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[00:00:00] **Bishop:** Children often are overprotected in the real world, but under protected in the artificial one. I hear from parents all the time. It's a very alarming issue.

[00:00:11] **Lauren:** This is Walk Humbly. We're glad you're here.

[00:00:15] **Tom:** Welcome to Walk Humbly. I am Tom Shakely with the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, joined in our St. Clare Studio by the one and only Bishop Michael Burbidge. How are you, Bishop?

[00:00:24] **Bishop:** Yeah, great to see you. Great to talk with you, too, Tom, and our listeners here. Exciting time of year. So many great things happening throughout our diocese and our parishes, and such a joy to see so many of our young people receive First Holy Communion this month, to see their joy and just great wonder and awe for the precious gift of the Holy Eucharist and really beautiful to see that. Mother Mary, honoring our Blessed Mother, May crownings, and now we're soon going to begin the graduation season, so it's a great time of year. Also anticipating ordination of our seven priests in June. So it's lots of joy, lots of blessings. We're grateful to God.

[00:01:03] **Tom:** It's beautiful. Yeah, and I've seen, Bishop, I know this is, this is pretty much every month for you, but I've seen you're in all corners of the diocese. You know, you're on the road everywhere, and, and your presence is felt and seen, and it's such a beautiful witness, to, you know, your office, but also just on the ground.

[00:01:17] **Bishop:** That's the best part of the job. Right, right. That's the best part of the job, to be out and, to be with our, faithful and, parishioners and, see all the great things going on in our parishes and schools. It just brings me, great, great joy.

[00:01:31] **Tom:** Well, Bishop, you know, once every year, you know, all of our priests in the diocese, I think we talked about this last year around this time, gather for, what's called convocation. Can you share, Bishop, you know, what is convocation? What takes place, and how does it help?

[00:01:43] **Bishop:** Right. And so every year, our priests do a spiritual retreat. That's part of our priestly life, but also in our diocese, we also have a convocation and that's more of a study day and, many times, the subject comes

to us from the priests. What is a timely issue? What is a pastoral issue? What is there something that we could together, increase our formation? And so a lot of times, it comes from our priests. and it's a week. Half the priests come Monday to Wednesday. The other priests come Wednesday to Friday. We have gifted speakers, we have lots of time for prayer, and social, great fraternal time as well. And it is always, it's such a blessing to be with our priests and see how much they enjoy being with each other. I wish our people could see all of our priests in one room. Seeing the wonderful priests that we have, but how much they, lift and encourage, one another. It's always, it's just a great blessing, and it was a very good week. And there was a lot, that we learned, and I think we're going to even mention what the topic was.

[00:02:47] **Tom:** Yeah. Yeah. I know, you delved into artificial intelligence this year. I think everybody, listening is probably familiar. If you haven't used one of these, like ChatGPT or Claude, Grok, whatever, you at least heard of it. And so it's a timely issue.

[00:03:00] **Bishop:** It really is, Tom. And, you know, even our younger priests, I mean, I was not familiar with all the platforms that were being you know, discussed and, but even our young priests were like, “we learned a great deal, about the pastoral implications of AI, artificial intelligence.”

And it's just like any gift that God gives us, any resource that God gives us, it can always be used for good. But there's always the danger of it not being used as intended and sadly taking us down a difficult path. So there's a potential both for good and bad. If you're listening and you have used or currently use AI platforms, you might do so because it helps you with your work responsibilities.

But you do it with integrity. It perhaps it helps research something more efficiently than like Google might, or helping translate something from one language to another, for instance, but at the same time, AI tools are also being used by many people in dangerous and, and troubling ways.

You know, one way, and I, I know professors are dealing with this, someone using AI to, you know, write a paper or, do a research project and claiming it as their own. Well, that's, that's not integrity. We learn about the prevalence of individuals, and this is where it became very alarming for the priests and, and very unsettling, using AI to, simulate, a romantic relationship or recreate a digital version of a deceased loved one as if that person, you know, has not died. And to turn to AI for, companionship, but in an artificial way, and then the response always being from that AI tool, just kind of reaffirming whatever the person's thinking.

