

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

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

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

Welcome to The Walk Humbly Podcast from the St. Clare Studio here in the Diocese of Arlington. I am Tom Shakely, Chief Communications Officer for the diocese, and I'm joined today by our very own Bishop Michael Burbidge.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:21](#)):

Great to be with you, Tom. Great to be with our listeners. We're recording this on the fifth Sunday of Lent, Monday on the fifth Sunday of Lent, so we are at the home stretch. And I'm sure like all of our listeners, asking God for the grace, for the strength to finish strong. I know many of us, I'm sure most of us have really been trying hard to make this a good Lent. And we made promises in the beginning and we have to finish the course. Stay on course, finish strong. Of course, we can only do so with the Lord's grace and help.

Tom Shakely ([00:55](#)):

Amen. Thank you, Bishop. Look, we've got some exciting news, Bishop. I know we've talked for a few episodes on and off about our Holy Year tour that's happening this year in this universal jubilee year for the church. And here in the Diocese of Arlington, it's taking special shape with this Holy Year of churches where anyone can make pious visits. We'll link to that in the show notes. But just this last, week we learned that we've hit a kind of special milestone in this Holy Year celebration. We had our first pilgrim complete the visit to all eight locations of the Holy Year tour across our whole diocese. Joyful moment. And so, the winner is Brian from Nativity Parish in Burke.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([01:37](#)):

Way to go, Brian. That is great. That is wonderful to hear that Brian went to our eight parishes designated as holy sites to not only learn, it's a beautiful way to learn our diocese because they are spread out of course, but we know when we make pilgrimages, when we journey in faith, the Lord has abundant graces and blessings waiting for us. So, I pray those graces and blessings are Brian's and all who continue to make this pilgrimage. You responded to the Lord's call, Brian, to conversion, to becoming a living witness of hope. So, thank you so much for that example.

Tom Shakely ([02:20](#)):

And if you're listening, you may be among the others. We know there are many others who are doing their tour. This is not something that you do in a day, although I guess if you're really radical, you could possibly, but it's something that you can do over the course of a few weeks or a few months. It's something that some people are doing as individuals like Brian and others who are doing as families. And we know because, as a part of this, if you go to these churches, like the Basilica in Old Town, for instance, has right there in the front by the narthex, it has a sign and it makes it very clear this is a part of the Holy Year tour.

([02:55](#)):

The signs have a QR code and you can just snap a picture of that. You log your visit. That's how we're able to track these things, and we have a sense of how many people are doing it and how many people are close to the finish line, how many people are just starting. And so, if you're listening and you're one

of those, definitely keep going. And if maybe for whatever reason it's the first time you're hearing of this Holy Year tour, please do check it out, linked in the show notes and consider starting your tour.

[\(03:21\)](#):

Well, Bishop, you were in Richmond just last week for the Virginia March for Life. I know we had Virginia Pro-Life Day earlier this year, which was kind of a legislative advocacy day talking to lawmakers, but the March for Life in Richmond had a bit of a different flair, didn't it?

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(03:36\)](#):

It did. And as you mentioned, we witnessed to the gospel of life, most especially through prayer, also through advocacy. We had that legislative days where we engage elected officials, trying to convince them of their sacred duty to protect, to safeguard all of human life, and public witness. Public witness is a very powerful way of witnessing, of proclaiming the gospel of life. And that's what we did in the Capitol in Richmond last Wednesday. It was very powerful to see people of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life, not just Catholics, but from around our various communities. But I was very proud of the Diocese of Arlington's presence there. So many of our friends all united in the belief that every life is sacred. And it was profoundly inspiring.

[\(04:32\)](#):

Of course, our commitment to defending the sacredness of human life, to proclaiming all that life is sacred, the dignity that belongs to every person is unwavering. But we have to be a voice for the voiceless, especially the unborn who cannot speak for themselves. So, by marching and praying and standing together publicly, we send a clear, clear message that every person is made in the image of God. And it was very, very... I was so happy also to see so many of our young people. I also want to thank and commend Governor Youngkin and a number of elected officials from across the Commonwealth who joined us that day for the program.

