

Bishop Michael Burbidge (00:00):

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

Billy Atwell (00:07):

Podcasting from the St. Clare Studios here in the Diocese of Arlington, welcome to the Walk Humbly Podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your co-host. If you're listening to this podcast, you're benefiting from the tremendous generosity of so many people who have given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. The BLA, as we call it, supports many ministries throughout the Diocese, one of which is the Communications Office here. So thank you to those who have made this podcast possible.

(00:33):

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(01:05):

Before we bring in Bishop Burbidge, we've got an exciting announcement regarding our Jubilee. There is a Multicultural Jubilee Cookbook in the works, and we're looking for submissions from the faithful. So if you've got a favorite family recipe you would like considered for the cookbook, just send it. Go over to jubilee.arlingtondiocese.org and click on "Get Involved", and you'll see the cookbook there. You can submit the recipe through the form there. And this Sunday, November 20th, join us for the opening of the Year Two celebration of our Jubilee preparatory period with the theme "My soul rejoices in the Lord." We have a Solemn Eucharistic Holy Hour and Recitation of the Holy Rosary at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More at 4:00 PM. We hope that you can join us.

(01:48):

On today's podcast, we're going to talk about the new pro-life committee chair for the USCCB. You might recognize him, why the Life is Very Good event that we've had in the past is not taking place this coming January and an update on the National Catholic Partnership on Disability and more. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you?

Bishop Michael Burbidge (02:05):

Billy, I am doing well, thank you. Just returned late yesterday afternoon from our week of committee meetings and the general assembly with the bishops of the United States, and it's always a great time. I actually enjoy the meeting because it's an opportunity for me to be with brother bishops and to share blessings in our diocese, maybe some challenges or learn from one another and also, most especially, that fraternal time. It's a busy week. It's a pretty demanding schedule as far as meetings and information, but I really do come back renewed and I thank everyone this past week who was praying for me. My brother bishops, thank you so much for your prayers and support.

Billy Atwell (02:53):

And each meeting has different news and its own flair. No two fall meetings are the same. And we'll get into some of that in just a moment here.

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

Sure.

Billy Atwell ([03:01](#)):

Before we get into those main topics though, I mentioned in the opening, our Jubilee Year Two that we're beginning that this coming Sunday. Can you give us a little bit of an overview of what you're hoping for this year?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([03:11](#)):

Right. And just a reminder to all of our listeners, three-year preparation period for our diocesan Jubilee Celebration 2024-Year One coming to a conclusion. "Remember" with the focus, "Do this in remembrance of me." on the Holy Eucharist, what a blessed year that was. And as you mentioned this Sunday, getting ready for Year Two, "Rejoice", with the focus on our Blessed Mother. "My soul rejoices in the Lord." and then Year Three will be "Renew" and evangelization. But Year Two, Billy, is a beautiful focus on our Blessed Mother, praying to God that this will be a special time in the life of our diocese where we all grow in our intimate relationship with Mary, the one Our Lord gave to us as our mother. His mother is our mother from the cross he gave us Mary. So maybe this is an invitation for us to really deepen that relationship of Mary and come to know her love for us, her protection, how she accompanies us every day.

([04:12](#)):

And also pray God an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to imitate her example of profound trust in God's will, being asked something she never expected, and of course, being fearful at first, but knew that her cause for rejoicing was saying yes to God's will. And I'm sure all of our listeners right now probably can identify something in the past or maybe going on right now in their lives where God is asking something special of you or you don't know why he's asking. But in saying, "Yes, Lord, let it be done to me, according to your word", we will always receive his promise that he will also give us the strength and grace that we need. Just like he assured Mary, nothing is impossible with God. With God.

Billy Atwell ([05:03](#)):

Absolutely. And so we've got a lot coming up for this year, and there's a few major events. In October, there's going to be a diocesan pilgrimage to the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg. But in April, there's going to be a Marian conference in which Archbishop Broglio will be the keynote speaker. He's the new president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([05:24](#)):

That's correct.

Billy Atwell ([05:24](#)):

And someone that you know well here. He does confirmations in our diocese. He's got a close connection to our diocese.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([05:28](#)):

Yeah. We're thrilled to have Archbishop Broglio as our keynote speaker this year.