And sometimes not being well aware of what the issues are that need to be addressed in a professional way with real people, who have expertise. And we've heard, sadly, of stories that really led young people down a dark, dark path. And it's, it's very, very alarming. I know our parents worry about this, and we have to be, very vigilant.

One of the lines I heard, and it's true, it wasn't meant to be critical, but it was ... it's a reality that, children often are overprotected in the real world, but under protected in the artificial one. And so sometimes in the real world, we overprotect our, our children or loved ones.

Yeah, this safety culture idea. Yeah, like you can't- You can't, can't leave the fenced area. Right. Yeah. Right. They can't go outside. Yeah, you can't have a setback. You can't- But here's an iPad. Right. Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. And then that world- is just open to anything, and we're not paying as careful attention to that.

So I know, I hear from parents all the time, it's a very, alarming issue. we even heard, talks about young people especially, turning to AI chatbots to ask questions that they should bring into their parents- or those experiencing mental health challenges and something receiving encouragement from AI programs to engage even, uh, walking in the path of self-harm. That's, that's what's happening.

Yeah, so AI can do things not because it is simply code. It's the result of very complex and sophisticated, advancements, but again, how are they being used? so it's ... we were awakened. this is one of those convocations where the subject was being talked about not just in the conference room, but even when we met for dinner or lunches. So that's a good thing, and it makes our priests and myself aware of the pastoral challenges that we're facing.

[00:06:36] **Tom:** it's amazing. And you really went deep, Bishop. I mean, this is such an urgent topic, I think, you know, in terms of the risks, but also the opportunities associated with it.

You know, we've seen it, it's being adopted in so much of the business world, right? It's impacting jobs even in some professions. So it's timely. Yeah, exactly. It's timely. Well, as we're speaking, you know, if the rumors hold true, we're just hours away from the release of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical. The rumored title, is *Magnifica Humanitas*.

We'll see if that, comes to fruition. but the encyclical, Magnificent Humanity. So right, it's interesting. If that does hold true, it kind of reminded me, you know, like John Paul II's, *Redemptor Hominis*, right?

The Redeemer of Man. Right. And so that idea of, of, We've, we talk a lot, you know, here in the Church a lot about human dignity. even so much so I think that, you know, we, we can, we can forget human dignity's always tethered to God, right? Our relationship with God. And so this idea that if you have Populo is writing about - *Magnifica Humanitas*, Magnificent Humanity - it'll be a wonderful, it should be a wonderful reflection on a lot of timely issues. The rumors are AI, human dignity broadly, war and other things in the emerging and changing global order.

[00:07:46] **Bishop:** Well, yeah, and how wonderful it is that we have a Holy Father Pope who is so in tune, attuned and, engaged, with this issue that we just spoke about, that he knows it as a reality impacting the lives of people, whether for good or for bad. So we are welcoming, pray God, as you mentioned, it's a pretty good indication that this could come as early as we're recording on Thursday or on Friday, with great joy, 'cause it's timely, and there is so, so meaning.

And it's a great guide for bishops. it's great to have a Holy Father who's guiding us and leading us to see how we can help our faithful. And so when the encyclical comes out, as always, I encourage, all of us, to read it in its entirety. Its entirety. AI's gonna do summaries of it. But it's better to pick up the encyclical and to read it thoroughly with yourself. And like you said, it seems like it will approach, AI, as a tool, sometimes rather than a moral agent, warning that unchecked technology, can just, you know, lead to all that is not great, at times. Yeah. So we really look forward to, to see what our Holy Father has, and, and obviously, I'm sure he will provide guidance and recommendations of how we, can pastorally deal with these issues, and I'll work with my team, to implement, I'm sure all the great guidance and recommendations we will get from our Holy Father.

