

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

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

Tom Shakely ([00:07](#)):

Welcome to the Walk Humbly podcast from the St. Clare Studio in the Diocese of Arlington. I am Tom Shakely, chief communications officer for the Diocese of Arlington, and I'm joined today by our host Bishop Michael Burbidge. Bishop, welcome.

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

Tom.

Tom Shakely ([00:22](#)):

How was your Labor Day?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:23](#)):

It was great. We had a little rest on our Labor Day weekend. We have a great tradition in our diocese that we have a Labor Day cookout on Sunday night for all the priests in our diocese, and it's just so wonderful to gather my brother priests to see their joyful, their fraternal spirit, to see all of us together in one room. So it was a very relaxing evening.

Tom Shakely ([00:48](#)):

That's beautiful. That's beautiful. I know Labor Day, it's one of those bookends. It's Memorial Day and Labor Day at the beginning and end of summer, but it's hard to let summer go sometimes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:57](#)):

It is. It exactly is.

Tom Shakely ([01:00](#)):

As far as Labor Day goes, as Catholics, what kind of deeper meaning can we take from it? It's a federal holiday, of course.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:06](#)):

Sure.

Tom Shakely ([01:06](#)):

But what does it mean really?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:08](#)):

Well, I think it really helps us to reflect on the dignity of work that our Catholic catechism teaches so beautifully, what work is meant to do. It is to praise God. It is to use our gifts and talents in service of others. And if we approach our work in that way, that whatever that work is, whatever that labor is, I'm offering to give praise to God and in any position, any work, any labor, to serve others. And when we do that, then it's not a job. It's a vocation.

Tom Shakely ([01:45](#)):

Yes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:46](#)):

And to me, it's always so wonderful to see people who love the work they do. We see it all the time.

Tom Shakely ([01:55](#)):

You can see it on the face, right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:56](#)):

Yeah. We see it when we sometimes go into a department store. There's the difference between the person who is just trying just to get by eight hours or someone who's really engaged. I often see it whenever I go ... I think they do a great job at Nats Park. I think they train people that way, that we're here to welcome people to make sure they have a great experience. And you see that whatever their position is there, it's like, "Wow, these people love their job."

([02:24](#)):

I see it here every day in our chancery with our colleagues here. This isn't just a job. This is a vocation that God has given to us. I see it with our teachers. We see it all over the place. So to approach it as a vocation, whatever work you're doing now comes to you from God. It's his plan for you.

([02:42](#)):

There's also the catechism and our church will often speak as well about that balance between work and recreation. We have to have that balance in our lives. It can't be, "I work endlessly until I collapse." I always try to say that when we work hard each day, there comes the moment where we say, "That's enough. I gave the Lord my best today, but that's enough. Now it's time to entrust it to him and to relax so I can be renewed the next day to begin again." Of course, in this day and age, we're also mindful of those without work or those who are underemployed. We pray for all of them, that every person through the help of St. Joseph the Worker may have that dignity of work.

Tom Shakely ([03:34](#)):

That's so beautiful. Thank you Bishop for orienting us in that way.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:37](#)):

Sure.

Tom Shakely ([03:39](#)):

Well, Bishop, the Cathedral of St. Thomas More is now reopened. Praise God. Years of planning and construction that took place led up to this moment, and of course it was streamed live and is available still to stream as a part of our Golden Jubilee celebration. All that took place on September 5th. We'll speak in a few minutes about that solemn Mass and dedication of the altar. But first I thought you might share with us a little bit about what you wrote about the cathedral's opening in this month's edition of the Arlington Catholic Herald.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:08](#)):

Sure. First of all, I would just say a few days later, I'm still on cloud nine. I'm still floating. It was one of the happiest days of my priesthood to be with the faithful and the priests of this diocese, and also to be blessed by the presence of our bishops throughout the country and the Apostolic Nuncio who was with us as well. Because it was a reminder that our Golden Jubilee, the dedication of the new altar at Mass, we were united with the church in Rome through the presence of the Nuncio.

[\(04:45\)](#):

So the Universal Church celebrated with us. Seeing bishops from all around the country reminded us that the church of the United States celebrated with us. This was a great occasion for the Diocese of Arlington and also for the Church herself. Yes. And so in the article I wrote that our new cathedral will evangelize. That through our new cathedral, others will look to the sacred and see its beauty and theological symbolism. And I really think that I've invited people to come visit our cathedral. There is so much to learn and there's guides to help you. Especially the lives of the saints of represented in 24 statues ...

