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Bishop Burbidge (00:00):

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

Billy Atwell (00:07):

Welcome to the Walk Humbly Podcast. I'm Billy Atwell, Chief Communications Officer for the Diocese and your co-host. Those listening to the podcast are benefiting from the generosity of thousands of Catholics and families across this diocese who have given generously to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal. It supports many ministries here in the Diocese, one of which includes the Communications Office. Thank you to those who have made this possible.

Billy Atwell (00:30):

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Billy Atwell (00:48):

Follow Bishop Burbidge on Twitter @BishopBurbidge. Every day he provides a short Gospel reflection for that day. You can follow the diocese on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. If you have a question for Bishop Burbidge, send it to [info@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:info@arlingtondiocese.org) or call (703) 831-7013. I welcome your host, Bishop Burbidge. Bishop, how you doing?

Bishop Burbidge (01:11):

I am doing well, Billy. This is our first podcast in the year 2022, so I hope everyone had a blessed Christmas season and that their new year is also filled with abundant blessings and graces. We also begin in the Church that liturgical season we call Ordinary Time, but I think that's a great reminder to all of us that we live out our call to follow Christ in very ordinary ways.

Bishop Burbidge (01:40):

It's the day in and day out of living that we're called to do with his help in extraordinary ways, with extraordinary love and faithfulness. We pray for that grace. Sure, all of us have made New Year's resolutions, but just remember, they're lived out day by day in ordinary time and always with the grace of God.

Bishop Burbidge (02:05):

You mentioned the Gospel tweets I do, or the readings every day, and today's just a beautiful, I think, reminder to all of us, is that God does speak to us every day. He speaks words of enlightenment and consolation, encouragement, direction, a unique message he wants us to hear.

Bishop Burbidge (02:27):

But as I often say, for us to hear that message, it's very important for us to slow down, to turn off the noise that's constantly around us whenever we have the opportunity to do so, sometimes in the car even, just shut off the radio. Of course in our prayer to allow time for silence, because it's in those moments that we can echo the words of Samuel that we heard today, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Your servant is listening. Amazing.

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

Just today I prayed that prayer and it's part of my holy hour, and the Lord responds. I'm giving a talk later tonight and I needed some work. I said, "Lord, speak. I'm listening." In prayer, God really does respond, and it really helped me today and I think it helps all of us every day.

Billy Atwell ([03:24](#)):

That's a good reminder. Thank you.

Bishop Burbidge ([03:24](#)):

Thanks.

Billy Atwell ([03:25](#)):

Before we get into our main topics, a couple of things. The first, I'm sure you've heard the news about two tragedies, an apartment fire in the Bronx that killed 19, including nine children. News reports are saying that it was actually started by a malfunctioning space heater. It's New York City's deadliest fire in more than 30 years.

Billy Atwell ([03:43](#)):

Just a few days prior to that, 12 died, including eight children, in a Philadelphia city-run, low-income apartment complex. Just horrific scenes. I was hearing the interviews. It's so sad. We're a few days out from these fires now, what are your thoughts as we look back on these and the rubble settles so to speak?

Bishop Burbidge ([04:00](#)):

Yeah. Like you said, Billy, just it's such tragedies and so sad, especially when you see the loss of life, including young children. It just breaks our hearts. It's just unimaginable. I'm sure that everyone who's listening, everyone who has read the stories, joins us in that tremendous sense of mourning and also in praying. In praying for those who lost loved ones, in praying for those who really begin a long path to transition and to recovery.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:36](#)):

I've asked our priests to include those victims in our prayer intentions at Mass this weekend. I have joined my prayer with Cardinal Dolan in New York and also Archbishop Perez in Philadelphia.

Billy Atwell ([04:49](#)):

Oh, good. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([04:50](#)):

Sure that spiritual support is needed from around all of our communities. Those who are brothers and sisters of Christ need to know that although we may be a distance from one another, we're never separated spiritually.