Billy Atwell ([05:32](#)):

And there's going to be a lot of different parish events, cultural performances, reflections, many different things. Now, one thing that's bridging between the two years is we have the National Eucharistic Revival going on in addition to our Year Two. And so you had asked for the 40 hours to continue. Why was that? Because you had heard a lot of feedback about it.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([05:50](#)):

Well sure. First of all, I'm so grateful to our pastors. Every parish in our diocese conducted a 40 hour Celebration during Year One. And I heard from our pastors and from our people that for many of our parishioners this was the first time they experienced 40 hours in the parish. But what blessings came to them as individuals, as families and as a parish community. And as you mentioned, the bishops of the country are participating in a National Eucharistic Revival. So it only seemed to make sense to me that we would continue the 40 hours in Year Two with a Marian focus. And so that's what we'll do on Sunday. We'll begin to have vespers in front of the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a Marian focus as a kind of a model, what parishes might be able to bring into their own communities. And hey, I'm so grateful... Our pastors, many said, "Bishop, we were going to do that anyway, it was such a time of abundant blessing." So yeah, it goes hand in hand with what we're doing at a national level. And I'm sure our Blessed Mother is always honored whenever we spend time alone with her son.

Billy Atwell ([06:56](#)):

Absolutely. And one last resource that people might want to be aware of is that we composed a Rosary reflection booklet, it basically takes you through each of the mysteries of the Rosary. And there's a reflection written by a religious sister from our diocese who's serving here in the Diocese. You can find that a jubilee.arlingtondiocese.org. There's some prayer resources, there are various types. For Year One, the sisters have put together an Adoration guide, a Mass guide, and now we've got a Rosary reflection booklet that's beautifully done. And just, I'm so excited for people to be able to get ahold of that.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([07:29](#)):

And I am so thankful to our sisters. These reflections are beautiful and the booklet itself is just so devotional, but knowing that it came from the women religious serving right here in our diocese, it's really beautiful to get a sense of their own spirituality and certainly a great help. I strongly encourage our listeners to use that booklet. It is so well done. Thank you, sisters.

Billy Atwell ([07:52](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And again, a reminder, the Solemn Eucharistic Holy Hour and Recitation of the Holy Rosary, is at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More at 4:00 PM this Sunday. So we hope to see you there. Well, Bishop, we were talking about the USCCB meeting, but we're burying the lead a little bit here. You have a new job as if you didn't already have enough on your plate. You're busy with the strategic plan and just the normal life of a bishop. Talk about what happened.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([08:16](#)):

Sure, sure. Well, it was a significant time at the conference where we did elect a new president and a new vice president, and I really believe the Holy Spirit was at work. We are so blessed. We will be so blessed with the leadership of Archbishop Broglio, very well known and loved in our diocese here, as you

mentioned, celebrates confirmations throughout the year, just a gifted leader. And I am thrilled that he is our new president and our own metropolitan archbishop of Baltimore, Archbishop Lori will be the vice president. So tremendous leadership. And what happened when Archbishop Lori became vice president is that his position as USCCB Chairman for Pro-Life Activities became vacant. And so there's a committee that is entrusted with, when there are committee openings to select two bishops to be on the slate for consideration for that committee.

[\(09:19\)](#):

So I returned home a little bit after dinner on that night, and I was surprised that Archbishop Broglio had said, "Your name has been selected." And so, you put it in God's hands and whatever's best. And I was very honored that my brother bishops entrusted me with this chairmanship. And I certainly hope just to continue the great foundation, the great work Archbishop Lori has already laid out. He's served in this position for one year, so I'll complete his term of two more years. So I'll continue his good work there. And there's a lot of work to be done, Billy.

Billy Atwell [\(09:56\)](#):

Well, and the timing is amazing. I mean, we're in a unique point in American history.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(10:00\)](#):

It's a significant time in the life of our country. We know that. So my plan would be to continue the great work of the bishops and of our priorities when it comes to protecting life, of prayer, of education, of service and advocacy for the cause of life. We know that overturning Roe vs. Wade was probably the most significant pro-life victory in last century. And we praise God now that states have the opportunity if they choose to protect-

Billy Atwell [\(10:29\)](#):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(10:30\)](#):

the innocent pre-born children. Politically, legislatively, we must do all we can to end the evil of abortion, which ends the life of a precious child and deeply wounds the child's mother. And one significant goal will be, as chair of this committee, is expanding education on the current reality of legalized abortion. I'm not sure that even maybe all of our listeners are aware of the extreme current state abortion laws and referenda that are out there. I don't want to get into specific states, but these extreme referenda allow abortion on healthy mothers and children at all nine months.

