

# remarks: **VIGIL FOR HAITI**

*On January 21, 2010, the UCI community came together for a candlelight vigil in remembrance of the lives lost, and to support the victims of the recent devastating earthquake in Haiti.*

**I**f there is ever a so-called silver lining to come out of a disaster like the one that currently wreaks havoc on Haiti, it is a re-affirmation of our global interdependence.

Americans are notoriously often viewed as self-centered in our awareness of world history and events, our relative plenty seems to shelter us from the magnitude of a catastrophic situation like the one Haiti faces.

So as we pray for Haiti's recovery, for humanitarian aid to reach those in need, for the safety and health of its residents, for the swiftness of rescue teams, let us recognize Haiti not as some remote island, far, far away.

Instead, let us remember the courage of the Haitian people when they ousted French slavers from the island 60 years before the US outlawed slavery. Let us remember their love of liberty in the way they have endured various colonial occupations. Let us remember their spirit of hope in the way they have survived astonishing government corruption and widespread impoverishment. The people of this small island carry on with admirable optimism, despite their sorrows.

And now they need our help more than ever. They need the generosity of our dollars and our time and our voices. In the days to come, they need us to be patient and persistent and consistent in our offerings of help.

The people of Haiti, who have faith in the benevolence of their spiritual protectors, also deserve to have faith in the benevolence of human protection as they strive to fathom the unfathomable, to not merely survive this disaster, but to thrive.

We have the opportunity to participate in the healing of a nation from more than just this earthquake. What the Haitian people have endured is both tragic and amazing. Let this be the beginning of a new commitment to our fellow human beings – a new promise from one freedom-loving people to another.

Delivered by  
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