Tom Shakely [\(05:27\)](#):

It's incredible, the statues.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(05:29\)](#):

... Throughout our cathedral. I'm also grateful to the generous benefactors who made this possible. We did a major renovation, not only for the beauty of the cathedral, but also structurally. We had to do a whole new HVAC system. We had to do a whole new sound system. We had to do some structural repair. We had to include a lift for persons with disabilities that may be able to participate now in the choir. So there's a lot of things that were costly that people don't even see, and were only possible through the generosity of our benefactors. We had no parish assessment, no campaign. Through the generosity of individuals who also support our charitable works of mercy.

[\(06:16\)](#):

And I also want to thank the parishioners of the cathedral for their prayers and patience and perseverance. We've been out at that cathedral for quite a while, so they hung in there with us. The cathedral is a symbol of unity. It's called the mother church. It belongs to every parishioner in our diocese. The new exterior stonework honors the Tudor style of architecture found during the time which our patron, St. Thomas More, lived. The tabernacle in which our Eucharistic Lord is reposed is now at the center of the sanctuary, reminding us that the Eucharist is always at the center, the source and summit of everything we do as a diocese, as a church, and as a parish.

[\(06:57\)](#):

I mentioned the beautiful saints that also represent our diocesan multicultural communities, including the African and African-American, Filipino, Hispanic and Korean and Vietnamese. Beautiful new crucifix, high above the altar reminds us of our Lord's sacrifice. A wonderful new rose window that is lit from the inside.

Tom Shakely [\(07:17\)](#):

Oh my goodness, yes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(07:18\)](#):

The light radiates in the center. So Tom, I could go on and on, but basically I would just suggest that our listeners come and visit. It's your church, it's the mother church. But also, your team did a great job with

videoing, doing a videotape of Father James Hudgins giving a walking tour of the cathedral. And Father Hudgins has an expertise. One of your staff members says he's like an encyclopedia when it comes to architecture and sacred art. He walked us through the cathedral, and honestly, I learned some things about the cathedral. And if you have a chance to see it, dear friends, it is really worth it. And it's not that long, but very, very, a great teaching production.

Tom Shakely ([08:09](#)):

That's right. Yeah. It's an amazing, amazing production, you mentioned that Father Hudgins offered for all of us. It debuted, of course, during the Golden Jubilee live stream in a sort of a shortened version, about a 15-minute version, and a complete version is going to debut this week ...

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:23](#)):

Oh, great. Yeah.

Tom Shakely ([08:23](#)):

... On our YouTube Channel. So stay tuned.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:25](#)):

Yeah, I had a sneak preview of the longer one.

Tom Shakely ([08:27](#)):

That's right. No, really, truly amazing. And you mentioned, we're talking about the renovations of the cathedral, Bishop, but I had seen the cathedral prior to the renovations and I've seen it now. Mentally, I know it was just a renovation, "just a renovation." And I know the structure looks similar, its footprint is the same, but it feels like a totally new cathedral. I mean, it's amazing to walk in and to see exactly what you just described. Your eyes drawn to the rose window, the crucifix in front of the rose window, the tabernacle beneath the ... I mean, it's the symbolism. It awes you.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:04](#)):

It does. And I saw that, Tom, I saw that on Thursday. I saw it when the students on Friday, the next day, had their first Mass there. They were walking into the cathedral with their eyes wide open. It was so beautiful. And I saw it yesterday in a Mass of thanksgiving for all the parishioners, just that sense of wonder and awe. So I said to the students on Friday, and I mean this sincerely, I said it to the parishioners yesterday that yes, on Thursday especially, we were really celebrating and on cloud nine with the beauty of the cathedral.

([09:42](#)):

But I did say to the students on Friday and parishioners on Sunday that it's even more beautiful now because the people of God are there.

Tom Shakely ([09:51](#)):

Amen.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:52](#)):

Dwelling together as the body of Christ, as brothers and sisters to give praise and worship to God, which is what this was all about, was to give praise and worship to God. But with the body of Christ, the people of God there, it's even more beautiful.

Tom Shakely ([10:05](#)):

When we are there together, it's truly complete.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:07](#)):

Yes.