[00:09:11] **Tom:** Well, maybe in our next episode we can talk a little bit more about it. We'll see. Okay. Well, this time every year, the faithful and, all those really, in the public, can learn about our new, diocesan clergy assignments. We just posted those, Bishop, as you know, to our, Arlington Diocese website and the Arlington Catholic Herald, and shared these new assignments. This was just this past Tuesday on May 12th. We'll link to them in the show notes. A lot of changes every year, a whole variety of changes in terms of assignments of the

parishes and, and important ministries in the diocese. Bishop, can you share, you know, I mean, how do these assignments come to be?

Are people calling you up? Are you, are you looking

[00:09:50] **Bishop:** No, we, we have, like, a dartboard, and we just- ... kind of throw darts. No, no. Um- Confirmed everyone's suspicions. No. With the clergy changes, you know, we want stability. You know- Yeah ... when, when there's, you know, things are going well in the life of the priest and the life of the parish, stability is a key.

But there are some factors, that, necessitate change, you know, when priests retire. this year we had a couple of priests retire. Well, now parishes are open, so now you gotta fill those parishes, and now the dominoes begin to fall. recently ordained priests, you want them, you know, not to have some multiple experiences in their early priesthood, and so that necessitates change.

And so the first is that you look at, and this is my responsibility, you look at the needs of the diocese. What are the needs of the diocese? And you try to meet those needs being respectful of the priest, to put him in a position with his- unique gifts and talents to be successful. And so you need guidance.

It's not something I can do by myself. And so first of all, it's rooted in prayer. You know, "Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten us, guide us." We have a very good personnel, priest personnel committee made up of our deans who are out, in the parishes frequently and see up close the needs of the parish

They know our priests very well. So they offer recommendations, in order to meet the needs of the diocese. And then again, seriously, it's very much prayer. I can assure every priest that before he is transferred, it's been brought to prayer. You know, "Lord, is this the right thing?"

And, it is the time of year where I, as I always am, but this time of year, it reminds me how inspired I am by our priests. Their priestly generosity, their, faithfulness, their obedience, and they repeat one after another. Although they may not have expected a change or want a change, they say, "Bishop, you know, if this is what the church needs, if this is what the diocese needs, of course, yes."

You know, one priest- gave a beautiful line this year when I asked him. It was a pretty big ask, I think. And he said, "Bishop, I already said yes. I said yes on the day of my ordination." And that's beautiful because that's a yes. It's like, "Lord,

I say yes to you. I don't know where you're gonna lead me, where you're gonna guide me, where you're gonna take me, but on the day of ordination I surrender myself. I prostrate, on the floor. Here's my life, Lord."

And so transfers are, a great reminder of that. And, I always tease, at this time of year, they also teach us humility. I know every time I've been transferred as a priest or a bishop, it's like, "Bishop, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry you're leaving. Father, I'm so sorry you're leaving. Hey, who's taking your place?"

And it's like the same story. Right, right, right. It's not even two sentences. But in a sense, it's a great reminder. It's whatever assignment we have, it's only ours for a privileged season.

[00:12:46] **Tom:** Yeah.

[00:12:47] **Bishop:** It's always the Lord's, and it's His church, and we are merely His instruments. And the other thing I sometimes tease about, this is the time of year, I always pray that I have a ... the day the, changes come out, I pray I don't have a confirmation in a parish where I just transferred a priest or something.

Because I will often hear, "Oh, Bishop, I'm upset with you. Why'd you transfer our priest?" Folks are ready, right. And all that. And I always say, "Well, I think it'd be worse if you were thanking me." That's true. That's true. So, but, you know, again, a great opportunity for me to commend our priests for their faithful obedience and generosity, and to commend and thank the faithful of this diocese, who support and encourage our priests, those who will be leaving them, and also welcoming graciously those who we're receiving.

So thanks to the lay faithful of this diocese as well.

