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Bishop Burbidge (00:00):

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

Billy Atwell (00:08):

Podcasting from the St. Clare Studio 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. We want to begin, especially in this season, by thanking all those who have generously given to the Bishop's Lenton Appeal in the past. The BLA supports so many ministries throughout the Diocese. You've heard us talk about them before, but one of them is the Communications Office and the studio that we're in. The microphone I'm talking into is made possible because of those who've given to the BLA. So, thank you. If you haven't yet, please rate this podcast or write a review for it wherever you're listening and if you're on YouTube, make sure you subscribe and ring that bell. We put up a lot of great videos and with that notifications bell, you'll know about it first.

(<u>00:49</u>):

Sign up for our e-newsletter at arlingtondiocese.org, and follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter. Every day, he provides a short Gospel reflection for that day. We are on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Check us out there and send your questions to Bishop Burbidge to info@arlingtondiocese.org or send us a message on social media. On today's topics, we're going to cover the March for Life, a priest's podcast hits number one, gender ideology in the NHL and several men prepare for the permanent diaconate. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge (01:22):

I am doing well, Billy. Thank you. Hope all our listeners are doing well also.

Billy Atwell (<u>01:27</u>):

I think you had to deliver five homilies last week, so I know you're coming off a wonderful week with the March for Life and all those events, but I know it had to wear you out.

Bishop Burbidge (01:35):

Oh no. Once the adrenaline starts, it kicks in, you get the energy, but I was very honored to preach to all the Respect Life leaders from around our country on Thursday and later that night, the Vigil for Life Mass at our Basilica Shrine, which was really a very beautiful opportunity, and I was privileged to be on the platform with other really great speakers at the March for Life, and a very important dinner that evening with again, Respect Life leaders from around the country just to offer a few words. So it was really just a great privileged moment, but I was so energized just by what we saw at the March for Life and the Vigil for Life, thousands and thousands of people from all around the country, especially our young people. Just the joy that was there, the zeal, the passion for the cause that unites us: protect the unborn and all the sacredness of our human life.

Billy Atwell (<u>02:31</u>):

And this was an interesting year for the March for Life. Every year prior, we have been fighting to end Roe vs. Wade and well, it's over and so we're now in this post-Dobbs era and there aren't the restrictions that we had caused by Roe vs. Wade and so we were curious how many people were going to show up to the March, and I know the Vigil for Life, which is where the Mass that you preached at the

night before that was, I think going to be a strong tell as to how is this going to go - talk about the crowds.

Bishop Burbidge (03:00):

It was because it is. It's kind of a year of transition. This is a very historic moment. So we weren't sure what the numbers would be, but at the Basilica Shrine for example, on Thursday night, the Vigil before the March for Life there, the whole Basilica Shrine was filled all the way down the aisles and overflow into the downstairs. So, people are estimating 5 - 6,000 people at the Mass and then the beautiful part after the Mass, there were Holy Hours throughout the evening that bishops and priests were leading into the early morning. So when we say this was a Vigil of prayer before the March, it certainly was and that's what strengthens our witness and strengthens our advocacy, and then again at the March for Life, I mean, to me, it looked like the crowds were about the same size.

Billy Atwell (03:48):

I wouldn't have noticed it as being any different than previous years. We were posted up on a corner at one point seeing all the groups from Arlington and it just seemed like it never stopped. It filled the street side to side and it went on for a long time.

Bishop Burbidge (<u>04:01</u>): It really did.

Billy Atwell (04:02):

That was wonderful to see. Yeah, so as you kind of recollect now on the March and the Vigil that you preached at, what do you think are some of the takeaways in terms of the message that we carry forward and the priorities we should have?

