

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

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

Tom Shakely ([00:08](#)):

We are coming to you from the St. Clare Studio in the Diocese of Arlington. Welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast. I am Tom Shakely, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese of Arlington and your co-host for this conversation with our host, Bishop Michael Burbidge. Bishop, welcome!

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:25](#)):

Tom, thank you so much, and I extend a welcome to you as well. This is our first podcast together.

Tom Shakely ([00:32](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:33](#)):

Great to have you on board here. You're off to a great start. And you've already mentioned to me how happy you are with the tremendous team here in our communications office and we look forward to your leadership and God's continued blessings upon you. But I'm sure our listeners are a little curious about Tom Shakely. So just tell us a little bit about yourself, Tom.

Tom Shakely ([00:54](#)):

Yeah, so I grew up in a Catholic family and I was really blessed in this way in so many ways. And for us, Catholicism was like the water we drank. It was the way we lived living in the church's liturgical seasons. But the faith really came alive for me and I started to see the results of what it meant to be Catholic when I started to learn some of my own family story and some of the hard things. My mother getting pregnant when she was 19 unexpectedly.

([01:23](#)):

She was a college student and made the choice for a life, that was my life. I learned that as I grew up and saw that without our Lord guiding her heart and guiding the hearts of my grandparents and other family, that might not have been the response. And then on the other end of the spectrum, my grandfather, who I grew up with, getting to care for him when he developed Alzheimer's and seeing what it meant to care for someone on that end of the spectrum.

([01:47](#)):

And so for me growing up, Catholicism was an invitation to a love story with our Lord, with the author of life, and on the ground through the pro-life issues. There was an incredible set of lessons for me and seeing what it meant to love and care for one another as family, but also in the larger community.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:05](#)):

Well, thank you. Thanks so much for sharing that with us, and God bless your dear mom and for the faithful witness and for the gift that she has given us in having to benefit now from your life, your talents, your expertise that God has given to you. Now, you're married. Tell us a little bit about your wife and son.

Tom Shakely ([02:27](#)):

I am, yeah. Thanks be to God. Mary Kate is my wife, a Franciscan grad and proud of it. And our boy John, who's almost two, and we've got another on the way due this fall in November. Mary Kate and I have been married for a few years now and we met again through the church. It was through a cousin and through a good Catholic priest who connected her through Bible Study.

[\(02:49\)](#):

And so we saw, again, in our own ways, in our courtship and now in our marriage, the ways that God knits us together if we have an openness to it. And truly the God of surprises, because the way we met happened during the height of the pandemic, so much drama, so much loneliness during the pandemic when we were cut off and isolated from one another in so many ways. We never could have expected meeting one another during that time, and yet we did. And we're here now and happy to be here in the Diocese of Arlington.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(03:21\)](#):

It's wonderful, isn't it, to celebrate God's divine and we would say mysterious plan, the plan that he has for each one of us and only asks for our yes. So thanks to you and your dear wife for your yes to each other, to the gift of life and asking God's blessings upon John, your son and the child that you will soon welcome. So our prayers are with you. And you come to us from Americans United for Life where you worked there as the Chief Engagement Officer. Could you tell us a little bit about that, Tom?

Tom Shakely [\(03:54\)](#):

Absolutely, yeah, yeah, Chief Engagement Officer. Somebody joked with me at one point, they said, "Is that like a matchmaking role?" I said, "It's not. Maybe it could be." But no, that was the term we used for communications and also fundraising and public relations. Americans United for Life is one of the nation's oldest pro-life organizations.

[\(04:12\)](#):

It's a secular organization, but the ideals of the organization are so, so influenced by Catholic thinking on pro-life issues, but really bioethical issues across the spectrum because the church has thought more deeply about these than anyone else. And so Americans United for Life advocates in the States and also at the federal level for life protecting laws across the spectrum.

