

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, and I'm joined today by our host, Bishop Michael Burbidge. Welcome.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:19](#)):

Hi Tom, great to be with you and to have this chance to speak with our listeners. We're recording this day on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a beautiful day to honor Mary, to entrust our lives and ourselves and all those we love to her care and protection. And also, a beautiful day to express our devotion, our affection for Mary as our mother, as our queen, as our powerful intercessor. And we pray that through her powerful intercession as the patroness of the Americas, that our nation, our world will know the peace that only her son can give.

Tom Shakely ([00:57](#)):

Thank you so much, Bishop. Yeah, it's a wonderful moment here as we move through Advent to have this great solemnity. Bishop, you recently celebrated your eighth anniversary of your installation as your Bishop of Arlington. That was December 6th.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:12](#)):

Yeah, it's hard to believe. It is like, I am sure our listeners feel the same way in their own lives, but you say eight years, where did that time go? Which probably is a great sign that it's been a very blessed moment and joy in my life. I was installed on the feast of St. Nicholas and I always say that was a perfect day to be installed because it's a great gift to be the Bishop of Arlington, to serve with such many wonderful, wonderful priests, and of course the faithful witness of all those throughout our diocese. So, just a day to thank God and renew that commitment to continue to the best with his grace to do his holy will.

Tom Shakely ([01:48](#)):

Thanks be to God. Yeah, looking forward to many more years to come, hopefully.

([01:52](#)):

All right. Bishop, did you catch the reopening of Notre Dame in Paris? I mean, thanks be to God, this thing reopened five years after a fire. I mean, I remember watching that on TV-

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

I know.

Tom Shakely ([02:01](#)):

And it looked like the entire cathedral was lost.

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

Right, I know.

Tom Shakely ([02:04](#)):

And now it's back.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:06](#)):

Yeah, that really was amazing. I caught highlights, videos of the ceremony and what a powerful moment that there was a promise that it would be rebuilt within five years, and with the grace of God, it was able to accomplish that magnificent endeavor. And it was just amazing to see that the sacred being restored, the impact that that had throughout the world. We saw so many world leaders there and it was kind of nice to see that cooperation of church and state in a sense, that we can do things together and can celebrate things together. And also a reminder that as we celebrate on the Immaculate Conception, nothing's impossible with God, and those workers and all those dedicated to that rebuilding of Notre Dame accomplished something great for his greater honor and glory.

([03:12](#)):

So it adds something to my bucket list, I think it's an obligation for me to go visit that, to see that beautiful cathedral. And so no, and the Lord does the same thing for us. That's what he promises throughout Advent. He promises that with his healing love and saving grace to rebuild us, to restore us, to renew us, if only we invite him into our lives.

Tom Shakely ([03:35](#)):

Well, this Advent, we've got a wonderful gift here for the entire diocese and the wider listening community really as Catholics. Our team here has put together a wonderful lectio divina series. This is something that you can find on our YouTube channel, as well as our website. And you may have seen it already on our social media or in our emails if you're subscribed to those, hopefully you are. Lectio divina just means, as you know, Bishop, divine reading, and this is a contemporary expression of an ancient Christian practice. And our team thought this is a wonderful thing to do. It's been many months of putting this together, to put this series together, both in English and in Spanish. So our own Father Jonathan Smith, guides us through our English version and Father Jesus Munoz guides us through our Spanish series. And it's just invitation to pray during Advent through meditation. Familiar themes, the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel appearing to Saint Joseph, the Visitation, the Nativity. And it's a way hopefully that all those who participate can make this a truly holy time in Advent, as they enter into the Christmas season.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:40](#)):

Yeah. Well, I'm very grateful, Tom, to you and to the team for producing this series and for Father Jesus and Father Jonathan for leading us. We all know that Advent is that call to slow down, to stop the hurrying and rushing and just to be still with the Lord and listen to him, allow him to speak to our heart. But we need tools, we need resources to help us in that prayer and this series will be a great resource for our listeners. I encourage them to please activate it in their own lives. See that as a resource to help you in your prayer, especially in these final days of preparation for Christmas.