Bishop Burbidge (04:14):

Well, I think you're right. I think first of all, with Roe vs. Wade being overturned, this was a march where, after all these years, and through people, many of whom gone before us just persevered. It was a year to march with even profound gratitude of what has occurred. So that gratitude, that joy was certainly prevalent, but the reason we're marching because we know our work is just beginning, abortion remains legalized in Virginia and throughout our country and now with Dobbs, the decision and the work is back in the hands where it should have always been, in the citizens and in the officials we elect, and so now, yes, on a federal, on a national level, we must continue witnessing obviously, but it is the time to, with even greater focus, use our resources, our prayer, witness, our advocacy on the local level, state by state, because we have some key battles ahead of us.

(05:25):

And it is that with Roe vs. Wade, all we really could do was protest peacefully, because it was a Supreme Court decision, but now's the opportunity to do the work to make sure that in our state we do everything possible to limit abortion, the funding of abortion, God willing to ban abortion, but we have lots of work to do and Billy, as I said in my homilies throughout those days, it is about changing laws for sure, but the real work is about transforming hearts and minds and to find a way that we speak this truth in love and let people understand why we believe what we believe, and also to let people know not only what we're against, but what we're for and how as a Catholic Church, we have so many reasons to be proud as a Catholic Church, how we say "yes" to life over and over again, walking with moms in

need, being with families, providing food and basic necessities, counseling, healing for those who are suffering and mourning of loss of a child through abortion.

(06:42):

We are there at every moment, and I think when you - especially speaking to elected officials and maybe even people, family members, colleagues, peers who disagree with us, I think our job now is to - where's that window we can open a little bit, where's that door we can open a little bit? And it's not by attacking. It's by inspiring. It's not by canceling, it's by converting. Let's find ways to open that window and to have this discussion and that opportunity to speak passionately about what we believe and why we believe, but it only can be done in love without any compromise, without any conviction because we're all accountable in the end to the extent that these are God's children. In the end, when we stand before him, don't you think he's going to ask us, "What did you do to protect my children?" Whether we're elected officials in public office who have a great opportunity to do so, but that goes true for each and every one of us.

Billy Atwell (<u>07:42</u>):

Yeah, absolutely and for those who - I really encourage you to listen to Bishop Burbidge's homily from that Vigil Mass. If you go to basilicashrine.org/mass, you can go back to previous Masses and check out that homily. I think it really helps set the tone for where do we go from here and more importantly, how do we go from here? And that spirit of love and conversion that you spoke about.

Bishop Burbidge (08:04):

And on that note, Billy, if I could just add that on February 1st, we will have our March for Life in Richmond, in our capital.

Billy Atwell (08:10):

Absolutely.

Bishop Burbidge (08:11):

And I'm really asking everyone who's listening, please do everything possible. Be with us on that day, a day of prayer, a day of advocacy, a day actually when we do meet with our elected officials, but please invite others, your own family members. Let's show up in great number.

Billy Atwell (08:26):

Absolutely. Go to arlingtondiocese.org to get more information about that. You can also go to vacatholic.org to learn more about our kind of political action here in The Commonwealth, Jeff Caruso, and his team there does such a great job at keeping us well informed, and our YouTube channel has both Bishop Burbidge's homily from that day as well as a good wrap up video from the March for Life. I encourage you to go watch. It was really a joyful and blessed event.

Bishop Burbidge (08:47):

Billy, your team did a great job in producing a short video. I encourage, I'll return the favor. I'll encourage people to watch that video. It's very short. It's powerful and positive and it's exactly the tone, the message I want to set.

Billy Atwell (09:04):

Yeah, absolutely. Perfect, thank you. Here's a story I know you'll be happy about. The number-one-ranked podcast for more than a week in the beginning of January was "Catechism in a Year". It beat out a lot of major networks and extremely popular programs. It's still in, I think, the top 15 or so, at least as of this weekend. I know it wasn't the Walk Humbly Podcast in the top tier, but we're working on it, I promise you, we're working on it.

Bishop Burbidge (09:28):

Tough competition here.

Billy Atwell (09:31):

But also, it's a reflection also in reminder of, the "Bible in a Year" was twice the number one podcast in the world in 2021 and last year, 2022. It was downloaded 430 million times. So I think it's almost paradoxical because we have these signs that people are not as interested in faith and people are losing their faith in culture and society. We're becoming more secular, and yet at the same time we'll see these enormous spikes and interest in the fundamental teachings of our faith and the Bible. What do you make of that?