[\(04:33\)](#):

They were founded in 1974. And I got to work there and tell the story of what it means to be pro-life and what it means for law, law to teach people, because laws teach, right? The Greeks knew that. We've forgotten it sometimes today, but we have to keep reminding ourselves that the law teaches us norms, it teaches us what to love and what to avoid. And that's ultimately what pro-life law is about.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(04:55\)](#):

And what a great reminder as a Catholic Church and everyone knows our steadfast position on the sacredness of all human life. Protection of the unborn is our preeminent issue. But to know that even outside of the church that we have partners, we have collaborators.

[\(05:10\)](#):

And certainly the more we work together with those in the community, then the stronger our voice would be. Another great reminder for us. Now, I know in your spare time, all the spare time we're giving you, you're also completing your doctorate degree at Catholic University of America. Tell us about your studies.

Tom Shakely ([05:28](#)):

Yes, studying politics there in the great politics program at CUA. That was something that they came out of relationship with folks at Americans United for Life. One of their former lawyers now directs the human rights program at CUA. And so that's how I learned about their politics program, their human rights emphasis. And it's been a joy the past three years I was taking classes there and I'm soon going to be getting started on the dissertation proposal, the topic and all that.

([05:54](#)):

So it's still a bit of a road to go, but politics, we think of... I mean, you encounter this all the time as a bishop. People sometimes use politics pejoratively. When something bad happens, when there's a falling out, people say, "Well, it's just political. It's politics." And I look at that and I say, "No, no. Again, think about Aristotle or Plato. Politics is the art of human relating. We're social animals. Politics is all about what's good for you and for me, not just for some of us at the expense of others, but what's good for the common good."

([06:25](#)):

And so no one I think does politics in the way that Catholic University does politics in that traditional way and in a way that totally accords with Catholic understanding of the human person. And that our happiness is not just to be found in political society here on earth, but in beatitude with the grace of God in heaven.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:46](#)):

That's a great, great opportunity for you to study at the Catholic University of America, which has a special place in my heart as well. And we know that dissertation also demands the gift of patience and perseverance, so we'll pray for those gifts for you. But just to our listeners, we are truly blessed in our diocese.

([07:06](#)):

We have so many great workers here at our diocese, but including young people like Tom and many of his colleagues who have so many gifts and so many talents and by the Lord's grace are using them in service to the church. So Tom, you're welcome. Please know of our prayers for you and your family and look forward to working with you and doing many of these podcasts together. So I'll hand it back over to you.

Tom Shakely ([07:32](#)):

Yes, thank you very much. It's such a pleasure to be here as your co-host. And so yeah, we'll turn the tables a bit now. And I got to say, I listened to the recent Walk Humbly Podcast from WorkCamp, and I'm wondering now as we get a little bit further out from that, the volunteers who gave themselves to build up the kingdom and to do so much good stuff, and you were out there. As we get a little bit further out from that, do you have any further thoughts on the gifts of that?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:54](#)):

Yeah, it's always inspired me to be with our young people and especially at WorkCamp, giving up so many invitations they have on how they might spend a week in the summer, but to devote it to the Lord in service of his people. And one of the highlights you mentioned is the podcast we do every year from WorkCamp, and these students who joined me on the podcast, I hope our listeners had a chance to see it, there was no rehearsal.

[\(08:22\)](#):

We just engaged these wonderful young people when we asked them questions and they spoke from their hearts. And what really inspired me was immediately they jumped not only to the good work they were doing, the difference they were making in people's lives, but they went right to the reflections of what was having the most impact on them.

[\(08:42\)](#):

And mentioned daily mass beginning this day of work and the time before the Lord with the Blessed Sacrament and what the spirits they mentioned was helping to transform them and really to encounter the Lord throughout that week. And how they spoke about that with such depth, such good insights was inspiring. And there was no doubt that the Lord was at work in their lives. I'm sure that all the wonderful young people and those who joined them who participated in this WorkCamp will know blessings for years to come.

Tom Shakely [\(09:17\)](#):

Yes, amen. And it's a wonderful annual thing. I know work is probably going to get started on next year's WorkCamp very soon.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(09:23\)](#):

Yeah, right away.