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

Amen. Well, Bishop, we're looking ahead a little bit to Christmas. I know that's part of Advent is this separate time, this time set apart, but you look ahead to Christmas and of course, we're looking beyond Christmas as well. Already thinking about the New Year in the life of our church, because on Christmas Eve, the Holy Father, Pope Francis will inaugurate the opening of the Holy Year of 2025. This is a jubilee

year in the life of our church. The theme is Pilgrims of Hope, and it'll be celebrated in a special way in our diocese community.

[\(05:52\)](#):

So of course, we're making materials available on our website at ArlingtonDiocese.org, I hope you bookmark that, our Holy Year 2025 webpage with key resources from the Holy Sea, as well as a message from you, Bishop Burbidge, that you have for our diocesan faithful.

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

Well, no, this is a jubilee, Holy Year marked by what Pope Francis prays will be marked by hope. And we do this every 25 years, and so this is a 2025, here we are. And the Holy Father has asked all the diocese throughout the world to be united in celebrating this jubilee. And what a beautiful theme you mentioned, Tom, Pilgrims of Hope. It's a message that our world, our nation, and all of us need is to have that hope. As Saint Paul says, "The hope that doesn't disappoint, hope that doesn't fade." And where is that hope? Of course, it's in Christ our Lord. I mean, that's the source of our hope, the one who promises to be faithful, to make things new, to rescue us, to save us, to be with us, to be the source of our peace and joy.

[\(07:06\)](#):

We pray a lot of times for an increase of faith, but I think we also should pray for an increase of hope because we see the problems that are around us, the sufferings, the evils, the darkness, it's all around us. But what never changes is the presence of the Lord God in our lives, the one who conquered in his son, the power of evil, the power of darkness, and in him is that path to life and joy. And so I think that's such an important message for all of us to embrace. But I would also say as we enter this whole year, not only to be pilgrims of hope, in other words, as we make this earthly journey, not to lose sight of what awaits us, God's promises and the fulfillment of them, of course in heaven. But also during the jubilee year, try to be messengers of hope, especially to those you encounter in your family, in your workplaces, in your schools because a lot of people are without hope. And when you're without hope, you despair. And when you despair, you give up.

[\(08:20\)](#):

And so we can every day be messengers of hope. And practically speaking, when you think about it, how can we be messengers of hope? Well, one way is to let people see your joy. Your joy in having a relationship with the Lord and living your faith and proclaiming it. Allow, be a messenger of hope of course, also through your kindness, your compassion, your charitable deeds. All those ways of reminding people that they're not alone, that God loves them, we love them. And that kind of spirit of being fully alive can have an impact on the lives of others, it's contagious. And so, let's all promise to not only to be pilgrims of hope, but also messengers of hope.

Tom Shakely [\(09:13\)](#):

And of course, you've got a special mass scheduled for January 5th if you're a subscriber to our diocesan events calendar, you'll have already seen this on your calendar probably, but January 5th at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More, an opening mass for this whole year, right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(09:26\)](#):

That's right, yeah. And as you mentioned our resource. So, didn't you also tell me there's an app for the Holy Year?

Tom Shakely ([09:33](#)):

There is an app.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:34](#)):

The Holy Seas.

Tom Shakely ([09:34](#)):

That's right, the Holy See put this together, and so this is linked on the web page. And so there's an app that yeah, you should download and follow along throughout the year because as you mentioned, this is a moment in the universal church. So there's things going on not only here locally and not only in Rome, but really all over the world that are worth following and making a part of your spiritual journey through this jubilee year. And so yeah, this local mass as well is going to be something that of course, we live stream as we do with many, for those who can't be there in person.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:03](#)):

Yeah, that's great. Well, thanks again for making that available.