Tom Shakely ([10:08](#)):

Yes. Well, Bishop, we're getting into it, but let's talk about that solemn Mass and dedication some more. I know during the Mass itself, there were more than a thousand Catholics, not just from across the diocese, parish representatives, diocesan priests, of course, deacons, women religious, donors and friends. But you mentioned there were also many bishops. There were three cardinals, and I think at least 29 bishops that came right from coast to coast for this solemn Mass. We mentioned YouTube briefly, but I should plug it again. If you're listening and you weren't present for the solemn Mass, or if you haven't seen the Golden Jubilee live stream of which it is a part, you can stream it right after you're done listening to this episode, you can go to [YouTube.com/ArlingtonDiocese](https://www.youtube.com/ArlingtonDiocese) or [ArlingtonDiocese.org](https://www.ArlingtonDiocese.org) to find the Mass.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:53](#)):

Yeah. And again, there's the commentary that explains everything we did, especially if we could focus ... If you have not seen, dear friends, the dedication of an altar, just even watch that section of that link that you just mentioned and listen to the explanation of what is really going on there to explain everything that took place on that day. It really taught everything that we believe as Catholics, and we had that moment to celebrate.

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

Amen. Amen. So Bishop, I was speaking recently with Father Posey, the rector of the cathedral, and he shared with me that there are already so many local groups, especially student groups who are already scheduled to visit the cathedral even before it reopened.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:35](#)):

Right. I've encouraged our pastors and our principals and directors of religious education, especially those preparing for confirmation, bring them to the cathedral. We will give you a wonderful tour. And I think that young students will be fascinated, especially as they walk around our cathedral and look at the statues and the symbolism behind each of the saints that tell you something special. And I think our young people can identify with the saints, and we have a great tour guide, a wonderful way for the students to experience that. But again, even parish groups, women's group, men's groups, everyone's welcome. And that's what a cathedral is for. It's supposed to be a place of pilgrimage. So I hope others will consider to do the same.

Tom Shakely ([12:19](#)):

And I know, of course, we've got a special display in the narthex of the cathedral that our team worked on, collaborated with the cathedral staff and as a part of the reopening, and it provides this ability ... We mentioned groups, of course, but even if you're an individual and you go to visit the cathedral and you want to learn some things like just as you learned from Father Hudgins video certain things, I certainly learned from this new display in the narthex of the cathedral about some architectural features that I did not know about from church history that are now present in our cathedral.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([12:47](#)):

That board in the back, as you enter into the church, that is so well done. It's interactive. You hit buttons and you can learn everything that you want. So that's a great point. Individuals can do that on their own as well.

Tom Shakely ([12:59](#)):

That's right. Yeah. So you can do a self-guided tour on any visit. But there's another thing we should mention about the cathedral in this special year Bishop, which is that the Holy Father granted a special plenary indulgence for those who visit the cathedral as long as you go prior to the end of this calendar year. But what is a plenary indulgence?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:20](#)):

Well, yeah, and it was a great, great gift from the Holy Father to be able to announce that a plenary indulgence is attached to those who make this pilgrimage, and the Holy Father granted this to us as part of our Golden Jubilee. The church, Tom, teaches that a plenary indulgence grants remission of all temporal punishment associated with the guilt of sin. So that's the easiest definition. And we all know that our actions have consequences. Well, that is just as true as sinful actions, of course.

([13:51](#)):

A plenary indulgence repairs the temporal harm done by sin. There are general conditions for a plenary indulgence and specific conditions for this particular diocesan plenary indulgence that lasts, as you mentioned, through the end of the year. Here are the special conditions for our diocesan plenary indulgence for pilgrims who are visiting the Cathedral of St. Thomas More, who of course, as you know is our patron. Prayer to God for the fidelity of the United States to his Christian calling, prayer for priestly and religious vocations and prayer for the defense of the family. So they're the specific conditions. An individual must conclude these prayers by saying the Our Father, the Creed, and a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

([14:35](#)):

And then there are general conditions for a plenary indulgence that may be fulfilled at one's parish within two or three weeks of visiting the Cathedral. These conditions: sacramental confession, reception of holy Communion, prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father. So it's very good for us to obtain remission for temporal consequences of sin. So I hope that many will take advantage of this distinct opportunity as we close out our Golden Jubilee. This is a very powerful grace, a very amazing grace that God is offering to us, and it is powerful. We will know the difference in our lives by fulfilling everything that's required by this plenary indulgence and fulfillment of God's promise, always there to make us a new creation.

