped, maybe it was. But anyway, this week allows us to be recipients of amazing graces and blessings as we walk with Jesus to Jerusalem, as we unite our sufferings to his, with the assurance that this is the path that leads to glory. And so I encourage all of our listeners to do your part to make it holy. We call it Holy Week, but it's not automatically holy because we say so.

Billy Atwell ([18:13](#)):

Right.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:14](#)):

It's an invitation. And so take some concrete steps. I would suggest, during this week to maybe leave behind a little bit of the noise and the distractions and technology and just allow a little bit more time for prayer, for silence, for reflecting on the Passion of the Lord. Maybe go back and read that, that we heard yesterday. It reminds us of God's great love for us, a love that knew no end, that did not count the cost, the love that God has for us. And I really do encourage our listeners, if at all possible, to attend a Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday at your parish. That is a very beautiful Mass.

([18:53](#)):

We celebrate the institution of the priesthood, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, reenact Jesus's humble service, his humility in washing the feet of his disciples. It's a beautiful, beautiful liturgy. And then of course, on Good Friday, a powerful liturgy in which we hear the Passion of the Lord read once again. But I think one of the most important parts of that liturgy is when we are invited up individually to reverence the Cross. I always encourage the people as they make that profound gesture, as you're walking up the aisle, just whatever cross you're carrying right now, whatever is your cross in life, mention that to the Lord.

([19:39](#)):

And when you reverence the Cross, united to his, from that cross, as the Lord himself told us, will flow abundant graces and blessings and strength to carry the cross. And we're all united on Good Friday, everyone in that church has a cross, but Jesus, there is nothing we're experiencing here on Earth... What do we experience that Jesus has not already endured for our salvation? False judgment, harsh treatment, betrayal, ridicule, persecution, emotional suffering, physical suffering, he's endured it all for

our sake. So he is not distant from our burdens. In fact, he's drawing closer to us and this week invites us to draw closer to him and to make it holy.

Billy Atwell ([20:31](#)):

That's wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:31](#)):

Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([20:32](#)):

Thank you so much, yeah. Okay. We have a couple questions from the faithful. Beforehand, I want to plug a couple of things though. One, if you haven't gotten a chance to take a look at arlingtondiocese.org/jubileejourney. It's an opportunity to visit the various churches named after Our Lady. So we're in the second year of our Jubilee celebration, leading up to our diocesan Golden Jubilee in 2024. So we're celebrating Our Lady this year. And another important way that you could do that is attend the Marian Conference. The speaker is Archbishop Broglio, who Bishop Burbidge you know well. He is a great speaker. He is now also the President of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. So he's very trusted by his brothers. It's going to be at St. Bernadette Parish. It's going to begin at 9:00 AM with Mass on April 29th.

([21:17](#)):

Go to jubilee.arlingtondiocese.org if you want to learn more about that. But I really highly recommend people attend that. April 29th is a Marian Conference you won't forget. And so please go to jubilee.arlingtondiocese.org to learn more about that. Bishop, okay, we've got a couple questions. This first one, it's a little late in Lent to be answering it, but I know it's a question people get and we get this question to our inbox pretty regularly, something along these lines. This is from a gentleman named Patty, said, "I'll be traveling out of town to attend my granddaughter's wedding, which will be held on a Friday during Lent. I'm unsure whether the reception dinner will offer an alternative to meat. There's been enough drama on both sides of the family in the planning of this wedding and I do not want to place more burden on my granddaughter by asking her about this or upset her if I don't eat the meal. Is there a dispensation for situations like this?" I think you may need also like a blessing for healing, right?

Bishop Burbidge ([22:08](#)):

Yeah. Weddings-

Billy Atwell ([22:09](#)):

Wedding planning.

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

Yes, a lot of planning and lots of drama sometimes. But the couple usually all come around and remember what's essential, what's really important.

Billy Atwell ([22:20](#)):

But we often get questions about, "What if I'm at an important event or something where it would be awkward for me to abstain?"

Bishop Burbidge ([22:25](#)):

Yeah, it makes sense. It's a good question by Pat. I would just suggest, and this is not anything unusual, just call the venue itself because I don't think we should automatically excuse ourselves from what is required of us.

Billy Atwell ([22:39](#)):

Right.

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

And unless there's absolutely no way to go about it or there's a dispensation for pastoral reasons. So I mean, it's very common just to call the venue ahead of time. People do that for all kinds of reasons, diet reasons or diet restrictions or whatever. So just say, "Hey, listen, if there's an option for salmon or fish or something like that, could I just arrange for that to be delivered?" And then you're not causing any scene, you're not causing any more upsetment to the whole situation. And by doing so, you're not the problem, by asking for that on the Friday during Lent. Your faith, which is the foundation of your life, should be respected, especially when you're not really asking for anything significant. By now, it's already occurred, so I hope it worked out, Pat.

Billy Atwell ([23:31](#)):

All right. And then Avie from Corpus Christi is asking, "What do we do with the abundance of holy pictures, rosaries, medals that we receive in the mail?" What I think has happened is she gave to one organization 10 years ago and doubt now she's on every list. I'm in the same boat. "I'm looking for the right way to treat them. Many thanks, and God bless you for all that you do for your sheep."

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

Thank you so much. Yeah. And I would think that many, many people just love to receive religious images. And so I would find a way to share them. I would contact the parish because the parish sometimes has opportunities to distribute, whether it's visiting the hospital or making Communion calls to the homebound or whatever, or to the school or whatever, where people would really appreciate them. If not, I think your local priests could also direct you to our Missions Office. We can also send it to other countries, and we participate in the Missions Appeal and things like that where they could be used. But we want to treat them with reverence and with the dignity, with respect. And so I think hopefully that's helpful.

Billy Atwell ([24:52](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And Avie credit to you for wanting to know the right way to dispose them and not just tossing them in the trash.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:57](#)):

Yeah. Exactly.

Billy Atwell ([24:58](#)):

You are asking the right question. Bishop Burbidge mentioned that he's on Instagram. If you want to follow his handle, it's @BishopMichaelBurbidge on Instagram. If you also just search his name, you'll find

his account as well. But it's @BishopMichaelBurbidge. Bishop, any final thoughts and if you would send us off with your blessing here in Holy Week?

Bishop Burbidge ([25:17](#)):

No. And thank you, Billy. Thanks for this opportunity to speak to the faithful in this holiest of weeks. Again, dear friends, do your part to walk with Jesus to Jerusalem, unite your sufferings to His, knowing that this is the path that leads to glory. And I pray, I truly do pray for all of you that this new life, this new life that Jesus offers to us through his death and resurrection, the new life he has won for us will be yours. And that the Easter season will be filled with abundant blessings of peace and joy, the peace and joy that only our Risen Lord can give. May all these gifts be yours as together we walk humbly with our God.

([25:56](#)):

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