

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 Saint Clare Studio here in the Diocese of Arlington. I am Tom Shakely, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese, and I'm joined by our host, Bishop Michael Burbidge.

([00:19](#)):

Bishop, how are you?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([00:20](#)):

Tom, I am doing well for a special edition of our podcast. This is the first time we are speaking on the podcast since the election of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. So great to be with you and our listeners.

Tom Shakely ([00:33](#)):

It's so good to be with you. Of course, Pope Leo XIV is making headlines the world over and people, I think, are joyous and joyful to see our new pope. I know one of the more fascinating things for a lot of people is that this is an American pope, an English-speaking pope, and so let's hear actually a little bit from his opening homily to the College of Cardinals right after he was elected to the papacy.

Pope Leo XIV ([00:59](#)):

I begin with a word in English and the rest is in Italian, but I want to repeat the words from the responsorial psalm. I will sing a new song to the Lord because He has done marvels, and indeed not just with me, but with all of us, my brother Cardinals. As we celebrate this morning, I invite you to recognize the marvels that the Lord has done, the blessings that the Lord continues to pour out upon all of us.

([01:31](#)):

Through the ministry of Peter, you have called me to carry that cross and to be blessed with that mission. And I know I can rely on each and every one of you to walk with me as we continue as a church, as a community of friends of Jesus, as believers, to announce the good news, to announce the Gospel.

Tom Shakely ([01:56](#)):

So those were the remarks of Pope Leo XIV at the very outset of his homily and his opening remarks to the College of Cardinals, and he continued on after that in Italian, and he's continuing to make headlines.

([02:09](#)):

But Bishop, I'm curious, where were you when you first learned that we had Pope Leo XIV?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([02:16](#)):

Oh, yes. Providentially, the priests of the diocese were on convocation. We were together last week. Half the priests come Monday to Wednesday. The others come Wednesday to Friday. So I was hoping and praying that we would find this news when we were together. So sure enough, we were at lunch on Thursday and one of the priests said, "There is white smoke." So we ran back into the conference room. We already had some big screens lined up there just in the event that the news broke. So I was actually,

I was so grateful that I was actually with my brother priests when we heard the news and the announcement.

Tom Shakely ([02:56](#)):

What was it like to be together, for all them especially?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:00](#)):

Well, I think we were just reminded of the unity that we share with our Holy Father, the unity we share with brothers as brother priests, and to hear this news, it was just received. There was shock. I don't think any of us in the room were expecting. Of course, we all said, "No one knows. The Holy Spirit will lead this and guide the hearts of the cardinal electors," but I don't think any of us were thinking that it would be an American pope.

Tom Shakely ([03:32](#)):

Right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:32](#)):

And so when we heard the name, we were like... There was almost like a period of silence and then this sunk in. And then there was a, of course, a great rejoicing, especially when Pope Leo XIV came out onto the balcony.

([03:50](#)):

So it's the reminder of a few realities that the Lord is faithful to His promises. He said He will be with us, He will be with his church forever, and provide for us. And I think through His goodness, through the acts of the Holy Spirit, and the cooperation, the graces the cardinals received, we have been truly blessed in receiving Pope Leo XIV.

([04:14](#)):

And we understand that Pope Leo belongs to the world. He's a citizen of the world now, but at the same time, there's a healthy, joyful pride in saying, "But he came from our country." So very happy for the people of Chicago, his hometown, the Augustinian community, and also the people of Peru. It's so wonderful, where he served as their bishop as a missionary, to see their joy. So I think we were truly blessed, Tom.

Tom Shakely ([04:47](#)):

Yeah, it is wonderful. Was this an emotional moment in particular, maybe because he's an American?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([04:52](#)):

I think it was just emotional simply because we saw the Lord's hand, we saw the Lord's faithfulness, and it's a new moment. It's a new moment. We rejoice in the ministry of Pope Francis upon his death and we continue to pray for his eternal happiness. We say, "Okay, now there's new life. There's a new beginning." And when you realize that here we go, we're moving forward now as a church under the guidance of our new shepherd, it is emotional, but one of joy, one of thanksgiving.

