

Reflections from EfM Mentors

As we transition leadership of the St. John's Education for Ministry program from the brilliant and insightful Dr. Patricia Bleicher to myself and Wade Hinkle, parishioner from Holy Cross in Annandale and graduate of St. John's EfM, I reflect on this collect from one of our theological reflections.

*Dear God, the Source of Wondrous Gifts,
You fill our senses.
Please help us keep our abiding amazement,
So that we can accept your message with a child's wisdom.
Amen.*

Summer is a time of sweltering heat, tasty cooler drinks, smells of fresh cut grass, sounds of children playing in sprinklers, skinned knees, burned skin, and long, slow days. It is also a time when many of us take a break from the grind of work and commitments with a much needed vacation. Summer break gives us new tools to keep our abiding amazement. We experience nature, culture, and new surroundings as we travel, and we sequester ourselves in a cool room with a rich book to be filled with the imaginations of a great writer. We often reconnect with family and friends. Our hiatus allows us to fill our senses with wondrous gifts.

With September comes a getting back to business. Learners return to school. Logos resumes publication and Christian education begins again. EfM rolls into a new year of study. After a summer opening up, Fall is where we are filled anew.

This collect asks us to hear with a child's wisdom. When a child learns, the experience is new and exciting. There is no need to pray to keep our abiding amazement when we are children because wondrous gifts are more apparent and plentiful. September calls us to reclaim that joy and wonder. Only then are we able to really hear God's message—with open hearts and minds that have been filled with the wonders of God's creation. And, as a child, accept it as truth.

Summer will allow me to take a break from the daily grind, but it also offers an opportunity to prepare for a new year of EfM. God's message has been to take on a leadership role, and summer will allow me to open up so that I may be filled with insight and inspiration for a new year of study. I look forward to being amazed and rejuvenated to receive new learning in the Fall.

I invite all of you to embrace the idea of this collect. Open your souls to wondrous gifts so that you may too be filled with abiding amazement and accept God's message to you with child-like wisdom.