Bishop Burbidge (10:01):

Well yeah, I think that on a very practical level, I think people are getting very tired of the podcasts and the talk shows and all those things that are just so angry and bitter and one-sided and things like that. It's just draining. It doesn't bring life and I think there's something inside all of us that has this longing, this searching for meaning and purpose to our lives and knowing down deep, it's only found in God and in relationship with him, but people are inspired in different ways, and so when you see a talented priest like Father Schmitz, who has that gift and ability to make the Scripture or to make the Catechism very life-giving and you want to learn more and more, it will touch people. And we're seeing the results of that. It's providential. Yesterday was Sunday of the Word of God.

(10:59):

Pope Francis made the third Sunday in Ordinary Time devoted to the Word of God and I actually in my homily yesterday at the parish, encouraged people to listen to this podcast, and then go back and listen to that "Bible in a Year" because as Pope Francis tries to tell us, the Word of God is alive. I mean the word that God spoke, it continues to speak to us in new ways specifically and directly to us and so when we open the Bible, God is going to speak the word of consolation or encouragement or guidance, or whatever that we need and so I encouraged the people yesterday to use great resources like Father Schmitz. Make sure that you have the Bible open in your home. It's always a great thing maybe to read the Psalms or one of the Gospels and see where you are, what God is saying to you.

(11:51):

And I always encourage people to do the readings, the Sunday readings before they come to Mass, and they're easy to find in the USCCB website or Magnificat or whatever, but do those readings before you come to Mass. Say "Okay, this is the Word of God." And you know what happens when those readings are proclaimed or the homily is preached, a spark is lit because you've already been meditating upon it and then when it's proclaimed or preached, wow, this is what God is really saying to me. So that's just words of encouragement, but there's so many really good Catholic podcasts and resources out there, but it's wonderful news to hear that this one is receiving so much attraction. It just reflects the longing that all of us have.

Billy Atwell (12:38):

Absolutely. A couple of troubling situations I wanted to ask you about. The Washington Capitals teamed up with the grocery store Giant to promote a bit of a coercive pronoun usage and LGBTQ terminology and ideology. This came through a series of what I would call kind of pseudo-educational tweets about how we should be acting and things we should be saying as well as even on-ice demonstrations, the initiative attempted to promote the use of preferred pronouns and acceptance and even appreciation for same-sex sexual activity. And in a related story, this one became even more popular, a Russian Orthodox pro hockey player for the Philadelphia Flyers, Yvonne Provorov refused to wear an LGBTQ pride jersey during the team's annual "Pride Night" celebration, and I just saw a little while ago that the Fanatics website and nhl.com sold out of his jersey. So obviously a lot of people are offering an outpouring of support. What do you make of these demonstrations?

Bishop Burbidge (13:38):

Yeah, I think what we are witnessing is the continued normalizing of transgender ideology and same-sex activity, but this time and we see it happening more and more in a way that truly ostracizes others, and that's really very unsettling. I mean I saw the Flyers hockey player, what he said, he could not have been more respectful.

Billy Atwell (<u>14:05</u>):

Extremely respectful.

Bishop Burbidge (14:06):

He was extremely respectful. He said, "I respect the positions of others, but I have to be true to who I am and to my religion." What's wrong with that? And why would he have to go through such? And I see it on social media, the things people are saying and really attacking. Why is that okay? The situation where people are saying we should have respectful dialogue and there should be tolerance and things like that. Well, that has to be mutual and again, this man was so respectful about others and as we should be, but on both sides. But we saw tons of support come his way and so I do think that it's important for all of us to realize that because of the force and the power of social media and Hollywood and the entertainment industry, powerful forces, they have a way of making sure you are the one who's isolated on this issue.