Tom Shakely [\(09:24\)](#):

Well, you are about to embark on a very special thing, a pilgrimage with the Saint Paul Leadership Forum to Catholic England. So I know this is coming up very soon. It's a 10 day pilgrimage to Catholic England. It'll take you and the pilgrims you're traveling with to many sacred sites, not only of the past, but also of the living present. So I guess first, before we get into the pilgrimage, let's talk a little bit about the Saint Paul Leadership Forum itself. What is the Saint Paul Leadership Forum?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(09:50\)](#):

Saint Paul Leadership Forum is a group of lay faithful here in the Diocese of Arlington who support the ministries of our diocese in incredible ways through their time and their talent and their treasury. And we try to bring them together three, four times a year for ongoing formation in the Catholic faith. So we will gather for breakfast or a dinner, and each session we'll have speakers because they've all expressed that desire to continue what we know is a lifelong process, faith formation.

[\(10:23\)](#):

And so in our jubilee year with our patron Saint Thomas More in the Diocese of Arlington, we thought a special opportunity formation was to offer this invitation to go to England. And it is a pilgrimage. It's not just a vacation. It is truly a pilgrimage. It will be rooted in the spiritual. And we are going to have a great trip. So that's the Saint Paul Leadership Forum.

Tom Shakely [\(10:49\)](#):

So let's talk about the pilgrimage itself and Catholic England. I think that particular emphasis on the Catholic part, right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(10:56\)](#):

Yeah. We'll be together every day celebrating. We'll have mass together every day throughout the trip. Maybe I'll just do a few highlights, including at the Blackfriars Priory at Oxford, the Birmingham Oratory, the Oxford Oratory, the Brompton Oratory, as well as the Tyburn Convent and Westminster Cathedral over the course of these 10 days. And as you know, the faith in England was once very, very strong, and so universal that England was known as Our Lady's Dowry.

[\(11:31\)](#):

England overflowed with devotion and all the fruits that came from our Lord. Catholic England, of course, describes the faith of England, not only prior to Henry VIII, but also after and as you mentioned, through the present. I'm looking forward to a lot of this trip, including the Tower of London and all the other places we'll visit. But I also am looking forward to visiting the Tyburn Convent. I think it's going to be a powerful moment for all of us in the pilgrimage.

[\(11:59\)](#):

During a period of intense persecution, as many of our listeners might know, the Tyburn Tree was a place where faithful Catholics were martyred. And this took place in the 16th, 17th centuries. And fast-forward to the 20th century and a congregation of Benedictine nuns established Tyburn Convent near the place that these martyrs gave their lives. So we're going to be right on the sacred ground, the sacred place. It's amazing to think of that.

[\(12:31\)](#):

And the Benedictine adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus lived their lives taken from their own mission centered on Eucharistic adoration for the glory of God and prayer for the needs of the whole human family, making reparation for offense against the Sacred Heart Blessed Sacrament. That's right from their mission there. I mean, I could go on and on talking about...

Tom Shakely [\(12:51\)](#):

Yeah, think about making reparations, right? I mean, what a tangible thing.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(12:55\)](#):

Yes, exactly.

Tom Shakely [\(12:56\)](#):

The past and present together.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(12:58\)](#):

And so as I often mentioned in my homilies here in the diocese, pilgrimage is a great reminder. It's a reminder that that's what life here on Earth is. It's a pilgrimage. This isn't just a journey. And we're heading to the same destination, God willing, and that's to live with Saint Thomas More and our Blessed Mother, Saint Joseph and all the angels and saints that have gone before us to get to heaven.

[\(13:25\)](#):

And a pilgrimage reminds us of that. And it reminds us that we make this pilgrimage together. We walk together, but it's always Jesus leading and guiding us. And so I do promise that throughout this pilgrimage, I ask all our listeners, all the faithful, just if they mention some special intentions in their hearts right now and every day, I promise that I celebrate the mass throughout this pilgrimage.

[\(13:50\)](#):

And every time before the Blessed Sacrament, I will be praying for all the faithful in the Diocese of Arlington and for all the intentions that they hold in their heart.