Billy Atwell ([05:06](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge (05:06):

Especially when we're needed. In addition to the many victims and families, we also need to pray for those people who each and every day risk their lives to help others. I think in particular as we were talking about this tragedy about our firefighters--.

Billy Atwell (05:26):

It's unbelievable, the stories.

Bishop Burbidge (05:28):

Yeah. --who responded, right? There were stories about firefighters whose air tanks ran out and many continued to rescue people and fought through all that smoke. We saw that also. That's being a true hero. When we use that word, we use that word so casually, but risking your life, sacrificing your life for others is what a true hero is.

Bishop Burbidge (05:55):

We've seen that in the past, of course, as we think back to 9/11, but the courage that's needed every day, and for their families, knowing as first responders, their loved ones, their fathers, their husbands go out every day willing to do that. I think there's a spiritual lesson in this for all of us in addition to our prayer. It goes back to what I was saying about ordinary time. When we think about the work we do every day.

Bishop Burbidge (06:26):

Every day, it can never be just routine, no matter what it is. We need to remember that it is truly God and his people that we're serving. No matter what our work is, if we make that morning offering, all I do today, Lord, is for you and for your people. You might be assembling electrical components in a factory, but if those parts are used in space heaters, the quality of your work can save lives, right?

Bishop Burbidge (06:56):

Same thing if your work at an auto making cars: If you do it correctly you can save lives. You may drive a tanker truck, but you may be filling up the fire station pumps that fire trucks need to serve on the front lines in crisis. You may serve as an inspector for a city, but all those things you do, make sure that smoke detectors, alarm systems notify people in emergencies.

Bishop Burbidge (07:20):

Then on the other end, there are people there willing to respond. Again, just going back to that theme, we must think of all the work we do, no matter how seemingly small, as part of God's plan for our lives and in service to others. Be convinced, just be convinced that every day, every day God works in and through us.

Billy Atwell (07:45):

Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you for that. One other thing, before we get into our main topics. After our last podcast ... So we haven't been able to talk about it yet. The Vatican issued clarifications on the Latin Mass. We had discussed that in the previous podcast, but they have issued a responsa and so on. What should we know about that at this point? Because I know you're working with an advisory group of priests, so where does all that stand for us?

Bishop Burbidge ([08:07](#)):

Yeah. Thank you, Billy. Thanks for asking that. The response from the congregation that we received was having received the motu proprio regarding the celebration Extraordinary Form of the Mass and the accompanying letter, which is also important to read, from Pope Francis. It's very important.

Bishop Burbidge ([08:28](#)):

Obviously there were still some questions and some clarifications, and it seems to me that the Holy See heard some consistent ones and decided to say, "Well, you've asked. Here's our response." The response I have to say is very clear. It's very direct. It's an answer to questions and it leaves little room for interpretation. Now we know very clearly from the Congregation, in case there was any doubt, this is what the Holy Father is asking of you.

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

Now, again, the timing was December the 18th that we received it. I did speak with my team, my advisors to say, "All right. I think right now our time, our focus and energy must be on preparing for the spiritual celebration of the birth of our Savior, helping other people to do so." Having received this on December 18th, I said, "I think as we come back to the office in the New Year, now we will take a deeper dive into looking at that."

Bishop Burbidge ([09:42](#)):

I know our faithful are waiting about how the motu proprio will be implemented in the Diocese of Arlington. I know this is timely. It'll be handled in a timely manner. It will involve consultation of course, with my priest before anything is official. But the motu proprio for now allows the celebration of the Extraordinary Form even as we move forward in the near future in some ways.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:11](#)):

Certainly where that is permitted, we will allow, but we have other clear guidelines that we have to be faithful to also. I'm just asking all of our people to pray for wisdom and guidance. Again, not too much guidance is needed because it's been outlined for us very clearly, but really praying more that we are united throughout this process and we are faithful and we are together.

Bishop Burbidge ([10:42](#)):

We don't let something like this be a source of any tension or division, because that's what the evil one really wants. This is an opportunity for us all to renew our faithfulness to the Lord, to his Church and communion with our Holy Father.

