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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](#)):

Welcome The Walk Humbly podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your cohost. I first want to start off by thanking everyone who's given to the Bishop's Lenten appeal, because it's because of your gifts to the ministries of the Diocese that we're able to produce this podcast, in the first place. You support a lot of ministries, and the communications office is one of those. I'm so grateful.

Billy Atwell ([00:29](#)):

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Billy Atwell ([01:11](#)):

I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how are you doing?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:13](#)):

Doing well, Billy, and I hope all our listeners are doing well also, staying safe and healthy. Although things are radically different, it's been a great joy in the past couple of weeks, getting out into the Diocese, into our schools and parishes. And it's just been celebrating confirmation. So we're doing it differently. But at least with our protocols in place, but at least we're able to have these opportunities to be together. I know it means so much to all of us, and I see how happy our students are in our schools. And so, it's great. Things are going well, and certainly praying for everyone, that they and their families are staying safe and healthy.

Billy Atwell ([01:54](#)):

Absolutely. So it was just last night, so I have to ask you about it. Did he get a chance to watch the presidential debate?

Bishop Burbidge ([01:59](#)):

I did watch the debate. I thought it was very disappointing.

Billy Atwell ([02:04](#)):

I think that a lot of people feel that way.

Bishop Burbidge ([02:05](#)):

Yeah, I really did. I thought it was very disappointing. I think our nation deserves so much better. This is such an important election. And I think a debate helps us to listen to how each candidate has positions on the issues that impact us all. And it's unfortunate, but I think it's reflective in some ways of our times, where we lack civility, we don't listen to each other. We don't respect each other. We call each other names. And how sad though, that we saw that last night in the two gentlemen running for President of the United States. And I think we were deprived of a healthy, respectful, and strong debate. There's nothing wrong with a strong debate, as people try to get their positions across. But this is why Pope Francis... that's why he's always reminding us that we have to respect and listen to each other, even when we disagree. And learn that civility is so necessary. And yeah, I pray God that both candidates and their camps look at what happened last night and say, "All right, we have to give the American citizens a much better debate next time around."

Billy Atwell ([03:26](#)):

Absolutely. I think a lot of people feel the same way.

Billy Atwell ([03:29](#)):

Other big political news, probably the bigger political news, of the week was the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court by President Trump. She obviously has yet to go through the nomination process. But what are your initial thoughts about her as a candidate? Obviously, it's an important pick for the Court and an important time.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:47](#)):

Sure, it's an extremely important decision. I'm proud to see a Catholic nominated to the highest court in the country. But she's a Catholic, but she's also, as we read about her, learn about her, very dedicated to her vocation as wife, as mother, beautiful seven children. I believe two have been adopted, one with special needs. It's just beautiful to see her having such great responsibility and keeping her family and priorities the same. It seems that's the person that has been nominated.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:31](#)):

But a key here is that again, we have to talk about respect. And she has to go for the confirmation hearings, and she will be questioned. And she should be. And I think those entrusted on that committee have to find out, is she the competent person to fill this very, very important position? And I hope, and I would say this about any candidate who comes before the committee, that they are treated respectfully. You could ask hard questions. You can probe. All of those things, it's the job of those in the committee to do that, but respectfully. And I hope, again, as a nation, we get to see this process carried out with that due respect.

Billy Atwell ([05:15](#)):

Absolutely. And again, I think people would agree with that as well. Before the Senate confirmations take place, you're going to be addressing the Supreme Court actually, and other members of our legal and judicial community, during what's called the Red Mass, which will take place in Washington DC on October 4th. How did that opportunity come about for you to be able to present [crosstalk 00:00:05:36]?

Bishop Burbidge ([05:33](#)):

Yes. So the Archdiocese in Washington, as many dioceses do, holds an annual red mass, which is calling down, asking for the graces of the Holy Spirit upon those in the legal profession and professors of law. And so, in DC, of course, it is the mass in which often Justices, the Supreme Justice and Justices of the Court, Catholics, participate in that mass, along with, oh, so many people in the legal profession. And each year, the Archbishop asks another Bishop to be the Guest Homilist in a sense. And so this year, Archbishop Gregory asked me to be the Homilist. And I'm very honored for this privileged opportunity. I have to say, I'm feeling a little bit of pressure though.

