

Today is the first Sunday in our Lenten journey and we are invited to follow Jesus into the desert.

Deserts can be scary places – temperature fluctuate between extreme hot and cold. Sand whips around and through everything; minds hallucinate. Creepy crawlers are everywhere and creature comforts have all but disappeared. This is the setting for Jesus' temptations.

Jesus countered his temptations by digging deep within and finding his true self – then standing firm in who he is. This sojourn into the desert comes right after Jesus' baptism – his celebration of who he is – God's very own, God's beloved.

After 40 days in the desert, Jesus was hungry. The tempter knew when to strike. He waited until Jesus was at his weakest, and at his weakest Jesus discovered anew his strength, his real identity. He discovered what it meant to be God's Beloved. God did not abandon him.

The invitation still stands for us...and Jesus beckons. Come follow me. I will be with you. I will not abandon you. Come discover your truest richest self in God.

Lent is the time to unburden ourselves, to release all that keeps us from knowing ourselves as God does.

May this Lent be for each one of us a time of discovering who we really are, the beloved of God.