Billy Atwell ([10:58](#)):

Perfect. Well, speaking of Pope Francis, just recently he spoke on maybe the most controversial topic yet. He had ... What's it called? The third rail or whatever. I like your point on it. It's regarding pets and here's the quote. He said, "We see that people do not want to have children or just one and no more, and many couples do not have chill because they do not want to, or they just want one, but they have two dogs, two cats.

Billy Atwell ([11:23](#)):

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Yes, dogs and cats take the place of children. Yes, it's funny. I understand but it is the reality, and this denial of fatherhood or motherhood diminishes us. It takes away our humanity, and in this way, civilization becomes aged and without humanity, because it loses the richness of fatherhood and motherhood, and our homeland suffers as it does not have children."

Billy Atwell ([11:42](#)):

Those obviously made waves because people love their pets, but I noticed it just took a stronger hold of people than I was maybe anticipating. I wonder if you had any thoughts or any reflection on this.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:53](#)):

You're really going ask me to talk about pets, right?

Billy Atwell ([11:57](#)):

I'm throwing you in the fire, is basically what I'm saying.

Bishop Burbidge ([11:58](#)):

Yeah. Now you put me right in that position. There's certain sensitive topics when we talk about and-

Billy Atwell ([12:05](#)):

Is Fido good or bad? Go ahead.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:07](#)):

... talking about pets. Right. Thank you, Billy. No, you're right. The reaction was amazing. I mean, this statement from the Holy Father, it really blew up on social media.

Billy Atwell ([12:21](#)):

Yes. [crosstalk 00:12:22].

Bishop Burbidge ([12:21](#)):

Again, we always go back to read exactly what the Holy Father said, read it in context and get to the heart of what he's really saying, you know?

Billy Atwell ([12:35](#)):

Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:35](#)):

Obviously, he's Pope Francis, obviously, in honor of his namesake he has a love for pets and he-

Billy Atwell ([12:45](#)):

Yeah. Right. Right. That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:46](#)):

... he understands animals and the-

Billy Atwell ([12:50](#)):

God's creation.

Bishop Burbidge ([12:51](#)):

... and the connection and the support and comfort and fun that they bring to people and to homes and to children, all that stuff. The Holy Father is not denying any of those things. Let's try and do that. That's a good point. Let's try to say, well, what's really at this then? What's the theological or pastoral considerations, right?

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

I think what the Pope is saying here is that so often in life, as we try to discern our vocation, as we try to live out our vocation and what God is really asking of us, we can easily be distracted. We can lose a sense of priority and it can come in many forms, right? We substitute things for what is really being asked of us. Now, again, I'm just talking in general terms.

Bishop Burbidge ([13:51](#)):

I'm not saying anyone who has a pet or anyone who has a high pressure job, but sometimes it is our work. Sometimes it's our leisure activities. Sometimes it's substances. Sometimes it's our pets or our material things, whatever, all can be distractions to what really should be consuming our time and our energy. I think that's what the Holy Father is trying to say.

Bishop Burbidge ([14:24](#)):

Again, when it comes to the openness of life, to welcoming, if it is God's will, children into the world, from love comes life, if that is God's will that's what every married couple in the Catholic Church promises. That this union, this sacred union of ours, we understand, is given to us certainly help each other grow in holiness, help each other get to heaven, but also from our love, from the union, the most intimate of unions, if God blesses us, we are open to receive the gift of children.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:07](#)):

I think sometimes the Holy Father may be saying that sometimes we could put that on hold, or we can say, "Not yet, or not now, because I have to accomplish this in my life right now. I'm too busy right now. My career is demanding so much of me." Then I begin to substitute other things as the priorities, whether it be our hobbies and our travel and all those kind of other things. I really don't think this is about pets at all.

