**Reflection on Autumn***(from Out of the Ordinary by Joyce Rupp)*

***Response after each reflection****:
God of Autumn, your presence gives me hope.*

*A new season is moving in. We can sense its presence in the coolness of the breeze and the quick gusts of wind that wrap themselves around browning lawns and fading forest leaves. This time of transition belongs to more than just earth. Inside of us there are also quiet changes sending their signals to let go.*

*Trees of radiant green say goodbye to another’s year’s growth. Their leaves break away, sailing to the ground. They tell us that in the deepest part of who we are, there is always a call to continue our transformation process.*

*Across the land truckloads of harvested fruits, vegetables and grains make their way to market. Gardens and fields give of their gifts. Growers fill their baskets and wagons. Sometimes it is only when produce is gathered, or grain is caught into the wagons that the harvest is seen in its bounty. We, too, are meant to count our blessings even when the reaping at first looks sparse and lean.*

*Frost shakes the warmth out of autumn weather and shapes itself into the first hues of winter. We begrudgingly see the signs of future cold and emptiness, knowing full well that our hearts are not immune to this seasonal direction.*

*We wake up to misty mornings full of dampness, covered by clouds that hang low. Wetness rests on what remains of summer’s beauty and fog tries to hide the road before us. We walk once more into the mystery part of life, recognizing that the inner journey also has its clouded, foggy pathways.*

*Color enriches autumn days with the last laughs of lovely marigolds and the visual flavors of rusted oaks and yellowed maples. A blessing called beauty kisses the sadness in their dying and makes of the ache a tender thing. When our own pain is great we look for beauty and know its soothing respite.*

*Geese are going south, as are all flocks of birds whose hearts lean toward the sun. They are in tune with the inside timing. We need that same gift of inner sensing so that we can be aware of our leaning toward the divine and follow what is being called forth in the depths of ourselves.*

*Beyond us, in distant places, there are other seasons of earth and of the spirit. Wars with weapons are mixed with struggles of greed and power. Little children yearn to be fed and old people dream of days when there was peace enough for all.*

*We are autumn people. We are always called to be in the process of growing and changing. May our minds and hearts be open to this inner season which is a part of us. May we trust in you, Autumn God, who calls us to grow. May we find hope as we enter willingly into the dying that is needed for our transformation.*