Tom Shakely ([15:22](#)):

Well, thank you so much, Bishop.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:23](#)):

Sure.

Tom Shakely ([15:24](#)):

We've been speaking of such joyful things, but of course in this life we also face sorrow. And here at the chancery, we recently held a prayer service for our very own Mary Stewart who passed away recently following a long illness. We invite all those listening, of course, to join us in prayer for Mary. But Bishop, would you like to share a little bit about her?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:45](#)):

Yeah. Mary was a very special, faithful woman, a great inspiration to all of us here, especially in her time of suffering. She embraced her cross. She never complained. She worked until the very end with that same passion and joy and zeal that we were talking about previously as part of her vocation. She was the director of the risk management office working to uphold a culture of parish, school, and workplace safety across our diocese and in this day and age, so sadly, even with the most recent shooting that we saw at the high school in Georgia.

Tom Shakely ([16:23](#)):

In Georgia, yeah.

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

Mary helped us, she and her team to put together really detailed protocols for school safety, parish safety, and with the great cooperation of our pastors and her team, we're implementing them and doing everything within human possibility to protect our young people, to protect our students. And she led that task force to help us to do it. She was beloved in our diocese. She served well her country, even as a law enforcement agent, and she will be remembered and kept close to our hearts and prayers.

([17:02](#)):

But I think in her honor, if we want to honor someone who gave just great service to our diocese is to be vigilant, to stay vigilant. She was always saying that to us, "Stay vigilant." Always being watchful of protecting others, protecting the campuses of our parishes and schools, and to assist your pastor in implementing some of these protocols, which some of them cost money as well. So anything that we can do to help that would be a great honor to our colleague and friend.

Tom Shakely ([17:32](#)):

That's wonderful. Thank you, Bishop. Well, I hesitate to bring this up somewhat Bishop, but ...

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([17:38](#)):

We're getting away from the good news here.

Tom Shakely ([17:40](#)):

I know, I know. I know. We're going to get back to it though. But this is a divisive time and it's an election season. The first presidential debate is happening this week. What do you make of that?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([17:51](#)):

Yeah. Well, I think again, it ties into our sacred duty, as we've talked about before in this podcast, to be, not only citizens, but to be faithful citizens. And as faithful citizens, we have to let our voice be heard, and we do so by our vote and honor the freedom, honor those who made this kind of freedom possible, that we have a democracy where our voice and our vote truly matter and make a difference.

[\(18:26\)](#):

And so there's that sacred duty of being informed, to inform our conscience above all, but also to be informed of the issues. What are the issues that are impacting us as a nation? And who is it that will offer the best solutions in a just way for the good of all, and a faithfulness to God's commands and ways? And so we all have to participate in that process.

[\(18:58\)](#):

I love following political history, and I've even looked back on famous debates the last few weeks.

Tom Shakely [\(19:03\)](#):

Oh, yeah.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(19:04\)](#):

I really wish we would get back to the day when debates were about issues and not personalities, because the voter needs to be informed. And so I think that as this debate, which is very important, I think this debate tomorrow night, I think one thing we all can do is pray that it will be a debate in which the issues are discussed, where there is respect for one another, allowing each other to talk and asking and praying that those who are conducting debate do so fairly and justly and ask the questions that need to be asked and get away from all the personalities and all those emotions that are not great, but to stay focused.

[\(19:57\)](#):

You look back, and I look back on some famous debates where people had no problem. They had different oppositions, but there was no problem. There wasn't even a question of whether they're going to shake hands. Of course they were. They both had a love for our country and was doing what they thought was best, but they respected each other. Even though there was fierce disagreement. I looked at a number of debates where there was even some humor where we can relax, okay, take it ... Let's talk about the issues. Let's be serious, but let's treat each other right. And at the conclusion of debate, the willingness to shake hands and stay passionate, but to respect each other. And I'm praying so hard for that in our country, especially at this moment in time.

Tom Shakely [\(20:51\)](#):

Yeah. No, it's so important. Thank you, Bishop. It's good advice for those of us who are tuning into the debate this week. And even if you're not, that's good advice for approaching things.

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

Some people might say, "Well, for my health, my blood pressure, I may not tune in," but hopefully we keep that ...