(15:22):

Where in fact, no, there are many, many others in the majority who understand respect for every human person. No attacking the dignity of every person, but be true to who you are and what you believe. Celebrate the fact that God created us man and woman, celebrate the sanctity of marriage as Jesus taught us. Celebrate the beauty of life-giving sexuality as God has intended and stay firm and thank God that there are people in the public who are willing to take a stance on that, but this attacking has to come to an end.

Billy Atwell (16:04):

And we saw the same with Tony Dungy, who you shared a stage with at the March for Life. People are calling for his job. He's a Hall of Fame football coach. I think he's been to the Super Bowl twice or something, legendary and for going to the March for Life, people were calling for his job.

Bishop Burbidge (16:19):

We saw with both our speakers at the March for Life, Tony Dungy from the sports world that day, people were calling for his firing because of his extreme position of being at the March for Life and again, did you hear his remarks, how respectful they were? And the same thing with the actor Jonathan Roumie, who plays Jesus in "The Chosen". His talk was beautiful and I spoke with both of them that day. Both of them knew...

Billy Atwell (16:47):

There's a cost.

Bishop Burbidge (16:48):

They knew there was a cost, but they said, not that it wasn't a heavy decision to weigh because they had family. They knew there would be a cost, but as the actor was saying, he just kept coming back to him. Do not be afraid. Do not be silent. Going back to that accountability, which we will all have. So I would love to see more in the entertainment field and more in the sports world rallying around people like this, even if they disagree with their positions, but rallying around the courage that they believe, they're sincere, they're respectful, and at least encouraging that rather than this canceling and all.

Billy Atwell (17:33):

I totally agree. Yeah no, it was very powerful to see those witnesses. Going to the issue of transgenderism and gender ideology - if you want to better understand what the Church teaches about gender ideology, Bishop Burbidge authored an outstanding teaching document and he worked with a lot of experts to help contribute to this. It's called "A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology". It's on our website, just go to arlingtondiocese.org and you can search "gender ideology" or "transgender" in the search box. It's the first thing to pop up.

(18:01):

It's a very easy-to-read resource. This is not theology that you need an advanced degree to understand. I can understand it. I promise you, you can as well. Again, arlingtondiocese.org. Bishop, on January 28th, you're going to be ordaining five men to the permanent diaconate. Each year, you ordain men to the transitional diaconate. We talk about that, as they're on track to become priests, God willing, but for the permanent diaconate, it's different. Their vocation culminates with the diaconate. How might your message to those men vary from what you might say to those who are on the route to become priests?

Bishop Burbidge (18:35):

Yeah, well first of all, we want to reassure and congratulate the candidates, Linus and Marvin, Robin and Mark, and Mark and their spouses and their families. This is a long path. We have a very rigorous formation program because of the sacred ministry and important ministry these men will carry out. So there's a lot of hard work. It's a lot of time, it's a lot of perseverance. They cannot do it without their spouses and without the support of their families. So we commend them for their perseverance and I can assure you, because of the great formation program, the teachers and mentors these men have, these men about to be ordained on Saturday are certainly well prepared and as you say, they're permanent deacons because they're not moving on to priesthood and they have a beautiful ministry entrusted to them in being collaborators with me and with the priests in carrying out the Word of God. They help us at the altar and they can preach and they can baptize and lead so many different ministries.

(19:44):

And we are really happy for them and, I guess my reminder to them would be, the fact that you're here today on the day of ordination because the Lord has chosen you. The Lord has chosen you, he's called you by name and that the Lord who has chosen you will give you the strength and the grace to carry out the mission that has entrusted you and deacons have a very privileged and unique responsibility because as deacons, they also are employed and so they work in corporations or businesses or various fields. So they have really a great opportunity, not only sharing and proclaiming the Faith in their parishes, but as a deacon in the workplaces where God sends them, where they can offer effective witness, and I'm sure the Lord will use them to touch hearts. So very happy for our deacons and their families - it's going to be a great privilege, it's one of the greatest joys of a bishop, is to ordain men to the priesthood and to the diaconate, but they're well prepared and we, Billy, we have plenty of work for them. Be assured.