Billy Atwell [\(11:16\)](#):

It's amazing.

Bishop Michael Burbidge [\(11:17\)](#):

At all nine months-

Billy Atwell [\(11:18\)](#):

It's unreal.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([11:18](#)):

... of pregnancy up until the moment of birth. We need people to be aware of this and to insist on the humane protections of the pre-born. And beyond our legislative advocacy, there's much work to be done to make abortion unthinkable, unthinkable, by supporting mothers in need. And as we know, and we can say humbly, but proudly, the Catholic Church has long offered hope in healing and material support to the vulnerable, more than any other institution outside the government.

Billy Atwell ([11:49](#)):

And that message doesn't get out. And that's one that you mentioned after Roe v. Wade was overturned. That was one of your leading messages actually, that you discussed on this podcast and elsewhere was, "We have to walk with moms, not just try to end abortion, but help mothers in need who would consider abortion."

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([12:03](#)):

Yeah. We want you to know that's not the answer and there's no need there. We want you to know that there's every reason to choose life because we will be there to provide you with the counseling you may need or the financial resources or the basic necessities, whatever. We know the great work of Catholic Charities with adoption. So there's so much... We want to walk with moms in pregnancy and in crisis pregnancy and to assure them that they will never be alone. And then we want to be with those who have chosen abortion because we know so much healing is necessary for mothers and fathers. And that's the great work of our Project Rachel. So, it's with a sense of urgency at this critical time in the life of our country. Prayer, education, service, advocacy for the cause of life. I ask our listeners to pray for me and the other members of the committee that we can help dioceses and parishes throughout our country to be recommitted to all these essential works, especially in a time of such great need.

Billy Atwell ([13:14](#)):

Well, we were so proud that you were elected by your brother bishops.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:17](#)):

Oh, thank you. Thank you.

Billy Atwell ([13:17](#)):

We were excited here at home for sure. One bit of news that came out during the USCCB meeting, and it does relate to pro-life activities obviously, is that it was announced that the Archdiocese of Washington had decided not to hold its large rally. This is separate from the Vigil Mass for Life, which will continue to take place, but that they're not going to be holding their rally. And so within that, people learned that the Life is Very Good events that we do in the Diocese of Arlington, that those will not be taking place. And there's a lot of confusion about why. People are thinking, "Well, don't we continue on fighting for the unborn and advocating for life?" Well, of course. But there's some very practical reasons for that. And so I wanted to give you the opportunity to explain why that is.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([13:56](#)):

Yes. Yeah, I would appreciate that opportunity for the practical reasons. But let me begin by saying that I do think it is very important for all who can to be very present the night before the March for Life that we've been doing and the day of the March for Life. Because again, we have to transform hearts. And I

think a peaceful witness, a peaceful march and prayer are ways to do that. And so on a federal level, it's very important because of elected officials who need to see that yes, we know what the Supreme Court decided and we thank God for that. But we also know that all of our elected officials play such a vital role in having the opportunity to protect life. We want them to see us, we want them to see our passion and our love. So I really am encouraging everyone who can to please be at the Basilica Shrine for the Vigil for Life. Because of my new position, I'll be the celebrant and homilist that day, and then we'll be together for the March for Life. And I know the people organizing that event have done everything they have been doing for years to make sure that the event is as secure and taking all the necessary steps, good speakers, very good speakers, and a peaceful march proclaiming the truth in love.

Billy Atwell ([15:20](#)):

That would be good.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:21](#)):

But let's get back to the practical side of this. The original intent of our Life is Very Good Rally, which is the night before the March, was to provide a place for people to go when they could not get into some of the masses, events and rallies in Washington, D.C.

Billy Atwell ([15:35](#)):

Right. There was high demand.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([15:36](#)):

Right. Exactly. So there were thousands of people looking for alternatives. And so here steps up, and this is way even before I came here, for sure, there's the Diocese of Arlington being so hospitable. They launch what has become Life is Very Good. And as I said, this has been going on for years. A great event filled with music, talks, entertainment, as well as confession, adoration and more. Our wonderful youth office has just done such a great job. And so these people coming from all across the country were welcomed and also ask us for help to places in our parishes and all to stay.