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

That's beautiful.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(05:21\)](#):

And also, Governor Youngkin led the march for us and participated in it. It's not easy. It's not easy for elected officials and representatives to proclaim their belief that we share, that every child must be protected, especially the most vulnerable. And so, for them to courageously profess that belief, that conviction, probably at a price, but they know that to live the truth, not to compromise is at the heart, I'm sure of everything they do. So, we should always be ready to challenge our elected officials, but at the same time to offer encouragement and thanks for when they do what we believe is their duty, their sacred duty in the public arena. So, just a word of thanks to those individuals.

[\(06:21\)](#):

And also, Tom, we march peacefully. We march through, and that's what confuses people. They see, oh, okay, here's march and here's the signs.

Tom Shakely [\(06:31\)](#):

They're used to anger.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(06:32\)](#):

What are these people protesting? We're not protesting. We are proclaiming all that is good. Life is very good. And so, because we have the truth, how are we doing it? We're doing it joyfully and peacefully because we have the truth, and that... But that that's one way to do it. But we can never, every day must be praying for the protection of sacred life, engaging our elected officials, and of course, always never be afraid to offer courageous witness.

Tom Shakely ([07:06](#)):

Thank you, Bishop. Yeah, and that's a good reminder to you too, because you mentioned Governor Youngkin's presence. If you are interested in these kind of updates and getting more engaged, maybe it didn't make it out to Richmond but you'd like to go to these in the future, it's worth checking out the Virginia Catholic Conference website and particularly signing up for alerts. Both email alerts, which I know you can get anywhere nowadays, but particularly text alerts are great. Really timely updates where the VCC will let you know what's going on legislatively in Richmond and how you can make a difference by making your voice heard through petitions or phone calls or attending the occasional advocacy day.

([07:44](#)):

Well, Bishop, I know we've also got here, probably talk about in our own diocese, the great work of Project Rachel as opposed to a post-abortion healing ministry that offers hope and restoration for those who are experiencing the after effects of abortion. Maybe we could just take a moment to reflect on this ministry.

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

Yes. Our commitment to proclaim, to live the gospel of life is our way of saying that we're for every woman, we're for every child, we're for every father. And we are well aware of the trauma, the stress there, the pain and suffering that come to those who have participated in abortion. And yet, just like the Lord, the church is always there for them, always. And Project Rachel is a beautiful ministry, as you mentioned, Tom, of healing. Very, very powerful ministry of healing. And we see, we have seen the Lord work miraculously in the lives of individuals right here in our diocese and beyond who needed to know the Lord loves them and that love is so great. It's infinite love, that there's nothing we can do where that love would ever fade or disappear. We're always the Lord's beloved.

([09:05](#)):

And even when we commit a serious sin or flaws that are very serious enter into our lives, if we are sorry and express our sorrow with the desire to begin anew, God is always there. We just heard that gospel last week of the Prodigal Son. And not only to forgive us, but he runs out to forgive us. He comes to us wanting to embrace us in love and mercy. And so, it's a beautiful, beautiful ministry. It's one of the most vital expression I believe, of the church's mission of mercy and healing. Abortion we know leaves deep wounds, wounds of sorrow, wounds of guilt and trauma that often remain hidden and unspoken for many years. And Project Rachel exists to meet people in that silent suffering and assure them that healing is not only possible, it's desired by God, and it can happen at any time.

([10:04](#)):

I love that gospel story we recently read that the man was ill for 38 years, and I'm sure he was at the point that this has been a long time. Nothing can ever change, nothing will ever change. But it did because he said, "Lord, I want to be healed." And the Lord says, "Do you believe I can do this for you?" "Yes Lord, I believe." And then, everything changed for him. And that's what Project Rachel does

through walking with individuals, never judging, but offering mercy, offering retreats and counseling, support. We are there for you. Please contact the office for Project Rachel.

Tom Shakely ([10:44](#)):

That's right. We'll link to that in the show notes.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([10:46](#)):

And the church is here for you. So, it is, that contact information is available in the notes, right?

Tom Shakely ([10:52](#)):

That's right, that's right.

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

Okay.

Tom Shakely ([10:54](#)):

Yeah. Thank you very much. Project Rachel's a particularly special thing. I think it's one of those things that many people within the church know, and I think it's shared by a lot of people within their networks and communities, and that's a good thing. But it's one of the things I've found when friends of mine who are not a part of the church find out about it, they're blown away. They had no idea because their conception is, like we just spoke about at the Richmond Virginia March for Life, they think, "Well, that's all you guys do."

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:21](#)):

Right, right.