Billy Atwell (20:57):

I'm sure you do. So if you would like to attend the ordination for the permanent diaconate, it's on January 28th at 11:00 AM. It's at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More. We would love to see you there. If you've never been to an ordination, I encourage you to attend. It's a really beautiful event and it's certainly unique when they have wives and children who will be there to celebrate with them. It's a beautiful thing to witness. Again, before we go into some questions from the faithful here, Virginia Defending Life Day, it's on February 1st. It's a bit of an all-day event. It's going to start at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. It's got two parts. It's both a March for Life here in our state, but also, you go and you speak with your legislators and explain to them the positions that we hold and the truths that we believe in and we know to be true.

(21:41):

It's really a wonderful day and we give you everything you need so you get there, they explain everything. So it's a great witness, especially for families. If you can bring kids with you, it's such a beautiful witness. Again, that's on February 1st. Go to arlingtondiocese.org to learn more and as we're in this second jubilee year leading up to our diocesan Golden Jubilee, a lot of events are on our Events page on our website, you can do different pilgrimages, there's reflections, Sundays with the Sisters, there's a St. Therese Vocation Society morning reflection and all those kinds of things. Please check that out if you would like to learn more. All right, Bishop, I got a couple questions. The first is from Myrtle. She says, "I'm not a Catholic from birth, but I became a Catholic when I married my husband. How do I know when I'm truly following God's will and not my own will? I fear I'm still not close enough to God's will in my life."

Bishop Burbidge (22:38):

Well, that's a good question, and doing God's will is a lifelong process. So when Myrtle says, "I fear I'm still not close enough to God's will in my life." That's quite understandable, none of us are. It's a lifelong journey. It's day by day and so just encourage Myrtle to continue to live it that way day by day and of course we know we can only come to know God's will in prayer. And when we pray, not just speaking but also listening. So talking to God, asking God questions, whatever, but then just stop and listen and when we allow that, create that space for silences where God often speaks - Billy, doing God's will always leads to peace and serenity into joy.

(23:30):

And so there are always signs of doing God's will when you have this sense of freedom or this sense of peace or this sense of serenity. More and more, you're in line with God's will because we know the

opposite is true too, right? We all know that when we're not doing God's will, we're not doing what he's asking us at all, we're restless because we're meant to do God's will. So look for those signs of peace and joy, serenity. Pray for those gifts. Many times they're signs that you are doing exactly, but it's day by day.

Billy Atwell (23:56):

And your priests are there to walk with you. Contact your parish. Talk to your pastor. What are the parochial vicars saying, that's what they're there for. They were ordained to help guide you in that way. Last question actually connects to Jonathan Roumie who you had mentioned a minute ago, "Do you watch the show "The Chosen", and what are your thoughts on the series?"

Bishop Burbidge (24:11):

I have not watched all the episodes, but I've watched some and they are very powerful, I think. I really appreciate that series. I think that they bring home the Sacred Scriptures in a very real way and I think in an appropriate way, they show the humanity of Christ in an appropriate way. Sometimes people go a little extreme that way and other things.

Billy Atwell (24:42):

Yeah, either he's totally distant or he's like just another guy - just a buddy.

Bishop Burbidge (24:46):

Exactly. It's very appropriate, but they also show the humanity of the people who encounter Jesus along the way and that's a great way to read Scripture too. It's always a great way to read scripture by putting yourself in the shoes, in the place of the person Jesus has encountered and whether it's the disciple or whether it's the person looking to be healed or whether it be someone in the crowd, and I think that's what "The Chosen" does so well. They were real human beings and what that must have been like in real time, and I think it does a great job and it always gives you something to reflect upon. So it's just so great to see healthy, life-giving broadcasts on things like this.