Bishop Burbidge ([15:41](#)):

I think it's more about us, especially married couples, one of the greatest gifts, if it is according to His plan that God will bless you, is that opportunity through your sacred union to bring life, to bring children into the world and to grow together as a holy family. Nothing can replace what is at the heart of our priorities and we always must be open to God's will.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:11](#)):

You can apply it to the priesthood also, right? Your call, you pledge that, "Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will." Then God surprises you what he's asking of you, where he sends you. At that point, you must

be ready to go. You can't say, "Well, no, I first need to do this, or first need to do that or complete this." Or anything like that. There's a readiness to go.

Billy Atwell ([16:33](#)):

You've mentioned that in your own vocation story, because you were not discerning the episcopacy. You weren't discerning being a bishop. That was something that the Church gave to you. That was not something you were expecting.

Bishop Burbidge ([16:43](#)):

Yeah. You can easily say, "But, but, but, but, but." I think let's just try to understand this statement in a way of how does this impact me in the way I'm living out my vocation? But the Holy Father, give him credit, he has a way of getting our attention.

Billy Atwell ([17:03](#)):

Yeah. That's true. There's a marketing genius, I think, to capturing a moment. I've witnessed that with friends, and Katie and I do conferences for engaged couples and things. We do notice an apprehension to children because they're a lot of work. I think our society kind of creates this expectation that the point of life is to be happy so to speak. It's kind of a pleasure-seeking mentality.

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

Well, my joke about kids is that they're more work than I can handle and more fun than I deserve, but I always emphasize with these couples, the greatest moments of joy in our marriage usually involve our children. These children kind of grew out of that love obviously and I think that's part of why there is so much joy in those moments. Now, they're our greatest challenges. It's a lot of work.

Billy Atwell ([17:48](#)):

I'm not going to act like it's an easy life, but it's so worthwhile. I've seen people try to make their job the replacement, or even things like where they would mentor kids at a community center and they're kind of forgoing parenthood a little bit because that's not fatherhood. That's not motherhood. We're called to that in different ways.

Billy Atwell ([18:06](#)):

Now, obviously there's exceptions for couples who can't have kids, and that's a cross that they carry and have to find kind of unique ways to live out God's call in that way. Yeah. It's-

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

No. I think it's good for you as a father to mention those words. Again, I think our Holy Father always talks about the joy of living out our vocations, the joy of living out the Gospel, and as you say so beautifully, the joy that your children bring to you, they're God's precious gifts. Again, to those who have pets, the Holy Father is affirming certainly them as part of God's handiwork and the good that they ... especially pets, you see so often in the airport, pets that serve in support roles to visit the sick.

Billy Atwell ([19:08](#)):

That's right.

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Bishop Burbidge ([19:08](#)):

And also just to bring fun to the house and to the home. It's fine. Yeah.

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

Yeah. Yeah. They serve the good, they can't be the good. That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:14](#)):

Yeah. I'm not sure everyone has as good of a dog as you do. That-

Billy Atwell ([19:17](#)):

That's true. We're a little lucky.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:18](#)):

That is the most obedient dog and calmest dog that I've ever seen.

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

We did get lucky.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:23](#)):

Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([19:24](#)):

This is a perfect segue, the beauty of fatherhood and motherhood and the gift of life, and we are a week away from the March for Life. So much has had to be adjusted. I interviewed Jeanne Mancini, who's the president of the March for Life, yesterday for our Searching for Fore podcast. For those who don't know, share the unique role that you and some others from our diocese have this year in the March.

Bishop Burbidge ([19:44](#)):

Yeah. The March for Life, always a great opportunity. We always talk about defending life, the sacredness of life, protecting the sacredness of all human life. We always say, there's a few ways of doing that. Namely, prayer, right? Certainly advocacy, our continued dialogue with our elected officials and making our voice known. The other is through witness. Through witness.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:08](#)):

I don't think I've ever missed, as a seminarian or priest, the March for Life, because it is such a powerful witness that we gather as brothers and sisters in Christ for life. For life. We do so, I always say, peacefully and joyfully. Why? Because we have the truth.

Billy Atwell ([20:29](#)):

Yeah. That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:30](#)):

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That's why we're peaceful. That's why we're joyful. That's actually the witness that really surprises the people on the streets and those ... I see them staring out from their offices.

