By Pat Haggerty

It's official! Fall is here. The "autumnal equinox" has come and gone, and the calendar keeps marching ahead. As a New Englander through and through, I have always loved this season: the vibrant foliage, the apple picking, the crisp mornings. It's something I wouldn't want to give up. It keeps me going; it brings me life!

Does that sound strange to you? How can decaying leaves and barren trees speak of life? They do to me. They speak of the Lord's magnificence as we watch the canvas of color emerge in a fall vista. They speak of the Lord's caring as we watch nature evolve and prepare for a new season. They speak of the Lord's message to us: be resilient and welcome the energy that change can bring.

I see deep beauty in the transformation of this season. It is a cycle worth paying attention to. As we watch the transformation of fall unfold, we can treasure the bounty of God's love. We can meditate on the power of change within us, and we can ponder the element of surprise that comes with all of our lives.

I was in Vermont last weekend, and I marveled at the beauty of the mountains that were just beginning to disclose their color. It was awe-inspiring and humbling to be encircled by those Green Mountains and be a tiny speck in the panorama that is God's creation! It made me think of Psalm 121 (vs. 1-2): "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

A few years ago, I wrote this little prayer celebrating fall:

Dearest Lord,

Thank you for the splendor and beauty of the autumn foliage. It speaks to your majesty and artistry as the divine Creator-Painter. Let me treasure the calmness and peace the season

brings to me. Let it be for me a precursor and preparation for the season of Advent---not that far away.

Autumn is about transformation and change. Help me to make adaptations in my own life as I move from a life of frenzy to a more thoughtful life in You.

Glory to you, Oh, Lord!   Amen.