Billy Atwell (25:40):

My wife and I use them for date nights. We do date nights and she's pregnant and doesn't want to go to restaurants and things. So we do date night in and it's a great way you do a couple episodes. Now, we're always the people who are like if a show's produced in 2010, we don't watch it till 2020. We're always way behind. So I tell people, we're just starting season two. They're like, "Where have you been?" I'm like, "I know." But they are really good. It's certainly good for kids to watch and they tell stories that are not in Scripture.

(26:04):

So they have a little bit of creative license to illustrate who the apostles were and who Jesus was. There was just a scene where it was Jesus's last conversation with John the Baptist before he goes off to confront, what was it Herod or something and he knows he's going to die, and so he weeps after John the Baptist leaves and you're like that is a very human moment. He would've known and had that emotion and it does bring you closer to God to go and witness those, and you have to know it's a production. Nothing's going to be 100% biblically accurate, but take it for what it's worth. Yeah, certainly.

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Bishop Burbidge (26:34):
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I was really impressed too with the actor who plays Jesus and is speaking to the young people and to all of us about the importance of prayer, about the importance of the Rosary, importance of an encounter and being with Jesus. Being with Jesus and you can't help but to change, and playing Jesus can't help but change you too, he says.

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Billy Atwell (26:56):
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I would imagine it would. Yeah, that's worth listening to. If you go to, I think probably the March for Life website has his talk on it, or if you just go to YouTube and search for it, it was really powerful. So Bishop, we just came off again a very active week, lots of things going on. You've got an upcoming ordination and we've got Virginia Defending Life Day coming up. What are your kind of final thoughts here for the faithful?

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Bishop Burbidge (27:14):
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No, it's a great time in the life of the Church. We also have Catholic Schools Week coming up, and so we also celebrate our Catholic schools. We know enrollment went up in our Catholic schools up overnight 9%. So it just shows you the great ministry of our Catholic schools and what they offer to parents and children. I'm just surprised Billy that there's not a question about who I think will win the Eagles game. No one's asking that question?

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Billy Atwell (27:39):
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Oh, no ones asked that, but I'm sure people wonder. So what's your predictions from going forward?

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Bishop Burbidge (27:43):
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Well, there's four teams left, and so interesting, this year is that the four teams left. They're all very young quarterbacks.

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Billy Atwell (27:53):
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Oh, that's true.

Bishop Burbidge (27:54):

They're kind of like a new generation here and I think the Eagles quarterback -and they're playing the 49ers - I think one's 23, one's 24 or something like that. So a new generation.

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Billy Atwell (28:06):
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Who do you think will finish out the playoffs?

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Bishop Burbidge (28:07):
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So I do think it's going to be the Eagles and the Bengals.

Billy Atwell (28:14):

Yeah, I think so too.

Bishop Burbidge (28:15):

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I think it's going to be the Eagles and the Bengals.

Billy Atwell (28:17):

That'll be a great game.

Bishop Burbidge (28:18):

I think the Eagles have a tough game on Saturday, but they're very closely matched, but I think there is slight advantage of being home, and the "City of Brotherly Love" always is gracious and welcoming visitors to their stadiums.

Billy Atwell (28:38):

Oh, I'm sure. We'll ask the 49ers about that for the next podcast.

Bishop Burbidge (28:43):

Well, I would expect that most of our listeners will be in solidarity with their bishop and trying to root for the Eagles later.

Billy Atwell (28:50):

Are there special graces that come with it?

Bishop Burbidge (28:51):

Yes, there is. There are.

Billy Atwell (28:54):

You could send this off with your blessing.

Bishop Burbidge (28:55):

Sure, just thank you everyone for listening and ask God's continued blessings upon you and your family, that he will bless you with his peace. Keep us united strong in faith and joyful in hope and help us each and every day to walk humbly with our God.

(29:09):

Thank you for listening to the Walk Humbly podcast. Make sure you check out more episodes on iTunes, Google Play, Stitcher and Spotify. You can follow me on Twitter @bishopburbidge where I offer Gospel reflections each morning and share photos and updates of what is going on in the Diocese of Arlington. Stay up-to-date with news, event information and inspirational content by subscribing to our enewsletter at arlingtondiocese.org.