

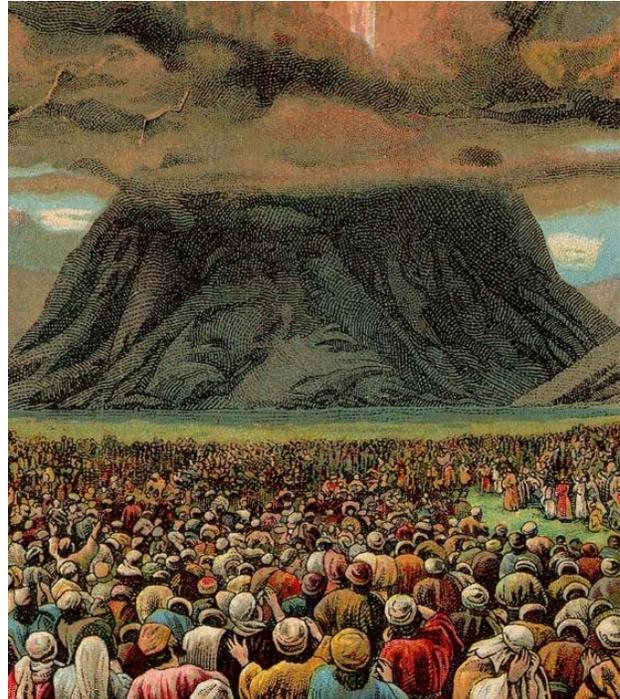
Up to the Mountain

In the reading from Isaiah (2:1-5), the people say, “*Come let us climb the mountain of God so that we may be instructed in God's ways and walk in God's paths.*” The mountain is described as the highest mountain.

To climb any mountain suggests feats of determination, physical skill, and perseverance – perhaps even discouraging some from attempting such a hike. *So why a mountain?* For most of Israel's history, God tabernacled and journeyed with the people on level ground. In the story of Babel, while the people attempted to reach the heavens, it was God *who came down* to the city to see what the people were building.

Climbing a mountain, though, offers the People of God a unique invitation to commit to a process, a goal – no matter how uphill the journey might seem. Saint Paul writes, “*We boast of our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope*” (Romans 5:3-4).

Climbing a mountain is far from easy. Yet each mountain offers its own distinctive perspective and teaching, and whether it is your greatest or worst experience, after you reach the top, you are always able to come back down having seen the world from a different point of view.



Isaiah 2:1-5

This is what Isaiah, ben-Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the days to come, the mountain of God's house, will be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills – all nations will stream toward it.

Many people will come and say: “Come, let us climb YHWH's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that we may be instructed in God's ways and walk in God's paths.”
For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.

God will judge between the nations, and render decisions for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. One nation will not raise the sword against another, nor will they train for war again.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of YHWH!

FOR REFLECTION

1. At this time in your faith journey as an LGBTQ person or ally, what “instruction” do you await to help you walk in God's ways?

2. Building on the theme of “the mountain of God’s house,” what pastoral attitudes, signs of welcome, or ministries in your church or worshiping community make you “steam towards it” (God’s house). How do you participate, or make your voice count, in your parish or faith community?

3. What “mountain” did you have to climb as an LGBTQ person or ally? What elements in this climb tested your faith and endurance? What lessons did the mountain teach you?

4. In the reading, when the nations come to God, God judges between the peoples and renders decisions. The people in turn lay down their arms and adopt measures of peace towards one another. How do you imagine YHWH will respond to you (or the LGBTQ/ally community) when you come to God? What measures of peace will you and others around you adopt? What swords do you need to beat into plowshares to bring peace and the reign of God to your life?

5. The closing verse from the Isaiah passage says, “Let us walk in the light of YHWH.” Romans 13:12 echoes this theme: “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” As an LGBTQ person or ally, what are some examples of Christian living that you perceive as “walking in the light of God” or “putting on the armor of light? Can you name three such examples to put into practice during Advent or any time of the year?

PRAYER

Psalm 122: 1-9

How I rejoiced when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of YHWH!”
And now at last our feet are standing
within your gates, Jerusalem.

Jerusalem restored! The city, one united whole!
Here the tribes ascend, the tribes of YHWH.

They come to praise YHWH’s name
as God commanded Israel -
Here, where the tribunals of justice are,
the judgment seats of David’s house.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls!
May your citadels be always secure!”

For the sake of my family and friends,
I say, “Peace be within you!”
For the sake of YHWH our God, I will seek your good.