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

It's like, no, you haven't made it past the first chapter, if that's what you think. So, there's so much good there. Well, Bishop, I know you mentioned as we start our conversation, Lent is past the halfway point, and that means we're looking ahead already to the holiest of weeks, Holy Week, Palm Sunday coming up, and that will take us through the Easter Triduum. And I know there's a lot of special things to talk about it, but maybe you could just give us a preview of the upcoming [inaudible 00:11:50].

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:50](#)):

Yeah, it's called the Holy Week, but it's not magically holy. What we celebrate is always holy. The truth we celebrate is holy. They're sacred, no doubt. But for in our lives, for it to be a holy week, we have to make some deliberate steps, I believe. I think we have to treat this like no other week, and it can't be business as usual. And make that space, make that space to enter into the celebration of the sacred mysteries. And of course, one way we do that is by participating in the sacred Triduum, and also of course, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday.

([12:35](#)):

But to enter into these mysteries, to make sure that we're allowing some time for silence during these sacred days, to reflect on these truths we're celebrating and to avail ourselves to the graces god wants to give us, graces and blessings throughout these sacred times. He only asks that we open our hearts

and our lives to receive them. So we know, yes, Holy Week is the heart of our faith where we accompany Christ in his passion, his death and resurrection, beginning with Palm Sunday, when we welcome Jesus into Jerusalem, shouts of "Hosanna." Yet we know that those same crowds will soon call for his crucifixion. It's a reminder of how quickly hearts can turn, even our hearts.

Tom Shakely ([13:19](#)):

Our hearts, absolutely.

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

And how much we need the mercy of God through the Triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter vigil. We're not just recalling history. We're entering into the Paschal mystery. We stand with the Lord at the foot of the cross, not as spectators, but truly as disciples. Holy Thursday allows us that beautiful opportunity to celebrate with wonder and all, the profound gift of the holy Eucharist, remembering that as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, so too the Eucharist calls us to humble service. Friday is a beautiful opportunity to, it's a beautiful day to be at that Good Friday liturgy, to unite all of our sufferings and crosses put.

([14:07](#)):

You come up to reverence the cross, to kiss the cross, touch it. You do so with saying, "Lord, I now give you all my sufferings, all the burdens, all that I'm carrying. I unite them to yours." Because when we do that, we are given that promise of glory with the sure hope of what we celebrated Easter, that Christ defeated, even suffering, even death. And we get a glimpse of that glory now, but certainly for the glory that is ours. Pray God for all eternity. So, I do wish all of our listeners, I wish all your families a holy week filled with abundant blessings. And don't forget on Tuesday, we will also celebrate the Chrism Mass, when I gather with the faithful, but especially with all my priests, my brother priests.

Tom Shakely ([14:58](#)):

That's a beautiful moment.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:59](#)):

And it is. It's a celebration of our priesthood as well. We renew all the priests in the diocese, renew their priestly promises. It's really powerful when you hear all the priests in our diocese renewing the same, the promises they made at ordination, to be faithful to them. And then the church right after that asks the people, "God, to pray for your priests." So, thank God we're in a diocese that our people do pray for our priests. And my brother priest and I are so grateful for those prayers and support. But if you can be here for the Chrism Mass, it's wonderful. We also bless all the sacred oils and the Chrism that will be used for the celebration of the sacraments. And if not, please join us online as well.

Tom Shakely ([15:47](#)):

Yeah, that's right. That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:47](#)):

Would be live stream.

Tom Shakely ([15:48](#)):

That's right. Yeah. Yeah, and those oils, right, it's not just, they don't just stay at the cathedral. Those are for all the churches in the diocese.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:53](#)):

Oh, yeah. So, all the oils that will be used for the coming year are carried home, carried home for the celebration of the sacraments.

Tom Shakely ([16:01](#)):

That's a beautiful thing. Well, I know there's also a special collection on Good Friday, is that right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([16:06](#)):

Yeah, exactly right. We have a very special collection. It's the Pontifical Good Friday collection. The collection supports our brothers and sisters in Christ of the Holy Land, who have suffered, as we know, particularly, I mean, incredible suffering, the pandemic and of course the ongoing war in the Middle East. They need our help more than ever, more than ever. And what a great way to have the opportunity for sacrificial giving, to participate in this collection and to know that the resources will help so many people in their hour of need.

