



Walking with Jesus in the Corpus Christi Procession

The annual Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (also called *Corpus Christi*, “Body of Christ”) finds many parishes around the world celebrating a procession in which a host consecrated at Mass is then carried in a monstrance in a solemn way through a city’s streets—June 2 in 2024. Like the Blessed Sacrament itself, there is more to the Corpus Christi procession than meets the eye. It is an occasion to *profess* our faith in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, to *thank* Jesus for the gift of His cross and presence in this Sacrament—and to *walk with Him* toward the Promised Land of Heaven.

But Catholics today are not the first to find themselves on a journey to new life while being nourished and led along the way with supernatural sustenance.

For example, the Old Testament’s recently liberated Israelites foreshadowed this same procession as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land. Shortly after crossing the Red Sea, the Lord gave these weary travelers meat (quail) in the evening and manna in the morning (see Exodus 16:4-15; also Psalm 78:24-27), food that would accompany them until they would pass through the waters of the Jordan into that land flowing with milk and honey—when the meat and manna stopped (see Joshua 5:15).

Later, the holy Moabite woman Ruth would be fed by Boaz, a landowner and farmer from Bethlehem—a town that means “house of meat” in Arabic, and “house of bread” in Hebrew. In his generosity, Boaz instructs his harvesters to leave grain for Ruth to collect as she gleanes in his fields, and he even invites her to eat and drink with him and his working crew (the food was so numerous, in fact, that she gathered the leftovers to take home). “Why,” she asks, “should I, a foreigner, be favored with your attention?” (Ruth 2:10).

These Old Testament stories are fulfilled in today’s Corpus Christi processions. For, in truth, we are also pilgrims on an exodus to a promised land, currently foreigners in a strange county. Yet we have a Savior born in Bethlehem, ready and willing to give us meat and bread—that is, His flesh under the appearance of bread—in such abundance that we will never hunger again. It’s a journey we shouldn’t miss!

Questions for reflection:

1. Do I see the Eucharist as the essential food for my journey to Heaven?
2. How might my participation in a Corpus Christi procession extend and complement my prayer at Mass?
3. How would I explain the meaning of a Corpus Christi procession to another (e.g., child, friend)?

Ideas:

1. Encourage your parish to celebrate Corpus Christi with a procession, even a short one.
2. Participate in a Corpus Christi procession, seeing yourself as on a journey with the Lord.
3. Read Chapter 16 of the Book of Exodus or the Book of Ruth (it’s only four chapters long) to nourish and enlighten your own participation in a Corpus Christi Procession.

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