



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

***February 14, 2010***  
***Transfiguration of the Lord***  
***Beverly Phillips***

RCL: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36(37-43)

LM: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9; 2 Peter 1:16-19; Luke 9:28b-36

“That is the home of the Thunder Gods,” say the Apache people of Arizona when they see the powerful lightning displays and hear the thunder echo from the canyons of the Superstition Mountains. “Ngai [god] lives there,” say the Kikuyu people of Kenya when they look at the majesty of Mount Kenya, alternately hidden and revealed by the clouds. “The Lord reveals himself there,” say the Hebrew people when they see Moses come down from Mount Sinai, his face shining with such a brilliance that he has to cover it to protect their eyes. “God does spectacular things there,” say Peter and James and John when they come down from the mountain after witnessing Jesus’ transfiguration and the appearance of Moses and Elijah.

Mountains hold the mystery of the ages, the rock solid strength of the divine, and the beauty of fellowship with God. They have always held that kind of power for human beings, and we are no exception. When we go somewhere or do something that lifts our soul to a new height, we say, “I’ve had a mountaintop experience.” The psalmist tells us to worship at God’s holy mountain. Mountains call us to worship God, who is Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all that is.

Our problem is that we want to stay on the mountaintop. We feel God’s presence there so strongly that, like the disciples, we want to build a little house and stay there, soaking up all that divinity for ourselves. But, alas, that is not the way it works. God told Abraham, “I am blessing you so that you will be a blessing,” and God has the same message for us when we come down from a mountaintop. Just consider what Moses has on his hands when he comes down from Sinai—a grumbling, mumbling people to lead in desert wanderings. When Jesus and the disciples come down from the mountain, a great crowd of people meets them, wanting all kinds of blessings, including the healing of a child with a demon.

Kenyan Christians come down from their mountaintop of worship and fellowship to face more than one million children either affected or infected by HIV/AIDS, seven hundred deaths a day from the disease, and massive poverty caused by 50 percent



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

unemployment. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a feminist scholar from Ghana, says that people who are poor in Africa don't struggle for quality of life. They struggle for survival, to keep themselves and their families alive for another day.

Our coming down from the mountaintop, as a place or as an experience, brings us back to the reality of people's pressing needs. The psalmist describes it as looking at God and responding with praise, because God loves justice and establishes equity and righteousness. The writer of the passage from 2 Corinthians says that when we have seen the Lord's glory on the mountaintop, we who are created in God's image are truly transformed into that image. We become people who not only seek righteousness for ourselves but also strive for equity and justice for all God's people.

Like Moses and Jesus and the Kenyans, we go to the mountaintop to strengthen and renew ourselves and to affirm our place in God's heart. Then we, too, come back to the valley where people are struggling for life.

We are called, as Jesus was, to come down from our mountaintop experiences of God's presence to carry out God's purposes. We show God's love for all people by working for policies and programs to ensure that those who are hungry have food, those who are sick are healed, and those who are captive are freed. In this, we strive for equity and justice for all God's people.

### *Children's Time*

I would make this children's moment more of a discussion time. What did Jesus do for people? He helped sick people get well, blind people to see, hungry people have food. We want to be like Jesus and to love people like Jesus did. What can you do, as children, to help other people? The answers might be: bringing canned food to church for food pantries; sending cards to and visiting people who are sick or who are old; being kind to each other; writing letters to our leaders saying you don't want people to be hungry. Tie the last of these in with a Bread for the World Offering of Letters if that is scheduled at your church.

### *Musical Suggestions*

God of Justice, God of Mercy—*Banquet of Praise* 86

Hope for the Children— *Banquet of Praise* 90

Lord, You Give the Great Commission— *Banquet of Praise* 107



**breadfortheworld**  
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Rise Up, O Saints of God!— *Banquet of Praise* 126

Swiftly Pass the Clouds of Glory—*The Presbyterian Hymnal* 73

Reflection from Hunger for the Word, Year C  
© 2006 by the order of Saint Benedict, Inc.  
Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.  
Reprinted with permission.