Tom Shakely ([10:06](#)):

Well, Bishop, in this upcoming Holy Year, we've got two particularly special moments in it already that the Holy See has announced. Pope Francis is going to canonize two young people, Blessed Carlo Acutis, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati as saints in the Catholic Church. Can you remind us for those listening who may not remember, who are these?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:26](#)):

Yeah, this is great. This is a great gift Holy Father has given to us and especially to our young people. Just a great example of true witnesses for Catholics today, especially our youth and young adults. Carlo Acutis became the first saint of the millennial generation. Extraordinary in holiness, deeper devotion to attending mass and worshipping our Eucharistic Lord. Great love for the Holy Eucharist, and praying the Rosary, great devotion to our blessed mother. He led his own mother back to the Catholic faith, and sadly died at the age of 15, but just his example of being on fire for his love for the Lord and having the zeal to share that with others and the impact he had on the lives of so many people.

Tom Shakely ([11:18](#)):

Truly incredible. Yeah, Bishop, just about a year ago, actually, blessed Carlo's mother came, I don't know if you remember this?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:24](#)):

Yeah.

Tom Shakely ([11:24](#)):

He came and visited DC and my wife and I attended a talk that she came and gave at Catholic University. And it was in their big auditorium there in the business school, packed. And I mean, people were moved, tears, in terms of her speaking about, of course, the natural love of her son, but the movement of the heart and the movement of the spirit that her son's witness led to in her own life. It was incredible.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:49](#)):

Yeah, I was not able to attend, but I heard so many people who were moved and touched as you and your wife were by that talk. And there's the churches, as we celebrate the lives of the Saints, we're making those resources available where we can learn more about Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati, another great example of living lives devoted to Christ, being heroic in their witness as young men deeply committed to the Lord and to his ways. So try, maybe all of our listeners can be encouraged to learn more about them. I know that in doing confirmations the past year or so, many more of our young men have taken the name Carlo Acutis. So our young people have learned a great deal about him. So, two more Saints, great gift to the church.

Tom Shakely ([12:44](#)):

Thanks be to God. All right, well, before we know it, the National March for Life is going to be upon us once again. In 2025, the Sisters of Life, the Knights of Columbus, and the Diocese of Arlington are uniting to host an event called Life Fest. This is going to be a dynamic two-day, pro-life event that's going to take place January 23rd and 24th on the campus locally here of George Mason University at Eagle Bank Arena. Speakers and musicians are going to be made available progressively on the Life Fest website, and you can register for that event right now if you want, at LifeFestRally.com.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:22](#)):

Yeah, it's always a great... it's a great, our diocese since 2009 has been doing Life is Very Good events, and we welcome young people from all around the country who are coming to participate in the March for Life in Washington the night before. It's a rally, it's a rally for life, preparing us for our witness that we will offer in our nation's capital. So with young people, it's very dynamic. There's great Christian music and artists and speakers. It's wonderful for young people to see they're not alone and to see people of their own age coming from all parts of the nation. And we have 30, 40 priests available for confessions. We have procession of the blessed sacrament, and then mass the next morning before we go to the march. It's not too early to mark your calendars and I can assure everyone who will attend this event, it will be prayerful and it will be energizing.

Tom Shakely ([14:25](#)):

And there's food.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:27](#)):

And there's food.

Tom Shakely ([14:27](#)):

That's a part of that too.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:28](#)):

Yeah, I know. Yeah, before they take off, we make sure they are nourished.

Tom Shakely ([14:33](#)):

That's right, that's right. Yeah, we may not get snow like we did last year, but it's a wonderful day at the March for Life, of course. And it's, as you had mentioned, Bishop, a wonderful way to prepare for it. So

again, tickets for Life Fest, night of praise and the morning rally are available now at LifeFestRally.com. And of course, we'll link to those in the show notes.

[\(14:51\)](#):

Bishop, every episode we have a question or two from the faithful. We welcome questions and Bishop responds to each of those, to all those questions that come through that come through to us at info@arlingtondiocese.org. Or you can reach out to us on social media, Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, with your question.

[\(15:11\)](#):

So here is today's question: "I will be traveling home for Christmas to visit family. I love my family, even though most of them are not practicing their Catholic faith or have become basically atheists. I want to be a good witness during our time together as a family, but I'm unsure how to evangelize without causing family drama or being accused of pushing my beliefs. So, what should I do?"