Tom Shakely ([13:58](#)):

That's beautiful. Yes. And I know, of course, we're going to be sharing everything we can from this pilgrimage for folks across the diocese. All the listeners will be able to follow, of course, your social media Bishop Burbidge on X and elsewhere, as well as the diocese. We'll be sharing video and photos to give folks an insight into these sites, into these sites that you can visit yourself on pilgrimage, on vacation, or what have you in the future.

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

That's a great idea, because then in a sense, we're making this pilgrimage together as a diocesan family. So thanks to you and your team for doing that.

Tom Shakely ([14:30](#)):

Yes, absolutely. All right, so you've got a busy July. We've got to talk about another trip coming up. This is a part of the National Eucharistic Revival. This is specifically the National Eucharistic Congress. So we'll talk more about this after it's taken place, but we'll do a little bit of preview now. It's taking place July 17th to the 21st in Indianapolis, Indiana. It's going to bring together laypeople, clergy, religious.

([14:56](#)):

They'll all be coming together for the first time in, I couldn't believe this when I read it, 83 years it's been since there's been a National Eucharistic Congress. And I think this is the 10th congress that's taking place. So folks will be attending from coast to coast. And Bishop Burbidge, you'll be in Indianapolis, of course, for the congress along with many from the Diocese of Arlington.

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

That's right, exactly. And many of my brother bishops will be there. I come back from England and I think I have one night in my bed, and then we're off to Indianapolis. I'm a real pilgrim that's alive. But that's right, Tom. It was two years ago that I joined my brother bishops from across the country in calling for a National Eucharistic Revival. And the congress is a pivotal part of this revival, inviting each of us Catholics to consider what God is asking of us to reclaim, what Saint John Paul II would say, reclaim Eucharistic wonder and awe.

([15:48](#)):

It's the most precious gift God gives us, the gift of his Son and Holy Eucharist. And yes, sometimes we can just take that gift for granted. So this is a revival. And again, pray God that we all leave Indianapolis with that renewed wonder and awe in a particular way. How beautiful that this National Eucharist Congress is occurring when we're celebrating our jubilee as a diocese.

([16:15](#)):

And we began our first year of preparation with our own year of the Eucharist. So actually the country's just catching up to us. But I know also that many in our diocese that have joined the revival through prayer and participation is still underway. And we're looking forward and, again, be keeping everyone in prayer throughout these sacred days as well.

Tom Shakely ([16:37](#)):

Yes, I think it's such an important thing, that source and summit of our faith, bringing us closer to our Lord. And so we'll be praying in particular for those listening who may be going or for those listening who are going to be just joining in prayer and spiritually joining along as a part of this National Eucharistic revival. And I should mention too, the registration is still open.

[\(17:01\)](#):

So if you're hearing this for the first time and you're saying, "How did I not know about this," you can visit their website. Just Google National Eucharistic Congress and you can find out how to register. So that's all good. And of course, we will be sharing more of that across diocesan social media accounts. But Bishop Burbidge, maybe you can particularly talk about how Catholics can join you if they're not attending in person beyond social media.

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

So certainly through prayer. You know that these sacred days will be taking place in Indianapolis. So please pray for me, for my fellow pilgrims as we journey to the congress and prepare to receive a door and draw closer to our Eucharistic Lord. And second, please stay tuned to, as you mentioned, the diocesan media channels and just witness how the Holy Spirit amidst the revival is so present.

[\(17:53\)](#):

And also to even those who are from home that are joining us in a spiritual communion, there's no better way for us to be united in prayer than with our Eucharistic Lord, especially in adoration.

Tom Shakely [\(18:08\)](#):

Yes, and so many opportunities, of course, across the entire Diocese of Arlington to do that, whether from home or from a chapel or church nearby. All right, we're going to move into some questions from the faithful, Bishop. We've got two questions today we'll consider. And as a reminder, anyone can send in a question for consideration on The Walk Humbly Podcast.