Tom Shakely ([05:32](#)):

Well, Bishop, I heard that you and Pope Leo XIV share something in common.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([05:37](#)):

Oh, that's funny. Yes. He is a graduate of Villanova University.

Tom Shakely ([05:44](#)):

Ah, okay.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([05:44](#)):

I went to Villanova University, but so people automatically think, "Oh, you must know him." Well, there was like 20 years apart here. He went there as a college student, I think in the late '70s, and I was actually at Villanova many years later as a graduate student. So our paths never crossed, but we do share the Villanova connection, and I have many friends who are connected to Villanova, and they are super excited. They are so, so proud.

([06:15](#)):

And so everyone has a connection in some way. And it's great to see the Augustinians so happy and Villanova people so happy, people from Chicago, and getting to know his family even. It's just like it's a reminder that God chooses. He chooses human beings who have a history, who have a childhood, who have family, who have friends, and He chooses human. This is how much God trusts us. It's amazing.

Tom Shakely ([06:43](#)):

Well, what's something you've learned about him since his election?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([06:47](#)):

Well, I just learned his vast experience. Oh my goodness. A canon lawyer. He was elected to be provincial and the general superior twice by his fellow Augustinians. I mean, to be elected by your brother priests to serve in that capacity shows you the great respect that he has from brother priests and that he was a missionary, a true missionary, wanting to be with the poor and the marginalized, a true missionary heart and spirit.

([07:25](#)):

Then he, Pope Francis just recently asked him to serve in a role, a very important role in the life of the church, the Dicastery for Bishops that assists the Pope in appointing bishops from throughout the world. So that was a great vote of confidence. I forgot that he's not even a cardinal for two years.

Tom Shakely ([07:48](#)):

Oh, wow. Wow.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:48](#)):

Yeah, yeah. It's just recent. And I think a bishop for almost 10 years. So a lot has happened to him in a short period of time.

Tom Shakely ([07:58](#)):

Yeah. Right, right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:59](#)):

But you hear of some people who know him and they say that he is very, of course, very holy, very bright, able to listen well, to be decisive, to work for fostering collaboration and unity, and has the heart of a shepherd, and very calm. I hear he has a calm demeanor, and we can see that, can't we? It's almost he puts you at ease. He's very calm and-

Tom Shakely ([08:32](#)):

Yeah, it's true.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:33](#)):

... very joyful. And so many, many gifts that he will bring to his ministry. One of the students, a young student yesterday at the parish said, "Bishop, did you also know he is a great tennis player?" And I'm like, "Oh." I said, "Well," I told him, I said, "you can't become the pope unless you're a tennis player." And he looked at me and he was shocked. He goes, "Why?" I said, "Because you have to know how to serve." He didn't like my joke.

Tom Shakely ([09:00](#)):

That was nice. That was quick.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:01](#)):

That was putting him on the spot though. But I did hear he's a very good tennis player too. He takes it very seriously, I heard.

Tom Shakely ([09:07](#)):

Oh, that's like I'm thinking of the old scenes of like JP II as prior to the papacy, skiing and things like that, right?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:15](#)):

Yeah, skiing, and hiking, and a White Sox fan too. I heard there was a little battle going on there between the Cubs and the White Sox, but I think there's proof he's a White Sox fan.

Tom Shakely ([09:23](#)):

The truth came out. Yeah, yeah.

([09:25](#)):

What do you think, I know we played that clip of him in his opening to the cardinals, but what do you think, Bishop, that he's taught us or maybe taught you in particular through his talks, through his homily so far?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([09:37](#)):

Yeah, you saw it right from the beginning. And since his election, he's celebrated Masses and he spoke to the cardinals, and on the afternoon audience, from the balcony on Sunday-

Tom Shakely ([09:55](#)):

Oh, I saw him singing the Regina Caeli. Did you hear that?

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

That was beautiful, beautiful.

