

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
August 8, 2021**

HARD JOURNEY



Sometimes life's journey brings great hardships and we can feel beaten down in life, but God strengthens us with his word, a word that comes from the mouth of his Son. In the Gospels, Jesus gives us a message of hope and encouragement. The Lord also strengthens us with his presence. He does that through the members of his Church who are called to care for one another.

Above all, we experience the strengthening presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. When we receive the body and blood of Christ, we are given a food even more marvelous than the manna that nourished the Jews

on their journey to the Promised Land. As Jesus tells us in Sunday's Gospel, "Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die."

The bread that Jesus gives us is not just a reminder of his presence; it is, as Catholics profess, his "real presence."

Strengthened by this "living bread that came down from heaven," the Church has journeyed through the past 2,000 years making its way through history, continually moving ever closer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Without that heavenly food that the Lord offers us through his word, through his Church, and through the Eucharist, we might find ourselves saying, "It's hopeless. I just can't take it anymore."

With affectionate prayers,

Father John Carlos