Billy Atwell ([20:40](#)):

That's right. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:41](#)):

They're like, "Why are these people so peaceful and joyful?" Well, it's because we have the truth. Life is sacred and every person's a child of God and we respect their dignity. We want you to know that we're never going to tire of defending the-

Billy Atwell ([20:54](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([20:55](#)):

... sacredness of this life, especially the unborn. It's a great opportunity, but this year, you're right, something special. Christendom College in our own diocese was invited to lead the March. They-

Billy Atwell ([21:07](#)):

That's so amazing.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:07](#)):

They're leading the March. I'm going to be joining my young friends from Christendom at the beginning of the March and-

Billy Atwell ([21:14](#)):

They turn out. They got numbers.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:16](#)):

Oh, they turn out. There we go.

Billy Atwell ([21:16](#)):

Even when they're not leading, they're always a big group.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:18](#)):

The college closes that day.

Billy Atwell ([21:20](#)):

Oh, really?

Bishop Burbidge ([21:20](#)):

Yeah.

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

I didn't know that. Wow.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:23](#)):

So that all the students can participate.

Billy Atwell ([21:25](#)):

Oh, what a great witness that is.

Bishop Burbidge ([21:26](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. They'll be leading the March, and it's really, really wonderful. I'm a little disappointed because we always had a rally the night before-

Billy Atwell ([21:38](#)):

Yeah. Life is VERY Good....

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

... at the George Mason arena. The Life is VERY Good rally. We welcome thousands and thousands of people from ... young people especially from around the country. We fill that arena. This year, so many of the groups that usually come are not making the trip across country. It's prudent, I think, in light of the virus and how contagious that is and, God forbid, could get sick while traveling. All those kinds of things.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:05](#)):

The numbers just kept going down and down and down and down. We will not be having the rally of the year. That is a disappointment. I know parishes will be doing things on their own-

Billy Atwell ([22:15](#)):

Yeah. A lot of parishes.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:16](#)):

... the night before. Always doing things locally is not a bad thing either. I'll be celebrating Mass 10 o'clock on the day of the March for Life at the cathedral.

Billy Atwell ([22:25](#)):

Yeah. That's great.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:26](#)):

I know I was already scheduled that they were going to be there, but I think we do have quite a number of students from Notre Dame University would be joining us at the cathedral that day for the March.

Billy Atwell ([22:38](#)):

Oh, that's exciting.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:38](#)):

Yeah. It will be nice.

Billy Atwell ([22:41](#)):

Oh, that's great.

Bishop Burbidge ([22:41](#)):

I hope our faithful will be present at Mass that morning at their parish or here at the cathedral.

Billy Atwell ([22:46](#)):

Yeah. Absolutely. We'll be sharing throughout the day on social media what's going on. If you go to [marchforlife.org](http://marchforlife.org), you can check out all the different events and things that they've got going surrounding them. Well, I didn't think about this when we were putting this together, but this is really a respect life themed podcast, because the next what we're taking about is this coming Monday, January 17th, is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, where we talk about the dignity of life in a different way.

Billy Atwell ([23:12](#)):

Now, you have an Advisory Council on Racism that helps you think through these issues related to racism, bigotry, and so on. When we approach Martin Luther King Day, how do you want us to think about this? It's a secular holiday, but obviously there's a religious component to upholding the rights and dignity of individuals.

Bishop Burbidge ([23:28](#)):

Right. Again, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., of course, was someone who taught us that when you bring the truth into the public arena, and of course that involves the eradication of racism and bigotry, and justice for all people, everyone being treated with respect, that you can do that peacefully and that's the more powerful force. He taught us that so very clearly. He courageously championed the inherent God-given dignity of all persons. In persevering this fight, he publicly called upon God's help-

Billy Atwell ([24:08](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:09](#)):

... to help us in this path forward. We can't-

Billy Atwell ([24:11](#)):

That's been lost a lot in the public conversation.