Billy Atwell ([06:15](#)):

I bet.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:17](#)):

[inaudible 00:06:17] a little bit pressure, so people out there can say a little prayer for me, I'd be grateful.

Billy Atwell ([06:20](#)):

That's an intelligent crowd.

Bishop Burbidge ([06:20](#)):

On Sunday, I think I've gone through the homily, I think I'm on my sixth revision. I think I'm overthinking it maybe. But it's a homily, and I want it to be that. I want it to be rooted in the word of God. I want it to be addressed to the congregation to whom I'm speaking. I'm assuring them of our prayers. Because they have such a serious responsibility. It's a beautiful reading, we're using that day, that Saint Paul asks us to live a life worthy of the call we have received. So I think we all need that reminder and a great opportunity to speak about their sacred duty. But also an opportunity to proclaim that God is the source of all wisdom and truth. And it's on him, and as he perfectly reveals his wisdom and truth in Jesus, that we must rely. So I hope it's a message that speaks to what we're facing, in this day and age as a nation. But also to the hearts of those entrusted with the sacred duty of stewards of the law.

Billy Atwell ([07:29](#)):

Very good. Now this year will be a little different in that representatives, I think, of groups will be there rather than the full crowd.

Bishop Burbidge ([07:35](#)):

Right. It's like everything we're doing these days. So yeah, there's going to be the practicing social distancing. And I think in the District, because those protocols are a little bit more strict than here in Northern Virginia, it's going to be a limited number of people. But again, it's going to be live streamed and hopefully, many people can participate that way.

Billy Atwell ([07:57](#)):

Great. Yes, if you want to follow that, you can go to the Archdiocese and social media accounts. And they'll be live streaming through there. Bishop, one of the most beautiful masses, and I never experienced it until I actually started working for the church, is what's called the Chrism Mass. And it's coming up here soon, on October 5th at 10:30 AM. You'll be joined by your brother priests, and we'll be

live streaming it on our YouTube channel. This is usually a standing room only mass. So I feel there's extra sadness that people can't come.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:24](#)):

I know. I know.

Billy Atwell ([08:25](#)):

Especially in this year. But why should people tune it from home? For those who haven't seen it, what would you say to them?

Bishop Burbidge ([08:30](#)):

Sure. So actually, we always celebrate this mass in our Diocese on Holy Thursday. And because of everything we were going through this past Holy Thursday, we were able to reschedule the Chrism mass. So this year, the Chrism mass will be celebrated, as you mentioned, with just me and the priest there. And that's why I am fully encouraging the faithful to participate in the mass. We'll they be able to see it, if they can't do it live?

Billy Atwell ([09:04](#)):

Yeah, it will be posted afterward and everything.

Bishop Burbidge ([09:07](#)):

All right, so that's great. And I really, as Billy said, I would really encourage the faithful, if you never been at a Chrism mass or ever seen one, it really is, it is such a powerful mass. It reflects the unity of the church as Bishop and priests and deacons and laity gather together. And what occurs in that mass is so profound, is that that mass, that the Chrism, the sacred Chrism is consecrated. And the oils, this Holy oils that will be used for the Sacrament. The oils of the sick and the catechumen will be blessed. And what is really powerful is it's those oils and then that Chrism from that cathedral that are now distributed and goes out. They go out to all the parishes for the sacraments of baptism and confirmation and the anointing of the sick. And yet that unity, it's all there at that mass. And then are carried back home to the local parishes.