[\(18:29\)](#):

You just have to email info@arlingtondiocese.org or reach out to us, send us a message on one of the diocesan social media accounts and we'll be in touch. So the first question is sort of a softball, Independence Day is coming up, July 4th holiday weekend is upon us, it's a simple question, do you have any favorite Independence Day traditions?

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

Well, yeah. Growing up, 4th of July was always the time that my family, extended family, cousins, all those things, we always got together 4th of July. We took turns hosting it and be together and always watch the fireworks together. Now I get to watch the fireworks right here. We have a great view from our office. You can see in our nation's capital. So that's something that I always enjoy doing.

[\(19:18\)](#):

This year I'll be in England on the 4th of July, so it will be kind of a different experience, but it is also a great opportunity to be reminded of the birthday of our nation, a historic moment in which a small group men signed what became an immortal document, the Declaration of Independence, and reminding us of equality, rights, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And pray God, all these gifts will be to extend it to all of us as we celebrate the birthday of our nation.

Tom Shakely [\(19:55\)](#):

Yes, may we preserve them and carry them forward certainly. The second question is still about summer a bit, but it's a bit deeper. So what advice, we've been asked here, do you have for families, particularly for mothers and fathers, for parents, on how to spend or enjoy maybe even summer vacation time well? At summertime, people are going away and they can just go on autopilot. They think they're checking out of life, but they come back and they find themselves more drained than ever. It happens sometimes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:25](#)):

I hear those stories from some of my family members for sure. I'll just talk from my own experience when I vacation with my family or I get together once a year with some priest friends. We go to a different US city. We like history, music. We do those kind of things. And I remember one year being with my priest friends and I was constantly checking my emails and checking the phone and things like.

Tom Shakely ([20:58](#)):

It's hard not to, right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:59](#)):

I know. But a little fraternal correction and just a reminder to say, hey, we committed to have this time together and why don't you spend it with us?

Tom Shakely ([21:11](#)):

Yes. Yes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:12](#)):

And even though I was physically present, I really wasn't truly present to those I was blessed to have a free time with. It can happen in our own families too, that we change the scenery, we go to a different place, but we're not really attentive to one another. So I guess if any advice is the correction that I've received is just really try to make that commitment that I'm going to let go of the things that so often occupy my time, unless it's an emergency, so I can spend quality time with my family and friends, because those memories will last forever.

([21:50](#)):

You'll never forget them. You'll forget the 20 emails you checked or things like that, but you'll never forget. No. We spent this time together here. Remember how much fun we had together or how much we have that chance to catch up, to listen to each other? So I guess the advice I give to our listeners is the same advice I give to myself, that if you make that commitment to be with family, to be your friends, then truly enjoy that time together, make it quality time together, and you will come home. If you do that, then you do come home refreshed and renewed.

Tom Shakely ([22:21](#)):

Yes, that's great advice. An advice we all need to hear. Probably put on repeat this particular part of the podcast. Well, Bishop Burbidge, first, thanks for interviewing me a little bit and getting a chance for me to introduce myself to the listeners and look forward to sitting down with you again when you return from pilgrimage. But yeah, may God bless your time on pilgrimage and we'll look forward to hearing about that and certainly talking more about the National Eucharistic Revival and Congress.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:48](#)):

Right. Thank you, Tom. As I said, I'll be keeping everyone here in the diocese in my thoughts, in my prayers, and pray that this time that's left in the summer will be a time of renewal and refreshment and joy and spiritual blessings for all of our listeners as we continue our own pilgrimage, our own earthly journey. And throughout that journey, may we always walk humbly with our God.

[\(23:14\)](#):

Thank you for listening to The Walk Humbly Podcast. Make sure you check out more episodes and all the podcasts our diocese offers on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and our diocesan website, arlingtondiocese.org. You can also follow me on X, formerly Twitter, [@BishopBurbidge](#) where I provide a short gospel reflection each morning and on Instagram [@BishopMichaelBurbidge](#). Stay up to date with news, event information, and inspirational content by subscribing to our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org.