Tom Shakely [\(21:05\)](#):

No shame in getting the Cliff's Notes after. Well, Bishop, that segues very nicely actually into the question we have this week as a part of our questions from the faithful. Of course, every episode we

welcome questions and Bishop Burbidge responds to those questions. You can email us at info@arlingtondiocese.org or you can reach out to us on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, wherever we have a platform, you can direct message us.

[\(21:31\)](#):

So our question for today, Bishop, is a little bit along the lines of what we just talked about, but it expands upon and it goes deeper. Our listener asks, "As Catholics, how do we balance being aware of what's happening in our national politics," like we just talked about, "but not being consumed by it on a personal level?"

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(21:49\)](#):

Right. That's a great question. It's always about that balance, that healthy balance. I need to pay attention to that myself because I really do get immersed in politics and I can find myself constantly turning on the news shows where they have political guests and just being too consumed about it. But again, there's always that moment where you have to say, "Enough, it's important for me to be informed. It's important to stay focused as a voter." But the person who asked the question used a good word, but not being consumed by it. A healthy balance. There's other things in life that we must attend to as well. So a healthy balance where it's not causing you to be emotionally distressed or anything like that. Keep it in balance.

[\(22:44\)](#):

And it's an important question. We know that right now there's so much tension and restlessness when it comes to politics. Also, as we talk about being informed, try to read more than headlines. I recommend the good resources. I always say this, but it's true. The Virginia Catholic Conference, we're so blessed with great leadership there. And the Virginia Catholic Conference offers an overview of Catholic social teaching and materials on how to form our conscience for faithful citizenship.

[\(23:17\)](#):

Now, as Catholics, we're finding that nearly all our thoughts are fixated on one candidate or another, one party or another. That's a good sign that maybe we don't have that balance. There's only one person who should be at the center of our heart and mind, and that is the Lord. It's one nation under God, and we have to entrust our great country to him. It's fine to follow politics. I do myself. And especially good to know politics deeply if that's your professional responsibility.

[\(23:49\)](#):

But to let partisan concerns dominate the heart can become an issue. It can really divide families.

Tom Shakely [\(23:56\)](#):

It has.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(23:56\)](#):

And friendships, even friendships. So the church offers us many practices that help us to stay oriented to our Lord. Daily prayer, making a habit of frequent confession, Mass attendance, and trusting, "Lord, this is all yours. I'm entrusting this all to you, and throughout this process, I'm asking you to give me peace, Lord, peace." And so we have to be spiritually focused as well throughout this important time in the life of our country. So stay engaged, but not to let the election season be excuse for neglecting our basic responsibility to God. Our great patron, Thomas More reminds us, we are God's servant first. So let's stay faithful. Let's stay courageous. Let's stay peaceful.

Tom Shakely ([24:47](#)):

Thank you so much, Bishop. I can already feel any tension I had just leave my body.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([24:53](#)):

I hope that is the case, Tom.

Tom Shakely ([24:56](#)):

All right, Bishop. Well, thanks so much for speaking about this. It's so wonderful to talk about the cathedral being reopened. It's going to take a little getting used to know that it is reopened and I can go back to Mass there every day if I want to, and that we invite all listening to go visit on pilgrimage as soon as possible for that opportunity of plenary indulgence.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:15](#)):

The doors are wide open to all of God's people where we encounter him, the living God in word and sacrament.

Tom Shakely ([25:23](#)):

All right, Bishop. Well, is there anything else that you wish to add at this time?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:26](#)):

Well, just maybe on a lighter note if we could, Tom. We were talking about politics a lot, but another passion of mine, I guess you would say would be sports. And we opened the NFL season this year. So one of the teams, my favorite team, is off to a 1 and 0 start. And so I'm happy about that. But we know it's a long season. It's a long season. I know our Commanders have a bright, young quarterback that also offers some great hope there. But again, with sports, it's the same as politics. Enjoy it, allow it to be a thing of relaxation, and I'm preaching to myself now, but keep balance still. Don't let it consume you. I'm preaching to myself now as well.

([26:16](#)):

But I do hope it seems that right after Labor Day, it seems like we get back to kind of the routine and the ordinary, but nothing's ordinary if every day we see it as a gift from God and an opportunity to offer our work and our labor to him in praise and in service of one another. So I hope and pray that we are able to do that together as we walk humbly with our God.

([26:41](#)):

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