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(15:33\)](#):

Yeah, this sounds familiar, doesn't it? I think many of us in immediate family or extended family have that situation where people we love are no longer for now, in a relationship with the Lord or with his church. It's a reality, but I think the person who asked the question is already evangelizing because he or she said, "I love my family." That's a powerful way to evangelize, that we love. We love those that have been given to us as special people in our lives, especially our dear relatives and family members. So we always love them. Sometimes they may disappoint us or sometimes they're not living as we wish they would live and things like that, but nothing changes the fact that we are called to love them. And by loving them we are evangelizing.

[\(16:35\)](#):

So I think I commend our listener for doing that, and we pray for them, right? No matter what there, they're always God's children. So we entrust them to the Lord and say, "Lord, this is my brother, this is my sister. I know that they're not living their faith. Maybe they're even denying the faith, whatever, but they're yours, Lord. And I entrust them to you to care of them, inspire them, touch their hearts. Allow me if I can, to just be an instrument that may be that person who just through my own example or witness may be the person that does touch that heart," and so never underestimate that.

[\(17:16\)](#):

I would always say that as we mentioned earlier about being a messenger of hope, when people see our joy and they see our serenity, even in the midst of the struggles and the pressures and the burdens of life, they notice. They notice and they say, "Why is he, she so joyful? Why are they so serene?" And if they ask us that question and we're able to say, "Because of my relationship with the Lord, I find my strength, my serenity, in Lord." Wow, that's powerful. So sometimes we don't have to say anything. Sometimes we just let our example in a sincere and a genuine way, to speak.

[\(18:04\)](#):

Of course, I think we can always do some practical things. We can without making anything too overwhelming for someone, we could just maybe invite someone to maybe join in a prayer before a meal, or could we just say a prayer together on this day for peace in our world? Something that where maybe someone would not be intimidated or threatened from hearing. So sometimes you have to take small steps before you take the big steps. And I think just always, we love our family, we lead them closer to the Lord always by inviting and not imposing. And when we start imposing and we start overwhelming people, that sometimes does not do the good that we're seeking.

[\(18:59\)](#):

So, love your family, pray for them. Let them see your joy in relating with the Lord, but ultimately, and trust them to God. And never underestimate, never underestimate how God can transform hearts and sometimes it's at times when we least expect.

Tom Shakely [\(19:15\)](#):

Thank you, Bishop. Well, we covered a lot of ground in this conversation. Bishop, do you have any final thoughts for us?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(19:20\)](#):

Well, it is a sacred time, right? We're in this Advent season, such a joyful, holy, sacred time in our lives. And I just encourage all of our listeners, I know there's a lot to do and there's a lots of social engagements, and there's all kinds of things going on. You know what? Some of that's all good. As long as we keep our eyes focused on what truly matters. We are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Savior, and we want to have hearts ready and prepared to do so. So as I mentioned earlier in the podcast, slow down, stop hurrying, stop running from one thing, be silent, be still, let the Lord listen to you.

[\(20:04\)](#):

And I would also encourage our listeners too, that one of the best ways we prepare our hearts, prepare the way of the Lord, is to free ourselves from the burden and from the sadness of sin. And we're all sinners, and this Advent season gives us the opportunity to celebrate what the Lord promises. Anyone who expresses sorrow, contrition, and the desire to begin anew, he blesses us abundantly with divine mercy and infinite love, and forgives our sins completely. Though your sins may be like scarlet, they become white as snow because no sin, for those who are sorrow is greater than God's mercy, there is no better way to prepare for the celebration of Christmas than be freed from the darkness of sin. And our priests and his diocese are extraordinarily generous in being available for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and make themselves so available at times that everyone, it's convenient for all people. It's not just there that our priests are so available. So I would encourage everyone to please consider celebrating the Lord's love and mercy and the sacrament of reconciliation before the celebration of Christmas.

[\(21:20\)](#):

And I wish everyone continued blessings throughout these sacred days and ask Mary our mother to watch over you, so that like her, we can say yes to God's holy will and to walk humbly with him.

[\(21:32\)](#):

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