

## Corpus Christi – A

In Greek mythology, there is a story of a wicked king named Sisyphus who, after his death, was punished for his evil life by having to spend eternity pushing a heavy boulder up a mountain, only for the boulder to roll back down to the bottom just before he reached the top. And then he had to start all over again. So sometimes laborious yet futile tasks are described as “Sisyphean” after the unfortunate Sisyphus.

Does life ever sometimes feel Sisyphean? Like you are laboring and laboring, yet never quite able to achieve your goal. For example, you have been trying to rid yourself of a bad habit, not be lazy anymore, get in shape, eliminate stress from your life, not feel so busy all the time. No matter how hard you try, you never quite get there. Perfection is still out of reach.

Or perhaps you feel dissatisfied with some aspects of your life and you think: when I get a new job, then I'll be happy. Or, if I buy this thing, then I'll be happy. When I graduate and no longer have to worry about homework and exams, then I'll be happy. When the weather warms up, then I'll be happy. When it finally cools off, then I'll be happy. Then we get the new job, we buy the thing, we graduate, summer comes, fall comes, and yet...there's still a nagging sense of dissatisfaction. One problem gets resolved and another one appears. In a way, it's kind of like Sisyphus and his grim fate of never quite pushing the boulder to the top of the mountain and being able to rest.

We see the same phenomenon played out at the societal level: human beings can never quite create the perfect society. We can have lots of cool technology, ways to entertain ourselves, great restaurants, but there's always something that's not quite right.

And the beliefs that we can create a perfect society ends up producing a dystopia instead.

I think this nagging sense of dissatisfaction or discontent, the feeling things are not quite the way we want them to be, or the way we think they should be, is a sign to us of something: it's a sign that this life is not all there is. That this life is a continuous journey, not the destination.

The 40 years that the Israelites spent wandering in the desert on their way to the Promised Land is a metaphor for this life. Those forty years, as we heard in our first reading, were not comfortable: the Israelites experienced hunger and thirst; they had to look out for serpents and scorpions; the sun was scorching hot and the ground was barren. The Israelites kept going because they knew that the desert was not a suitable place for them to live. And

the Lord had promised them that he was leading them to a better land, the proverbial land flowing with milk and honey.

So this life is like the desert the Israelites were wandering in for forty years: it's not always comfortable, in fact, it can be downright unpleasant and miserable sometimes. We don't always have the things we need let alone the things we want. There are hidden, unknown dangers. In other words, this life is a journey to another life, to a new and perfect Promised Land.

That Promised Land of course is heaven. That's our true homeland. God created us for heaven, where all of our desires will be completely satisfied, all our needs completely filled by God Himself. That's our goal – or at least it should be our goal. And until then, we are on the journey with our restless hearts and seemingly bottomless needs.

But we are not alone in this journey. Of course, we have one another: we ought to accompany one another on the journey through this life to the next and to help one another when we stumble and fall. How much better and happier even this life would be if everyone put the needs of others ahead of their own needs. But even if we did this, collectively we would still not be able to make it through this life on our own. Fortunately, we do not have to: God is with us and has promised to be with us always on our journey through this life. Just like the Israelites wandering in the desert, who depended on the Lord for their food and drink, to be their guide and their protector, God is also accompanying us, even when it doesn't seem like it. He provides for our needs; He serves as our guide, especially through His Church. And he provides us nourishment for our journey: He feeds us with his Body and Blood.

And that is the feast that we celebrate today: Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does the Lord guide us through this life, but He is also our spiritual nourishment in this life. The Eucharist is our manna in the desert. The Eucharist gives us the spiritual strength that we need to continue our journey, to continue our labors, even when they don't seem to yield any fruit. Jesus is that living bread that comes down from heaven, the bread that gives us life.

And Jesus gives us an incredible promise with this gift of himself: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever." Eternal life – that's what Jesus promises us in the Eucharist. But we have to dispose ourselves or prepare ourselves to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a magic pill that automatically changes us. We have to prepare ourselves to receive this gift. And we can prepare ourselves to receive Communion on Sunday throughout the week, by praying daily, by inviting the Lord into

our hearts and into our lives each day. And then on Sunday, we ought to fast for one hour from all food and drink (except water) before receiving communion as a reminder that we are about to receive something incredibly special. And after receiving communion, we ought to give thanks to the Lord for this incredible gift of Himself that he has given us.

It's easy to take the Eucharist for granted. It can seem mundane and ordinary. That's why it's so important to prepare ourselves through daily prayer. And even more, to actively seek to grow in our faith, learning about what we believe and why, reading and praying with Scripture.

The Eucharist is our manna in the desert; it is our food for the journey of this life. It is Jesus Himself. What an incredible gift. Let us not refuse this gift that God desires to give us. The word

“Eucharist” means giving thanks. Let us thank the Lord for this precious gift of Himself.

- **June 7, 2026 at St. Mary’s, Spring Lake**