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## Morning Sun, Flicker of a Candle

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# Morning Sun, Flicker of a Candle

[udayton.edu/blogs/president/2020/06/the\\_morning\\_sun.php](https://udayton.edu/blogs/president/2020/06/the_morning_sun.php)



Wednesday July 1, 2020

By Eric F. Spina

***(This is my column in the summer issue of the University of Dayton Magazine, which is only available online. Please take a moment to click through the magazine and read about our plans for the fall — and relive the glory of the amazing seasons of our Flyers, women and men. Be well, Flyer nation!)***

A deer startled me, in a good way, when he peered into my home office window during the middle of the University's first Zoom-based board of trustees' meeting.

I treasure that unexpected moment of grace. We glimpse the sacred when we open our eyes to the world around us and pause to appreciate the extraordinary in life's ordinary moments that, sadly, sometimes escape our attention.

Since the University of Dayton abruptly sent students home and shifted to online learning in mid-March as a public health measure to avoid the spread of COVID-19, Father Jim Fitz, S.M., our rector and vice president for mission, has been a gentle, steady guide, inviting us to enter into the mystery of the unexpected and the unknown — and embrace it.

“Christ is the light that shatters the darkness,” he told faculty and staff at virtual town hall meetings this spring. “Sometimes in our faith journey, the light of Christ is like the morning sun, brightly lighting our path. At times like this pandemic, the light of Christ is a flicker of a candle showing us no more than the next step. We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Our Catholic, Marianist university resides at the intersection of faith and reason. Our academic journey is a search for the truth, one that can be recorded in a researcher’s scientific formula or a student’s essay written late at night as part of a final grade. Yet the test before us today is profoundly different. We’re required to learn new lessons in solidarity, renew our commitment to each other — and stretch the frontiers of knowledge. We’re asked to make sacrifices for the common good. We’re invited to be people of hope who walk by faith.

In this moment of great need, so many alumni are doing whatever they can — visible and invisible, big and small — to help their neighbors and our human community. For those sick, caring for others or mourning, may God’s grace wrap you in comfort. For those who have lost jobs, feel emotionally adrift or have taken on the exhausting task of home-schooling children while working from home, I wish you strength and resilience in the days ahead. For our healthcare workers comforting the sick and our researchers searching for a cure, you are our unsung heroes.

In this issue of the *[University of Dayton Magazine](#)*, you’ll read stories of hope, faith, love — and tenacity. You’ll learn about our [careful planning efforts](#) to return to campus with safety measures in place. You’ll see how the spirit of our beloved UD community, like the flicker of a candle, will never extinguish. You’ll experience unexpected moments of grace.

This is Flyer nation, a community of pragmatists and dreamers, visionaries and doers. With our collective will, creativity and enduring faith, we will light a new path forward.