([09:58](#)):

So one thing you're seeing, I think, from his talks is it's very focused on Christ. Everything's focused on Jesus, leading us to the Lord and what the Lord teaches. And so everything is focused on the Lord, on our Blessed Mother's protection and help, on the Gospel itself. He is speaking to us. Some of the things I've heard that have resonated for me and great reminders, he has spoken about the need in our own lives for quiet, for stillness and for prayer because he says it's in that stillness that we encounter the Lord most intimately.

([10:40](#)):

He has spoken frequently, even already, about the need for reconciliation in our world, in our nations, where people walk together in harmony, lifting up each other, encouraging each other in faith. That's the only way we can know the peace of Christ is when nothing is dividing us. And he says, "Everyone, everyone deserves our charity and our presence and our love and our dialogue."

([11:10](#)):

And then he talks about, for the pope and every Christian, the essential call we share is that daily journey to participate in conversion, in transformation, in fidelity, in saying yes to what the Lord is asking of us. And I often say, I was saying over the weekend that can you imagine? He hears his name being called out in that Sistine Chapel. He keeps hearing, "Prevost, Prevost, Prevost," and I'm sure it's resonating, that it looks like I'm going to get the votes here and become pope. And then they walk right over to him and they say, "Do you accept?" And once he says, "I accept," he becomes the pope. He's the pope at that point.

([11:56](#)):

But you think, how could he say, "Yes, I accept" to such an extraordinary ministry, the successor of Saint Peter, the universal shepherd for the entire Catholic Church? Well, I always say, Tom, that you can only give those extraordinary yeses if you're in the practice of giving the small yeses every day. Yes to what the Lord asks of us, kindness, forgiveness, compassion. Yes to His will and not mine. Yes even to the crosses that the Lord may ask us to accept. And when you repeat those yeses each and every day, those small yeses, then when the Lord asks something extraordinary of you, you're able to do that.

([12:44](#)):

But it's a call that we all have received, he said, that daily yes to fidelity, to what the Lord is asking. And of course he's reminding us all this is impossible unless we are relying on the grace of God and the prayers of our Blessed Mother.

Tom Shakely ([13:01](#)):

That's beautiful. Bishop, are you hearing anything in particular from parishioners, people of our diocese?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:07](#)):

There is excitement. Again, I think it's because of this new life, this new moment. I think the pope has reflected some energy, some youth. 69's pretty young for a pope.

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

It's true.

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

So people are pretty excited about that. I was with our young people, our middle schoolers at the bash that we had, 1,400 of them in fact. And even our middle schoolers are super excited and they're talking, they're asking questions about the pope, and they're getting to know him, and he's going to be a big part of their lives moving forward.

([13:43](#)):

So I would say, Tom, I felt this weekend just excitement, lots of excitement. And in this excitement, we're also reminded of our responsibility. It's our responsibility now to unite around our Holy Father, to be one church, to be one people of God, to give him our support, and to give him our prayers. He's asked for those prayers. He needs those prayers. And so we'll be having a Mass today right after this recording. It's a Mass of thanksgiving. Thank you, Lord, for giving us Pope Leo XIV. But it's also a Mass where we entrust Pope Leo to the Lord's protection and to Mary's care.

Tom Shakely ([14:29](#)):

Well, and we'll of course link to that in the show notes, the livestream for viewing later, and some other resources for how to pray for Pope Leo XIV.

([14:40](#)):

Bishop, I'm sure we'll speak about our new Holy Father in other ways in future conversations, but for now, any final thoughts for us?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([14:48](#)):

Just a reminder for all of us perhaps that we see that Pope Leo XIV is our chief shepherd successor to Saint Peter. We believe this is God's plan. This is part of God's providence. And to remember that the Lord has a plan for each one of us too. He knows us. He's going to take us beyond heights, beyond doing anything we can even imagine. Our job is to surrender. Lord, lead me. Lead me to where you need me to be.

([15:22](#)):

And I think that's what Pope Leo has done in his saying, "Yes, I accept." It's a yes that we all need to repeat. It's a yes to saying, "Your will, Lord, not mine." And it's that yes that allows us to walk humbly with our God.

MUSIC ([15:38](#)):

[Pope Leo XIV singing the Regina Caeli].

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:38](#)):

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