Bishop Burbidge ([24:12](#)):

I know. I know. We can't do that alone. I, a couple of years ago, made a, just with some priest friends, a trip, and we visited Memphis. There's a beautiful museum there that highlights these things we're talking about and his life and his work. I don't know if our listeners have been there, but it's very powerful, worth a visit, is that you go through the museum and it's really well done.

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

It talks about the civil rights movement of that age also, not just about Martin Luther King's work, but others who were involved in it. The struggles and the challenges and some of the blessings and fruits. As you conclude the end of the tour, I guess what you would call it, of the museum, you actually are standing outside the motel room where Dr. King was assassinated.

Billy Atwell ([25:13](#)):

Wow.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:13](#)):

The room is set up as it was where he was there that evening.

Billy Atwell ([25:18](#)):

Wow.

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

Billy, you're in awe, you're in silence, but that powerful reminder of what we were talking about earlier in our podcast, that willingness of self-sacrifice for something of a core belief, that all people are children of God and should be treated with that kind of respect. That's why he is honored. It's the headlines of the day and ordinary tasks draw our attention to other things that we must be steadfast in addressing this sin, this evil of racism. It exists.

Bishop Burbidge ([25:56](#)):

Sometimes I do hear that people may not be fully convinced that it does, and it does in all of our communities, so sadly, it is not eradicated. It's an evil that must still be confronted. Sadly we have, in our own diocese, people praying on a regular basis on the computer, on a Zoom call, praying the Rosary for the end and eradication.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:27](#)):

Again, for the second time in a row, I don't know how people figure that out, but they interrupted the prayer service with horrific racist-

Billy Atwell ([26:39](#)):

Really?

Bishop Burbidge ([26:40](#)):

... comments. It was horrible-

Billy Atwell ([26:45](#)):

Oh my Lord.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:45](#)):

... for the people who were participating. It's real. It still continues-

Billy Atwell ([26:50](#)):

Wow.

Bishop Burbidge ([26:50](#)):

... in some of the things that's said. We see them coming into our own office, on email sometimes when ... I initiated an Advisory Council on opening wide our hearts to the end of racism. We saw comments that were racist.

Billy Atwell ([27:08](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:09](#)):

It was very sad. If we're going to confront this evil, we have to acknowledge that it's real. It's not about 50 years ago. It continues. I'm so grateful to the people, wonderful people, my advisory council, who are helping us in addressing this issue by allowing our ourselves to listen to the stories of people who've been victims of it. What are some of the things that we can be doing? This council is active.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:34](#)):

We are creating our own charter. It's a Gospel-centered approach to addressing this instance. That's what I love about this advisory council. This is Gospel-

Billy Atwell ([27:44](#)):

Very faithful people. I know some of them.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:45](#)):

... Gospel-centered. Gospel. We're not just mere activists. It's Gospel-centered.

Billy Atwell ([27:50](#)):

That's right.

Bishop Burbidge ([27:51](#)):

Active in implementing the Gospel and being faithful to it. Certainly it's part of our strategic plan and our initiatives and conversations on this topic will continue, and certainly as a heightened reminder, as this celebration in honor of the life of Martin Luther King approaches.

Billy Atwell ([28:11](#)):

Very good. All right. We've got a question from the faithful, but first, before we get into that, I just want to let everybody know next Wednesday, January 19, at 7:30 p.m. there's a prayer service for the 2022 observance of the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It's themed, "We saw the star in the east and have come to worship him." It's going to be at St. Bernadette Parish in Springfield. Again, that's Wednesday, January 19, at 7:30 p.m.

Billy Atwell ([28:36](#)):

That prayer service at St. Bernadette's in Springfield. Bishop, we have a question from a parishioner: "I heard that we're ordaining several priests this June so this is their last semester in seminary. What changes for seminarians as they approach their ordination? Do you remember your last semester before ordination? If so, what was it like?"

Bishop Burbidge ([28:55](#)):

Yeah. That's a great question. God willing, there's, with God's grace, the possibility we will be ordaining eight new priests in June.

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

Wow. Have you ordained eight before?