Billy Atwell ([16:17](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([16:18](#)):

But with Roe vs. Wade being overturned, this decision, going back to the states, many diocese and pro-life efforts are now focusing on the state level. And that's where many battles are being fought at this point. So what we learned is that less people are coming to the March for Life from around the country and the surrounding events and rallies. And so while we did everything to promote Life is Very Good and had every intent on hosting it, we rent out the George Mason Arena, which is, it's very expensive.

Billy Atwell ([16:52](#)):

Extremely expensive.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([16:53](#)):

It's worth the cost, but it's very expensive. But our registration was down more than 80%. 80%. So we could not commit to spend out-of-pocket for an arena that would almost be completely empty. 263

people registered for the Mass, that arena that holds over 10,000. So that's the practical reason. And we respected decisions, while I would hope everyone still comes here to D.C., we respected decisions of other dioceses. But I know our youth office is, in addition to promoting the Mass at the Basilica Shrine, we're going to have an event for parishes in our area that will take place at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. And a lot more details coming for youth ministers and pastors to invite their young people.

Billy Atwell ([17:46](#)):

I think for a lot of the angst on social media and everything, it's partly... Change is hard even when you have good change, right? Roe v. Wade being overturned was a tremendous victory, but we had existed under 50 years of it. And so now we're trying to figure out, "What next, how now do we live and carry out this great mission?" And so there's some growing pains with that that are a little uncomfortable, but we will continue to lean in heavily to promote life and to try to have more pro-life victories.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:12](#)):

And so the decision was not made by the Diocese of Arlington in a sense. It was made by those who availed themselves of our help saying, "Well, we don't need that this year." So we were fully ready, fully committed. To me, it was one of my favorite nights and morning of the entire year to see so many young people from around the country. I always say this, that it's a rally. So they have the band, the music that the young people like and they're hooting and hollering and all these kind of things. And then we have Adoration and then there's profound reverence and silence. So I mean, I'm going to miss that opportunity, but again-

Billy Atwell ([18:51](#)):

It'll take shape differently.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:52](#)):

Yeah, we'll see.

Billy Atwell ([18:53](#)):

Absolutely.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:53](#)):

We'll see going forward.

Billy Atwell ([18:54](#)):

Well, thank you for providing that explanation.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([18:56](#)):

Sure.

Billy Atwell ([18:57](#)):

You have a passion for helping those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, both adults and the young. And we have programs in our schools to help integrate students with those needs into our classrooms and to the activities at the school. You were asked to be the Episcopal Moderator for the

National Catholic Partnership on Disability. And so at the USCCB meeting recently, you gave a report on that partnership. Could you give us a little bit of a bird's eye view for those who didn't tune in?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([19:25](#)):

Yes. I'm very honored to serve as the Episcopal Moderator for the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, which is a very, very strong pro-life entity in that it helps dioceses and parishes with resources they need to serve those with intellectual, developmental, physical disabilities so that we make sure that we're even more effectively responding to the pastoral and spiritual needs of those with disabilities, making sure that they're fully engaged in the life of our parishes, our schools, and our communities. Not every diocese can staff offices that can do this. So NCPD provides consultants, experts to help parishes, training courses for leaders who want to be engaged in this ministry and work. And any diocese can become an affiliate. So I had a great opportunity to invite all my brother bishops to become an affiliate of NCPD because they and their dioceses will be greatly enhanced in this essential ministry. And so it was a great honor. And again, it's pro-life because pro-life is making sure that every single human person is treated with the dignity and respect that belongs to them as a child of God.

Billy Atwell ([20:51](#)):

I've known as that program has grown in our diocese to integrate into classrooms and so on. There's always the desire for it, but there's not always the knowledge and the wherewithal. And so NCPD comes in and they have the experience. They can tell you exactly what you need to do to make this work. And it's worked beautifully.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:06](#)):

Oh, it really is. It's really a great executive director, great board members, great consultants. And it's just a great tool. It's a great resource. And so I'm honored to be part of that entity.

Billy Atwell ([21:23](#)):

We obviously talked about the schools program and our parishes are doing the same with religious education, but you're leading by example here at the Chancery. Why don't you talk about how, on our staff, we have brought in some adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be part of our team.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([21:38](#)):

So working with groups like Porto Charities and others who are assisting persons with disabilities, one of the primary goals now is well, we are doing so well. Of course we always can do better, have more work to do with making sure that there's inclusion or students being fully immersed in the life of our parishes and schools and faith formation programs. But what about after they graduate?

