

DISCIPLES ON THE JOURNEY: A REFLECTION

by Jack J. Anzaldúa



Disciples on Journey (DJ) evolved from Disciples in Mission, which was a program designed to help Catholics prepare for the Lenten season. And what began as faith-sharing and as a preparation for Lent provided me with the opportunity to come closer to God and His message of salvation through my *DJ* faith-sharing group. *DJ* ultimately evolved into a continuing encounter with the Holy Trinity and a continuing faith-filled journey throughout the years. As the Victoria Diocese has encouraged the *DJ* participants to continue their faith journey via the program, many of the small faith-sharing groups have continued the weekly meetings in order to prepare for each week's Sunday Mass of Celebration through the study of the scripture readings and through the sharing of our faith.

My journey began when my wife, Alma, and I discussed our participation in the program. Alma then informed me that I was to be group leader for our small faith-sharing group. I was hesitant at first because of my fear of not being a good group leader, but the Holy Spirit allowed me to realize that I was only a leader in the guiding of discussions which we were to have but actually a participant just like all the members of our faith-sharing group, and that the actual significance for the study and discussions was to glean insight into my own self and my own faith, and that each group member would have different insights due to our different life's experiences and backgrounds.

The annual *Disciples on Journey* has taught me that preparation for each of the six weeks of Lent actually has enabled me to share my faith with others in my daily life. Furthermore, in sharing during our group discussions, I have found that although the biblical passages studied during these years have been repeated at different times, the lessons to be learned are always from different perspectives, and I have received different learnings from our discussions. I always walk away after each weekly sharing better prepared to open my life of faith to God, family, friends, and to others who I encounter in my daily life.

Personally, *DJ* has helped me to prepare during Lent to receive a richer message by studying the readings for each week of Lent, and has further prepared me for life in general. I find myself reading and preparing for each Sunday, and have been able to devote more time daily to reading the day's scriptures and am better prepared for the day through prayer. Although I still falter in my daily existence, I find myself searching for God's forgiveness almost immediately after my offences.

Furthermore, *DJ* has helped me adjust my personal thoughts to realize that although I will never be perfect, I now have the thought processes and means to help me correct my failings and to seek further relationship with the Holy Trinity.

At times during *DJ* discussions, human frailties still enter my mind, but those thoughts quickly vanish after realizing that the Holy Spirit will guide our group to successful religious discussions and encounters. Each of our faith-sharing group members has been very loving and has listened attentively to other members as discussions led to a fuller understanding of our love for God.

What can a person say or do about coming into the presence of God to really meet oneself and to extend oneself to others in service to God? For this is what *DJ* have allowed me to do, as well as share my faith with others and come face to face with myself – my strengths, my weaknesses, my sins, my very self.