Billy Atwell ([10:07](#)):

It's a beautiful thing to see.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:08](#)):

It really is, it is so powerful. And in another very, very powerful moment... Because Holy Thursday is usually when we celebrate this mass. Of course, it's the institution and the priesthood and the Eucharist. So within that mass, it's really beautiful. Where as Bishop in the name of our Holy Mother church, I ask the priests of the Diocese to renew their priestly promises. So that's like a retreat day. It's like, wow, you recall those promises that you've made as a newly ordained, that God willing, you've been living faithfully for years for so many of our priests. But you get to renew them, yes, Lord, here again, I want to say yes to everything that I promised for you. And then we pause, and we ask the people of the diocese to pray for our priests.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:57](#)):

And also, I asked personally for the people to pray for me, that I may be a faithful shepherd. So it's an opportunity for the faithful of the Diocese, even participating via livestream, to be actively engaged. Because the church is calling you as a way of showing your appreciation, I'm sure you have for your priests. Actively engaged at that very moment, to be praying for them specifically as they lead God-willing, renewed and strengthened with priestly, zeal and joy. So I hope many can participate live via live stream, or at least view it afterwards at a more convenient time for them.

Billy Atwell ([11:36](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. So those who want to get a reminder ought to go to youtube.com/arlingtondiocese. And you can subscribe to our YouTube channel there. And then you get a reminder, if you ring the bell there, a notification when there's new video. We've already got the livestream up, and you can get a reminder. Also, if you're subscribed to our e-newsletter, we're to be emailing people the morning of, a quick reminder that, hey, this is coming up. So again, arlingtondiocese.org, if you want to sign up for that e-newsletter.

Billy Atwell ([11:59](#)):

I always think about our diocese is so diverse, geographically and in every other way. That if you have a baby baptized in Luray, the Chrism used in that was consecrated at this mass. So there is this sense of no matter where you are, the connection of ourselves as family is beautiful.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:17](#)):

That's true. Exactly.

Billy Atwell ([12:19](#)):

So you have some big news to announce today. It's something we've talked about in the past, but you've got some new developments here.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:23](#)):

Yes and we've talked about the establishment of an advisory council in racism. We know that this is an issue, an evil that must continue to be confronted. And I've asked for help. How can we do that specifically as a local church, as the Diocese of Arlington? And so, I have created an advisory council of 14 men and women who will help me with a plan. This isn't just discussion, we come up with a plan to address instances of racism in our parishes, perhaps sadly, we have to acknowledge in years past. God forbid, but maybe even today and in our schools. We have 14 men and women representing the Diocese that come from all professional backgrounds and fields, such as the law, administration, business, there's mothers and fathers, two deacons. Each person's a parishioner of the Diocese. And they represent every deanery in the Diocese of Arlington also.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:19](#)):

And so, the goal is to bring a gospel centered approach. This is not a political. And it is very important to remember, this is a gospel centered approach. Taking the mandate of the gospel and Jesus' command to love and to be loved, that is inclusive, all embracing. And dealing with, as Jesus taught us so many times, injustice and evil, what does a follower of Christ... how does one go about that? So I look forward to hearing the advice and working with the members of this council, to assure them and the faithful in our Diocese, that we are continuing to deal with these difficult issues that sadly impact all of us. And I know

for the members of our African American community... and in some ways, every community experiences, sadly, discrimination and prejudice and all. But I know in these very difficult times, the African American community has felt the impact of that. And so, I think knowing that members of your community helped to form this council will be hope, a sign of our support and our prayers for all of you.

Billy Atwell ([14:32](#)):

And I know there are getting started in October, so they're getting to work right away. They'll be meeting regularly.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:36](#)):

Yeah, this is a working committee.

Billy Atwell ([14:37](#)):

Yeah, rolling up their sleeves.

Billy Atwell ([14:40](#)):

So Bishop this past weekend, you celebrated a mass for the 106th, believe it or not, World Day of Migrants and Refugees. It was celebrated at St. Anne's Parish. The mass was followed by a community event where you're able to speak with some of the migrants and refugees themselves, who have benefited from the ministry of Catholic Charities. And I know you've spoken to a lot of refugees and migrants in the past, but talk to us about some of the experience and the encounters you had.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:01](#)):

