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Dear Parishioners;

So the Democrats in the United States have chosen as their Vice Presidential candidate Kamala Harris, a woman of color. And my response to this historic moment is that it is about time. And of course, the first response to this woman by the Republicans is to question her character and even her nationality. The Republicans described her as being nasty and unkind and un lady-like.

The problem is that these old white guys don't understand the difference between a lady and a woman. When I was in the seminary, we worked through a document that was entitled; "Women in the Church". And we were fortunate enough to have some very capable women join us to add their perspectives and, hopefully, to enlighten us.

So the first night I introduced the women and I called them ladies. And after the night was over, one of the women pointed out to me the limitations of the title Ladies. I thought that I was being polite. And when I asked if I shouldn't have used the title Ladies, she said only if I would also use the title gentlemen in the same way for men.

It was one of those rare times in my life when I got what the person is saying without much resistance on my part. Women don't have to be "lady-like", they only have to be a person. They only have to be who they are and hopefully that will include the qualities of compassion.

Now, we are not better off when women assume the worst qualities of men, but we also do ourselves a great disfavor when we want to box all women into what are the narrow qualities of what most people mean when they say that they want a woman to be more lady-like. Because usually they want the woman to be more quiet and to be less visible.

I read a book one time entitled; “When I grow old I will wear purple.” And I recall this one line that went; “When I grow old I am going to learn how to spit.” It turns out that it is from a poem written by Jenny Joseph titled; “Warning”.

Now, nobody likes to watch other people spit. In fact, one of the benefits of the pandemic is not having to watch baseball players spit throughout the entire game. But everybody needs to know how to spit without getting it all over themselves.

And everybody needs to know how to defend themselves and how to look out for themselves so that they are not seen as victims by those who would take advantage of them. We all need to be charming but that does not mean that any of us should ever be dominated or subordinated to another. Now more than ever, we need women and men who will speak the truth and especially truth to power. As they say, everyone is entitled to their own opinion but they are not entitled to their own facts. When the facts no longer matter then power corrupts absolutely.

Unless you are talking about lifting weights, women are the equal to men. And better than that, the female perspective is a great compliment to the male perspective. To the point that if we want to understand the realities of the universe and the mysteries of faith, we need to have a healthy balance of the two.

So good for Kamala Harris and may God bless her and all women whose only wish is to be given a fair opportunity to put their gifts and talents at the service of the common good.

I came across this poster that reminds us of the place of women in the life of Jesus.

Jesus protected women, He honored women publically, He released the voice of women, confided in women, was funded by women, celebrated women by name, learned from women, respected women, and spoke of women as examples to follow. And now it is our turn.

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.

Pat Monette/Pastor