Bishop Burbidge ([29:05](#)):

I've never ordained that many at one time. No.

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

Wow. Wow.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:08](#)):

It's a great joy. Really, once again, friends, be assured, wonderful, faithful, holy, joyful men will be our newest priests. God is sending us such gifts as he has done throughout the years and as a result, no doubt, of the prayer of all the people. Their last semester, it's a hard semester for them. It's like, they're so close to ordination but there's still some work to be done. The good news is that usually the work in the final semester is more practicum.

Bishop Burbidge ([29:45](#)):

Like about this is actually how you celebrate the mass or baptize. There's a lot more of that and most of their heavy coursework is completed by this stage. I always encourage them, "Hey, listen, you're not done yet. There's another semester. It means, God still some work he wants to do with you at this seminary. Keep both feet down. There'll be plenty of work to do when you are ordained, God willing, but enjoy your final semester."

Bishop Burbidge ([30:15](#)):

It's a very good question. Very providential in a way, because the person who asked, do you remember your last semester before ordination? I do. It's very different than what our seminarians experience now, but with the new program for priestly formation, what I experienced back in 1983, when I was a deacon before priesthood ... 1984, I'm sorry, the final semester is going back to what I experienced.

Bishop Burbidge ([30:51](#)):

With the new program for priestly formation, what is asked is that the transitional deacon, meaning someone moving towards priesthood, will spend his last six months, not in the seminary, but in a parish.

Billy Atwell ([31:08](#)):

Oh, interesting. This is what our guys are doing?

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Bishop Burbidge ([31:10](#)):

That's when we get in there. Not right now. They're in the seminary now. With the new program for priestly formation, this will be one of the major changes.

Billy Atwell ([31:19](#)):

Oh, this will be upcoming. Okay.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:20](#)):

It'll be upcoming. It could be any day now we get the official word. But one of the changes that we'll see in priestly formation is this new requirement-

Billy Atwell ([31:29](#)):

Interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:29](#)):

... that the last six semesters are spent-

Billy Atwell ([31:32](#)):

Six months. Yeah.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:33](#)):

Last six months are spent in a parish.

Billy Atwell ([31:36](#)):

Interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:37](#)):

So that the deacon before he starts on day one assuming priestly responsibility ... Because I tell them, on day one, if someone knocks on the door, they don't care if you're one day ordained or 10 years ordained.

Billy Atwell ([31:48](#)):

That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([31:48](#)):

You're the priest, you know? The Church says, "Well, let him experience living in that parish and seeing up close that priestly life before he assumes all the responsibilities of priestly duties." Actually, that was my experience.

Billy Atwell ([32:06](#)):

Interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:06](#)):

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My last semester was spent as a deacon in the parish.

Billy Atwell ([32:11](#)):

That's fascinating.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:12](#)):

It's funny how life goes full circle sometimes, right? We live and learn.

Billy Atwell ([32:16](#)):

What's old is new.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:17](#)):

Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([32:18](#)):

Would they serve in parishes in our diocese or they'll be near the-

Bishop Burbidge ([32:20](#)):

In our diocese.

Billy Atwell ([32:22](#)):

Oh, that's interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:22](#)):

Yeah. That's a good question because the new program for priestly formation makes it very clear that it must be in the diocese where he will serve as a priest. For example, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, St. Charles Seminary, they have transitional deacons from 10, 15 different dioceses maybe. Right now they're all together doing their final semester, but that's not the way it's going to be going forward.

Billy Atwell ([32:44](#)):

That's interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:44](#)):

They're all going home for their final semester.

Billy Atwell ([32:47](#)):

Wow. That's interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([32:48](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It'll be interesting.

Billy Atwell ([32:51](#)):

That's announced by Rome or is that a thing just in the U.S.?

Bishop Burbidge ([32:52](#)):

It's already been approved ... Like we've approved it with the new program for priestly formation, which is like the handbook or guidebook for priestly formation. Now we're awaiting ... and Rome has signed off on it, but not officially yet.