[00:13:40] **Tom:** The US Department of Health and Human Services, part of the executive branch of the federal government, this one is the one led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., uh, Bishop, recently launched a new website with a pro-life focus. You're probably wondering as I'm introing that, you're like, "We don't usually talk about federal policy on this podcast." but they launched a new pro-life, website. It's, pretty memorable. I gotta hand it to them. Moms.gov. You're not gonna forget that. the new site offers basically a one-stop shop for resources and information, for new and expecting mothers, those facing difficult or unexpected pregnancies.

It's got a pro-life pregnancy, resource center finder, so you can go and search and find them anywhere in the country, as well as a this is a mouthful: Federally

Qualified Health Centers Finder. Uh, the government's full of acronyms. These, FQHCs focus on medically underserved areas, again, throughout the country.

I was actually amazed when I was looking at this. There's over 16,000 of these service sites- across the country, and then it's got other things, like, nutrition facts for mothers and enrollment portals for investment accounts for children and other things. but I think, to me, when I was looking at this, Bishop, the biggest thing was just what a 180 from, a political culture that previously, has prioritized abortion. You won't find that word on there.

[00:14:55] **Bishop:** This is a pro-life win. It really is, and our national politics can, sometimes seem so controversial and divisive, but this is an instance where we can all applaud a federal initiative. All the resources being promoted are important. None are necessarily new, but what, is new is the White House creating this one-stop shop, in a sense and promoting pro-life pregnancy centers as a default, for mothers, and you'll find no mention of Planned Parenthood there. There's no promotion of abortion, for instance. So this is all good and a big change from what we have been seeing. So, we want to see more of this type of pro-life activity, much more, and again, we welcome this with great joy because as we always say, the Church is pro-life. The Church is pro-child. The Church is pro-mother. The Church is pro-woman. we walk with moms and child, and so we applaud this effort, and again, I'd like to see our elected officials working together on both sides, to create a culture of life.

[00:16:02] **Tom:** That's beautiful. Thank you, Bishop. Yeah, maybe someday we'll see a dads.gov too. There's probably a lot we can convey to fathers as well. That's exactly right. well, Bishop, we've spoken previously, and we're gonna continue to talk about, through, now through really Election Day, the threat of, of two Virginia state constitutional amendments that will appear, on the ballot.

You know, the Election Day, of course, is in November, but, voting actually starts six weeks before that in September, September 18th. You know, so if you're a Type A person, mark that on your calendar. But, you know, these amendments, one of them would enshrine a radical and dangerous pro-abortion culture in the Commonwealth, something far more radical than, than Roe v. Wade was nationally, and the other, would just further threaten marriage by redefining it. Listeners can engage right now by visiting arlingtondiocese.org/vote, and there's much more to come.

[00:16:46] **Bishop:** Yeah, much more to come. We have a great communications plan where we'll be sharing resources with our pastors to share

with their parishioners, and hopefully parishioners sharing with their family members and their neighbors and colleagues.

We have to be very, very strong here in making sure we get out and vote and we defeat these amendments. As Catholics, we have a responsibility to engage and to vote come election time. They're deceptively named. This is how you know they're from the evil one. Uh, the Virginia Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment, the Virginia Remove Constitutional Same-Sex Marriage Ban Amendment.

These amendments, an abortion amendment, for example, that is when you read the language, will threaten women's health and safety. It will. It will essentially eliminate parental rights and allow for completely unregulated abortion on healthy babies up to birth. Now, who can be for that?

The amendment would enshrine, a false understanding of marriage, which as the Lord Jesus Himself teaches, is always, between one man and one woman, a sacramental reality in view of the unitive and procreative good of the spouses and their family. So these are very dangerous. They're deceptive. There's no doubt they're from the evil one. And so we are launching a simple new website, which will allow anyone in the diocese to pledge to vote this fall and access informational resources about these two dangerous amendments. And frankly, this may be the only election in our lifetime where you hear me or the church speak as directly on how to approach the ballot box.