Billy Atwell ([22:05](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:06](#)):

What about the workplace? These are very gifted people who bring so much joy and many gifts to wherever God sends them and including the workplace. And so I spoke to our team here and said, "Listen, what about our Chancery?" We have positions open, so let's welcome some of our brothers and

sisters with disabilities who are going to make us even better. And so we have three positions now where those with some disabilities are assisting. And the joy that they are bringing to all of us is absolutely incredible. Plus the great work we're getting out of them too. Yeah, yeah. I mean they're-

Billy Atwell ([22:50](#)):

Very helpful.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([22:50](#)):

working very, very hard. And I asked all of our Chancery staff to take some sort of training on what is the best way to make sure we're supporting persons with disabilities.

Billy Atwell ([23:04](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:04](#)):

Because there's things you do, there's things you don't do. And some people naturally could say, "Well, I've never had this experience. I'm a little intimidated. I don't want to do anything wrong." Well, again, like NCPD, we can help you. We can train you for this. And I was so thrilled with the enthusiastic response to that invitation, and I'm really, really so grateful for the individuals God has sent our way here.

Billy Atwell ([23:30](#)):

And you made a good point that it's brought a lot of joy. And it's worth noting, too, these are paid positions.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:35](#)):

Oh yes.

Billy Atwell ([23:35](#)):

It's not like volunteer. They're part of the team. They're part of the staff.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:38](#)):

Part of the team.

Billy Atwell ([23:39](#)):

Doing great.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:39](#)):

Absolutely.

Billy Atwell ([23:40](#)):

Doing great. Yes. So Bishop, this is our last podcast before the Thanksgiving holiday. And then I realized, "Wow, it's our last before Advent begins." I cannot believe we're already there. Do you have any thoughts for people as we lead into the holiday?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([23:53](#)):

Well, sure. First of all, on Thanksgiving Day, I will certainly at the Mass I celebrate, give thanks to God for the privilege of serving in this wonderful diocese and for the tremendous support I receive from the priests, the women religious, the deacons, our seminarians and our lay faithful who just support me with their prayers and the works of our diocese that are sacrifices and generosity. So my Mass will certainly be a Mass of thanksgiving for all of you. And the Gospel that day at Mass, and I'm really thrilled, and I hear our pastor saying this, "It's not a holy day of obligation", but people, our priests are saying, so many people now are beginning their Thanksgiving day with Mass. Well, that's the perfect act.

Billy Atwell ([24:44](#)):

That's wonderful sign, isn't it?

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([24:45](#)):

So maybe if you have not done already as a family, and the pastors are smart, they know you have a busy day that day and the family football game begins, and you got to get to grandma's for dinner. So the Masses are at a time where you can start your day with the perfect act of Thanksgiving. If you haven't done that, friends, maybe consider going to Mass on Thanksgiving Day. And the Gospel that day is the famous story about the lepers. All 10 were healed, but only one returned. And I think we can all identify ourselves as those sometimes who forget to give thanks. We just take our blessings for granted. Or it's not that we're not thankful, but maybe we're too busy to pause and to offer praise. So Thanksgiving is just an opportunity for all the blessings that God has given to us throughout our lives. Special people he's placed in our lives, and until this present day, and to offer thanks for the gift of faith, the gift of family, friends and the gift of freedom that is ours in this great country of ours.

Billy Atwell ([25:51](#)):

Absolutely.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([25:51](#)):

And so thanks to all you dear listeners, and Advent, again, time to slow down, get our priorities in order and make sure that we don't wake up and realize it's Christmas Day. No, we've used Advent and these four weeks of a spiritual preparation, a beautiful time to prepare the way of the Lord, most especially prepare the way of the Lord in our own hearts and in our own homes.

Billy Atwell ([26:17](#)):

And we've got that Advent series.

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:18](#)):

I can't wait to see it. I've only, yeah, I can't wait to see it.

Billy Atwell ([26:21](#)):

If you're not signed up for our emails, please sign up for those. We've got an Advent series. You have to see it to understand it fully. But basically each Sunday we'll release a video. And three priests and a religious sister are offering guided reflections. It's just the beautiful imagery of the way it was all shot. You're really going to enjoy it. I think it'll help guide you through the season.

This transcript was exported on Nov 21, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Bishop Michael Burbidge ([26:41](#)):

All right. And Billy, thanks to our listeners and also know of my prayers for you, especially as we do approach Thanksgiving Day, that God will continue to shower his abundant blessings upon you, and we will be renewed in our commitment to walk humbly with our God.

([26:58](#)):

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