Yeah. Well, first of all, it's an incredible thing. And remember, this is the 106th year we've celebrated this mass as a church, as a universal church. And it's always a privilege for me to offer this mass because we, as a diocese from our very beginning, the founding of this diocese under Bishop Welsh, right from the beginning, wanted to make sure that this diocese would be embracing and finding ways to help our migrants and refugees. And for this year's mass, the Holy Father asks us to reflect on the image of the Holy Family. Mary and Joseph having to take Jesus, leave home because it was unsafe because of Herod. And that's what refugees experience. They can identify that reality of having to leave home, a home out of fear of war or violence or threats to religious liberty, seeking a safer place, a dignified way of life for themselves and for their families. And so imagine that, getting on a plane and just go into a place unknown. And through our great work of Catholic Charities, and the work of our migrant and refugee services... and as you mentioned, supported by [the BOA 00:16:16].

Bishop Burbidge ([16:17](#)):

So thank you, dear friends. We have people, our Catholic Charities from the very beginning, meeting them at the airport. So they're there. And we get them to a place to reside. And there's food waiting for them, and there's the basic necessities that they need to get started. And then, we start working with them to make sure we try to provide working opportunities for them, helping them learn the English language, providing for their children and their school supplies. And so, it's just such a great credit to this diocese that we reach out in such compassion. And knowing that we were going to talk about this.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:55](#)):

I did want to share some statistics with our listeners. But this resettling of refugees in a time of a global pandemic has been made more difficult.

Billy Atwell ([17:10](#)):

Absolutely.

Bishop Burbidge ([17:10](#)):

But even in this last year, we settled 417 refugees, mostly from Afghanistan. We have assisted 600 refugees with job placement, provided 500 refugee children with school supplies and tutoring, mentored over 50 youth refugees, assisted 75 senior refugees with medical bills, social activities, employment. 89% came to the United States after assisting the United States, military abroad. So we settle more than 3000 refugees per year. All refugees pass through the extensive background checks conducted about a United States Department. So I just think that as a diocese, we're carrying out this mandate of Jesus, welcome the stranger in your midst, they are your brother and sister, they are members of God's Holy family. So thank you dear friends for allowing us to continue this great work.

Billy Atwell ([18:02](#)):

And that's a great program in many ways. But one of which is, that they're expected to get employment quickly after getting here. The idea is that they would be on their feet because there's a dignity that comes with being able to manage your own affairs. And we help them along the way in getting there. But they're actively participating in that. So that they can sustain their families on their own, which is good to see too.

Bishop Burbidge ([18:20](#)):

Right. And I always like to do what Pope Francis says to do, is it's so important to provide assistance and support, but get to know, listen to their story. So I always try to do that. And in fact, after the mass this past Sunday, I met with two refugee families. And their stories are absolutely incredible, the courage. As they're telling me, I am like, I am just in awe of your courage. But you know what? Both families told me that they, with the help of Catholic Charities, they said he couldn't do it without it, have been very productive now. And one family has now, a construction company. And they're saying to Catholic Charities, we want to provide an opportunity in our company for other refugees that might come. We want to try to give them work. We want to give back.

Billy Atwell ([19:05](#)):

Wow.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:05](#)):

And the other gentleman is now working for our migration and refugee services.

Billy Atwell ([19:09](#)):

That's amazing.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:10](#)):

So it's amazing.

Billy Atwell ([19:11](#)):

I got goosebumps from that. That is wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:12](#)):

Yeah. It's just that need, that desire, and a great spirit of Thanksgiving to give back. It is just very, very powerful.

Billy Atwell ([19:20](#)):

And those are just two of the stories.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:21](#)):

Just two, just two.

Billy Atwell ([19:22](#)):

Yeah, exactly.

Billy Atwell ([19:23](#)):

Bishop, we've got some questions from the faithful here. Doug asks, I read where Bishop's coat of arms includes elements from the diocese and from his own personal preferences. But how about the Episcopal motto? I love yours, walk humbly with your God. How did you decide on that one?

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

Yeah, it's funny that Doug mentions that because when you get told you're a Bishop, they say, "Okay now, you have to come up with a coat of arms, and you have to come up with an Episcopal motto." I'm like, "Really?"