We're not speaking about candidates. So, we are consistent as a Catholic church in forming consciences, but we don't say vote for this candidate or this political party. But here we are speaking about fundamental issues, the basic human right to life and the truth about marriage. And as Catholics, we know these are fundamental issues.

God Himself knit us together in our mother's womb, and our Lord Himself instituted, the sacrament of marriage. So as faithful Catholics, we know that precisely in order to protect the right to life and to protect marriage, Catholics must vote no. So we can be that direct saying no to this ballot.

It's not to a candidate, it's not to a political party. And as you mentioned, Tom, September 18th, this is what, this is what happens. Uh, September 18th, early voting starts, so we want to make sure, we get out there and vote. And be prepared, everyone, because the opposition's on its way, and they're gonna flood the airwaves with lies and we cannot be deceived.

[00:19:26] **Tom:** Yeah. Thank you, Bishop. Thank you. Well, of course, you can always connect with Bishop Burbidge on Walk Humbly by texting Walk Humbly, to 84576 for periodic alerts and updates. We welcome listener questions for Bishop Burbidge. You can call or text the show anytime, 703-778-9100 with your question.

We've got a question today from a listener in Chantilly. "Bishop," the question reads, "I have read that a new edition of the Liturgy of the Hours is coming out soon and will be available from Ascension and Word on Fire. As I understand it, priests are expected to say the Liturgy of the Hours every day. I am a layperson but interested in trying it out. Can you give me guidance on how I might get started and hopefully make this kind of prayer a habit?"

[00:20:07] **Bishop:** Yeah. Actually, that's a promise you make on the day of your ordination, to pray, the Liturgy of the Hours, all the Liturgy of the Hours, throughout the day, every day, and you pray for, the universal church.

And so it's a beautiful privilege to do that, but it's also, required for every ordained priest to do. But the Liturgy of the Hours is for everyone, and it's, I really am so, delightful to hear, this question of someone who wants to begin to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

If advice or guidance, may be given, maybe, just start out. You don't have to start out by doing everything a priest does from morning to night praying the Liturgy of the Hours, but maybe you pray morning prayer or an evening prayer, or maybe night prayer. And the Liturgy of the Hours are basically, the Psalms.

And, when you pray the Psalms, you can identify, with the emotions or the desires or the frustrations that the psalmist himself is speaking, and apply that to your life. And then there's always a reading and intercessions, and, there's opportunities to pray. Like iBreviary is an app you can get online, if, if you don't have the set of The Liturgy of the Hours. But I encourage, individuals to consider doing so. I know some of our parishes, are, praying the Liturgy of the Hours sometimes before Mass, morning prayer together or doing night prayer together. So that, that's a great thing to do. So I'm really, uh, very excited to hear that question.

[00:21:36] **Tom:** We'll have to talk about it, you know, when those new editions come out from the two publishers, 'cause I think it's if I remember right, Bishop, I read about this as well, it's the first new publication in, like, decades, right? So it's a big deal.

[00:21:47] **Bishop:** I know. I've been praying from the same breviary since I've been ordained a, a priest, and, you know, I, you know, I highlight things and put notes down. I'm gonna miss all that. I'm gonna have a fresh new start here. Start fresh. Yeah.

Thank you, Tom, and again, this is a beautiful time of year that we're celebrating. We just celebrated Mother's Day as well, and soon we'll be celebrating, Father's Day, so, best wishes to our moms and dads. And thank you everyone in the diocese for giving us, so many holy marriages as gifts, holy families.

Thank you all for what you're doing, and just asking God's, blessings upon all of you, and filling you and your hearts and your homes with the joy and peace that only He can give, and also the grace we need to walk humbly with our God.

[00:22:31] **Lauren:** Thank you for joining us on Walk Humbly, where Bishop Burbidge shares the joy of the Gospel through conversations on Catholic culture, faith, and family.

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