Billy Atwell ([33:04](#)):

Gotcha. Okay.

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

Actually it came from the Holy See.

Billy Atwell ([33:07](#)):

That's interesting.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:07](#)):

This is the Holy See's idea.

Billy Atwell ([33:09](#)):

Interesting. Very cool. Very good.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:11](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It is neat.

Billy Atwell ([33:12](#)):

Any final thoughts? We've dealt with a lot of kind of heavy topics in this, but any final thoughts before we close up?

Bishop Burbidge ([33:17](#)):

Well, you forgot such a major topic that-

Billy Atwell ([33:19](#)):

Oh, I'm going to guess. Football.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:22](#)):

This weekend we begin.

Billy Atwell ([33:23](#)):

It's the playoffs. Sorry. Sorry.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:24](#)):

The best time in sports.

Billy Atwell ([33:26](#)):

I should have led with this.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:28](#)):

We begin with the NFL playoffs. If you're going to have me talk about pets, I'm going to talk about football too. No. As a sports fan, I always think this is like one of the exciting times in sports.

Billy Atwell ([33:38](#)):

It is.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:39](#)):

It's like a tournament. There's only so many teams left and it's one and done. You lose, you're done, right? Thank God, God's not like that, right? You know?

Billy Atwell ([33:46](#)):

That's true.

Bishop Burbidge ([33:48](#)):

It's playoff time. It's one and done. I guess I'm just mentioning this by chance, but of course the Philadelphia Eagles are in the playoffs, and I know my-

Billy Atwell ([34:01](#)):

Just happened to catch that in a headline maybe.

Bishop Burbidge ([34:02](#)):

I know my friends of the Washington Football Team, since they're not in the playoffs, will join in solidarity with their bishop in rooting for the other NFC team, not the one from Texas, but the Philadelphia team. They have a tough task, though. They're playing Tom Brady and the Buccaneers.

Billy Atwell ([34:24](#)):

That's not easy.

Bishop Burbidge ([34:25](#)):

But it's been a season where anything could happen. I know we have a lot of fans in our diocese from Pittsburgh, too. The two Wild Card teams from Pennsylvania, the Steelers and the Eagles, are playing this weekend. My prediction is one of them, either the Steelers or the Eagles, will have the upset. I'm not sure which one, but I think one of them will pull off an upset. We'll see what happens there, but it's always fun.

Bishop Burbidge ([34:53](#)):

As I always say, sports is not our priority. It doesn't consume us or take us away from our main obligations but if it serves as a relaxation, just to get our mind off things too, that's a good thing too.

Billy Atwell ([35:11](#)):

That's good. Well, you're in better shape than me. My New York Giants fired their coach today.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:15](#)):

I know.

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

Or at least yesterday.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:16](#)):

Yesterday. I know.

Billy Atwell ([35:16](#)):

They're like, "We're in a rebuilding season."

Bishop Burbidge ([35:18](#)):

Yeah. That's ... Yeah.

Billy Atwell ([35:20](#)):

I will join you in solidarity in rooting for the Eagles.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:22](#)):

Well, you could get lucky. The Eagles are in the playoffs this year with a brand new coach who just is in his first year.

Billy Atwell ([35:30](#)):

Yeah. Well, that's true. You never know.

Bishop Burbidge ([35:30](#)):

You never know. You never know.

Billy Atwell ([35:30](#)):

That's the nature of sports. You never know, right?

Bishop Burbidge ([35:32](#)):

That's right.

Billy Atwell ([35:32](#)):

Any final thoughts before you send us off with your blessing?

Bishop Burbidge ([35:33](#)):

Yeah. Everyone, it's a new year and I hope and pray that it is filled with many blessings and spiritual gifts for you and your families. God will fill your hearts and your homes with his peace, that we will continue to persevere through the virus, and that we will stay safe and healthy, and that we will renew our commitment in Ordinary Time, day in and day out, to say yes to God's holy will, and day in and day out walk humbly with our God.

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Bishop Burbidge ([36:06](#)):

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