



**On Our Way Baptism and the Wilderness
A Lenten Message from
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Jesus came to his cousin John to be baptized. John was preparing the way for the greater one who would come after him. He was baptizing those who wanted to be changed for the better, who were seeking God's forgiveness.

Jesus came to John to be cleansed by baptismal waters. However Jesus' baptism was different. As Jesus was coming out of the water, the heavens split open and the Spirit came down upon him. A voice from heaven said: "you are my Son, whom I dearly love, in you I am well pleased.

Jesus received the cleansing gift of water and the empowering gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was then forced out into the wilderness. Jesus, the one without sin who came **for us**, spent 40 days in the wilderness without food or drink.

Jesus was tempted by the evil one. Time and again he was offered short cuts, ways of avoiding the difficulties presented by the wilderness.

"No need to be hungry and thirsty, command these stones to become bread," said the evil one. Jesus digs deep, remembers what he'd learned from and trusted the Holy Spirit's power and says, "People don't live only by bread alone, but by every word spoken by God.

The devil takes Jesus to the holy city to the highest point of the temple and says "throw yourself down. Test God. See if the angels will protect you." Again Jesus digs deep, remembers what he's been taught, trusts the Holy Spirit's power and says, "But it is written, do not test the Lord."

Finally the evil one takes Jesus up on a high mountain. Shows him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and says "Worship me and all of this will be yours." Jesus digs deep, remembers what he had learned, trusts the gift of the Holy Spirit and said, "Go away Satan, because it is written, you will worship the Lord your God and serve him only."

Jesus received the gift of baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit. Then he was tested.

- Would he remember who he was and whose he was?
- Would Jesus take the short cuts offered to him by the evil one or dig deep remembering what he had learned and whose he was?
- Would he trust the empowering presence of the Spirit?

We too are people of water and the spirit. We have received the gift of baptismal waters and the empowering gift of the Holy Spirit. We too go from high and holy moments to our own wilderness wanderings. We are tempted to forget who we are – deeply loved daughters and sons of God. We are tempted to live life on our own. We are tempted to take short cuts and take foolish chances. We are enticed by symbols of power and status that surround us.

In our high and holy moments and well as during our wilderness wanderings, will you remember who and whose you are. Will you remember the lessons of faith that you have learned? Will you accept the freedom and power of the Holy Spirit?

