

# No Need For Casinos In Northern Virginia: Bishop Michael Burbidge

The bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington said the passion for gambling risks becoming an addiction and threat to one's freedom.



Michael O'Connell, Patch Staff 

Posted Tue, Oct 8, 2024 at 5:07 pm ET | Updated Wed, Oct 16, 2024 at 11:36 am ET



Bishop Michael Francis Burbidge, of the diocese of Arlington, Va., speaks during a news conference at the Fall General Assembly meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021, in Baltimore. (Julio Cortez/AP Photo)

ARLINGTON, VA — Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington said he saw no need for Northern Virginia to have casinos, during Monday's episode of *The Walk Humbly* Podcast.

Burbidge told podcast co-host Tom Shakely that the church has tolerated "what have historically been called games of chance" such as cards, lotteries, friendly wagers and bingo.

"But the Catechism states that games of chance become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others," he said. "We see the difference there. If you're having a friendly game of cards and you lose a quarter, it's not going to

be that big of an impact. But if you're taking \$500 or so to the casino and you end up losing it all, that \$500 was supposed to be for other purposes. Now we can't do what we're supposed to do."

The key point of the Catechism, which is the collected tenets and beliefs of the Catholic Church, was that the passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement and addiction was a threat to one's freedom.

"I'm only one voice, but I don't see the need for casinos in Northern Virginia," he said. "That's up to the community and elected officials to decide."

Shakely, who is the diocese's chief communications officer, introduced the topic of casinos by mentioning Virginia Sen. Dave Marsden's (D-Burke) [proposed legislation](#) that would give the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors the authority to put a casino referendum on a future ballot.

"In previous versions of the legislation, it's indicated that Tysons would be the likely location if a casino were to come to pass," Shakely said. He then went on to quote a letter written by former Congressman Frank Wolf, who [strongly opposed the legislation](#).

"Probably most of our listeners, myself included, know family members, friends and loved ones who were gambling," Burbidge said. "It has the power to become an addiction that leads to dangerous behavior. Using what is hard-earned money for gambling purposes, and then upon losing that money, you're not able to provide for what you should be using the money for, the care of your family or whatever."

*Read all of Patch's reporting on Comstock Companies' plan to build a casino on Metro's Silver Line in Fairfax County at [Silver Line Casino](#).*