Opening Acclamation:

God of strength and courage, 
in Jesus Christ you set us free from sin and death, 
and call us to the risk of faith and service. 
Give us grace to follow him 
who gave himself for others, 
that, by our service, 
we may find the life he came to bring. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 10:24-33

Jesus said to the twelve disciples, “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Meditation

This morning Matthew calls us to think about student-teacher relationship. Not like today’s classroom teacher with 20 - 30 students. In Jesus time, a boy at age 5 began a 7-year discipline of daily memorization of sacred scripture – the prophets, psalms, sacred history, especially Moses.

After his Bar Mitzvah, the emphasis changed to learning everything about his Teacher – how he thought, how he spoke, his public mannerisms, how he dressed, his tone of voice, and, yes, even his favorite foods. The disciple studied all this in order to adopt them, and become more like his Master.

My father never graduated from high school, yet he taught himself three different careers, and became a skilled leader for on the job training other workers whom he supervised. My mother did graduate from high school, and aspired to be a secretary. She retired as Postmaster for the
small, rural Post Office in the village where we lived. I don’t know from where my love of learning came from, but I excelled as a student through grade school and high school, and my last two years of college.

In my four years as a young naval officer, I was blessed to serve three of them under two excellent senior officers. I observed them carefully, because I wanted to be like them, especially developing leadership talents like theirs. I learned a great deal from them – especially as leader of the men serving under me. To this day, I still credit those two officers as mentors, and even more, to me.

So as Jesus said, “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master.” So we would do well to study Jesus deeply – not the words of his teachings, but his actions ans interactions with people, desiring in the depths of our being to be like Him. (by The Rev. Harry Grace)

Closing Prayer:

Holy God,

We praise your abiding guidance, O God, for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah, to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors, on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures. Amen.

Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Grace:

Lord God, friend of those in need, your Son Jesus has untied our burdens and healed our spirits. We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened, those seeking healing, those in need within the church and the world. Amen.

Use your parish directory this week as a prayer tool. Pray for five or ten members by name each day. As the sheep know their master’s voice, use your own to offer prayer for the members, staff, clergy, and volunteers of your own worship community.

Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling 646-876-9923 use code 127 336 938. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this link: https://zoom.us/j/127336938 If you are asked for a password, use lakeerie.

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