



By Pat Haggerty

Fall is my favorite season! I just love the changing leaves, the crisp air and the brisk mornings. Everything about it makes me sensitized to the grandeur of God's creation and to the blessings He bestows on us through the beauty of nature. It is as if the earth is resplendent with a multi-colored quilt created just for us.

Last week I was driving to work and had to visit a school in a fairly rural setting of Massachusetts. At one point during my drive, I had to stop the car. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the surrounding landscape. The foliage was breath-taking. I paused for a few moments to take it all in---the transformation that had taken place in the trees was astounding. I had to thank God for that moment and for the picturesque canvas of color surrounding me.

We look at the leaves, marvel at the foliage and eagerly accept the transformation that has caused green leaves to turn into hues of yellow, red and gold. The chlorophyll in the leaves starts to break down and allows pigments like carotene and xanthophylls to take its place---thus producing colors of orange and yellow. The red pigments called anthocyanins appear when sugars stimulate its production. This change occurs automatically.

Change is never automatic for us. We usually put up a struggle when faced with change. It could be change in our jobs like more demands and a new way of doing things. It could be a change in our family structure. Perhaps we have a child going off to college and leaving the nest. It could even be change in the church, such as the language changes in the Mass that

took place not too long ago.

We are not always a resilient people, but accepting change can be a good thing. We should even look for change and embrace it! We often have to ask for God's help in making a change. Sometimes we have to ask God to help us change as spiritual beings. We may have to ask God to help us change our hearts and to transform us into more Christ-like people.

I am reminded of the song by Rory Cooney that begins: "Change our hearts this time, your word says it can be. Change our minds this time, your life could make us free. We are the people your call set apart, Lord, this time change our hearts."

We all need to change our hearts once in awhile. Is this your time?