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A Place at the Table

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Wednesday August 17, 2016

By Eric Spina

I was struck by the lyrics of "A Place at the Table," the opening hymn at this morning's "Blessed Beginnings" prayer service in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception.

"For young and for old, a place at the table, a voice to be heard, a part in the song."

Karen and I joined nearly 300 faculty and staff at a gathering filled with song and readings from the Hebrew scriptures, the Marianist heritage and the Christian and Muslim traditions. The service marked a moment — the beginning of a new academic year — and a short interval from the bustling days ahead that will be filled with orienting new students and their families.

More importantly, it served as a powerful reminder of all that's special at the University of Dayton. We are a different university — one that values bringing people from all walks of campus and faith traditions together to pause, reflect and pray. This is what building community is all about.

At one point, we extended our hands and joined in a "blessing prayer" for our colleagues, offering thanks for "their hopes and concerns, their efforts and commitment." From groundskeepers to division heads, we called upon the spirit for guidance, for faith, for wisdom.

At this university, with its special Marianist mission, we all have a place at the table. I left the chapel renewed, energized — and with a lasting appreciation for our University's place in the world.