Billy Atwell ([19:48](#)):

And you have to live with it forever.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:50](#)):

Yeah, you have to live with it forever. So what I did, I went to... Usually, when a newly ordained priest, when you're ordained, you have a Holy card for that special day that you give to all the people who attend your first mass. And one of my favorite scripture passages was on the back of the Holy card, on the day I was ordained a priest. And it was from the Prophet Micah. When we ask what can we do for you, Lord? Act justice, love tenderly, and then walk humbly with your God. And that phrase, walk humbly with your God, has always meant so much to me. That we walk not alone, with God by our side. And if that's humility, that allows us to say, and without you, God, I can do nothing. I always tease Billy though, but I also say... and another reason that I picked that motto is because my family and friends helped me to live it. They keep me very, very humble.

Billy Atwell ([20:46](#)):

And your staff here at the Diocese.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:47](#)):

And my staff here too. Trust me. Trust me.

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

All right, Fran didn't provide the parish. But Fran asks, "What is the significance of different steps a man takes to become a priest?" He mentioned an acolyte and lector and so on. I don't know any except becoming a deacon and then becoming a priest. I should say your brother, Fran, you've mentioned on the podcast. This isn't Fran asking. This is your brother, a parishioner here in the Diocese. So what about those other steps that take place [crosstalk 00:21:16]?

Bishop Burbidge ([21:14](#)):

No, Fran is probably a close reader of our Arlington Catholic Herald, because we recently... Thank you, Fran, for that. We recently, I think have posted photos of seminarians who have received the ministry of lector and acolyte. So it's a very good question. So before becoming a deacon or, and then God willing for our seminarians, a priest, the church has these steps that you're called forward to. You become officially a candidate. And then, you get the Ministry of Lector, which you're instituted in a formal way to proclaim the sacred scripture. And then, acolyte, you're instituted for service at the altar to assist the priests and deacon. And then to the [inaudible 00:22:02], and then for our seminarians to priesthood. So these institutions, like for example, the Ministry of Lector and Acolyte being an institute of [inaudible 00:22:09]. they don't radically transform your life.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:12](#)):

But I always say to our seminarians, they are not instituted in these ministries until they're called, not literally called, but called by the Bishop to make this step forward. And that is upon receiving the recommendation of the formation faculty at the seminary. And the Bishop receives that, and he receives their evaluations. He takes that to prayerful discernment, says, "Yes, come forward to this next step, God willing, as you move closer to diaconate and, or priesthood." But I always say to seminarians, don't take that lightly. It's a reminder, and this is important, that when someone says they want to be a priest, it's not just the seminarian discerning, it's the church discerning too. And so, when they received this call to come forward, that means the church has said, guided by the spirit and prayer, that yes, we believe that God is continuing you on this path. So please come forward to this next step. So these institutions is also a reflection, the discernment of the candidate, the discernment of the church.

Billy Atwell ([23:16](#)):

Very good. Very cool. And it seems like that would be a healthy thing for them in preparation for these major steps, to have these other steps along the way that kind of draw them closer to it.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:24](#)):

Right. Because they're discerning also.

Billy Atwell ([23:25](#)):

Yeah, that's wonderful.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:26](#)):

Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Billy Atwell ([23:27](#)):

All right, Bishop, we hit some heavy topics here, from presidential debates to Chrism mass and migrants and refugees. Any final thoughts? And then if you would send us off with your blessing.

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

Yeah. Thank you, Billy. I know, dear friends, that we're still are in this midst of this pandemic, this COVID 19. I know it continues to bring burdens to us, financially and spiritually perhaps, emotionally. But we're persevering together. We're encouraging and helping each other. And please know that every day I'm praying for all of you, that God will give you the strength and grace you need to persevere each day. And God willing, pray for all those doing such extensive research that God willing, we can move forward and out of this situation. But in the meantime, you're not alone. God is with us. He will protect us and deliver us. And thank God we have the gift of each other. So let's continue to renew that faith. And let's continue to walk humbly with our God.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:32](#)):

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