Tom Shakely ([16:43](#)):

Thank you very much, Bishop. Well, we are in this month of April, and that marks something that is nationally recognized, all sorts of organizations and voices, and people are recognizing that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Diocese of Arlington is participating in that, of course, and we released a statement earlier this month, acknowledging the importance of this month and highlighting our commitment. And I know a particular way for you, Bishop, to protecting all of God's children.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([17:15](#)):

Absolutely, Tom. And we call it Child Abuse Prevention Month, but every day, every day, every month is child abuse prevention time. And you have a month designated with this title just to remind us of what must be a daily commitment. And so, the Diocese of Arlington certainly acknowledge the mandate to protect all of God's children, humbly acknowledge failure to do so, both as leaders within the church, beyond in the past, and with profound regret and sorrow, and especially to our victims of abuse and assurance of our continued prayers. But we have to be tireless, unwavering in all the programs we have within our diocese to make sure that we protect our children. And that includes formation and guidance and background checks, and the list just is endless. But every, every day, making sure we are being vigilant. National statistics indicate a 19% decrease in child abuse cases. Virginia reports a 29.5 decrease, 10.5% points lower than the national average.

Tom Shakely ([18:45](#)):

That's a big deal.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:46](#)):

Which is promising news. The progress we have made should not diminish our determination, of course, to protect the most vulnerable among us. It's not about statistics, it's about persons, individuals, every person.

Tom Shakely ([19:02](#)):

And yet, yeah, I mean, and that's what, I think as you're making that point, that every day is a day for this kind of good work, but a month like April to recognize it, it's a great way to kind of check in, to highlight, in this case, thankfully, encouraging news like these decreases. And of course here in the diocese as well, the diocese has VIRTUS sessions, which are all about avoiding any of these harms and doing good. 85 of these sessions took place reaching more than 3,800 over the past year. So, thousands of people touched in a positive way.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([19:38](#)):

Yeah, and I'm sure if people say, "Well, what else is the diocese doing?" You can certainly contact our Office of Victims Assistance to learn what we're doing for any support, for any guidance that you need as well.

Tom Shakely ([19:53](#)):

Thank you very much, Bishop. Well, we've been talking on and off about our Holy Year of Hope hotline. We shared the good news earlier in the conversation about our pious visits and those doing those pilgrimages. But we also are soliciting hotline messages. We want to hear your reason for hope, the things that are inspiring you, encouraging you. We want to share those in these conversations with Bishop Burbidge. And so, we certainly welcome you doing that. You can, we've been mentioning in the past that you can call a number and you can still do that. The number's the same. It hasn't changed. 703-778-9100. We'll link to that in the notes. But now, we've really rocketed. You can text the number now, Bishop.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([20:34](#)):

That's good.

Tom Shakely ([20:36](#)):

So, if you don't want to leave a voicemail, we know some people prefer texting. You can text us your message of hope and we can read that out in future episodes. But we want to feature our first audio message of hope here today. This is from Joseph Brooks. We're going to play that now.

Joseph Brooks ([20:51](#)):

Hi, this is Joseph Brooks. I hope that we as a people will obey Jesus's call to love one another as he loved us, for if we can look at our fellow man and see the face of God and vice versa, then maybe we can see an end to the division in our country and the world. Thank you.

Tom Shakely ([21:17](#)):

Wow. That's really a great encouraging message from our listener and friend, Joseph Brooks. Thanks for leaving that message, Joseph.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:24](#)):

And Tom, our Holy Father during this jubilee year has encouraged us to look for signs of hope. Signs, and if we do, if we make that a commitment each day, where do I see the presence of the Lord? Where do I see his victory? Where do I see his goodness? Where do I see him acting in my life? There's always signs of hope. And so, it's important for us to look for them, to thank God for them because it's only then that

we can be witnesses of hope. And so, it is my hope and prayer that dear friends, all of you will be witnesses of hope. Become very aware and give thanks to Lord for the many signs of hope and even in your own life, and especially as you see and celebrate the truth that will unite us throughout Holy Week and the Easter season, that Christ is the source of our hope.

[\(22:18\)](#):

He is the one who, by his cross and resurrection, has conquered the power of evil and sin and suffering, even death itself. He is victorious and he allows us to share in his victory, both now and forever. Blessed are those who hope in the Lord and all who walk humbly with their God.

[\(22:39\)](#):

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