

An Open Letter to the Women Who Marched

I applaud your exercise of your First-Amendment right to free speech. I thought of joining your cause and several of my friends marched with you. I had some friends who marched in Washington, D.C., another friend who marched in New York City, and a cousin, who marched in Kansas City.

I wanted to march with you on Jan. 21, 2017, but I couldn't fully buy into the pro-abortion platform. The reason I wanted to march with you was because of my pro-life values that drove me to not terminate the pregnancy of my daughter with a disability. I understand that many protesters were taking a stand for the disabled, immigrants, refugees, the poor and marginalized.

I feel very torn between my friends who are pro-life and pro-Trump and could not support your march. I wanted to march for my daughter because frankly I'm concerned about her future under Trump's administration. I watched the news coverage all day and prayed.

I prayed that you would be heard. I prayed that God would heal the division in our nation. I prayed for peace.

One of my friends texted me and said she would have loved to march but couldn't because of the pro-abortion stance. There are millions of women like my friend and I who are just as passionate as you are about the defending the plight of the immigrant, the poor, the refugee, the disabled and the marginalized.

But we will not shed our stand for life. While I'm pro-life, I'm pro all of life. I believe that the pro-life movement has been weak to advocate for all life, for the single teenage mom who decides to keep her baby, for the baby who ends up in

foster care or an orphanage, for the homeless, for the immigrant and marginalized. I believe God is pro all of life. He is pro-people, pro-freedom and pro-truth.

I've never voted on one issue like most of my pro-life friends. I've tried to keep an open mind because I have people who I love who had several abortions. I refuse to condemn or judge them. My heart is to reach across political issues that divide us and bring us together.

I pray that we can truly hear each other instead of shutting each other down because of our own perceived stereotypes. I refuse to stereotype you as a rude, profanity-speaking woman. By the same token, don't stereotype me as a militant right-wing, pro-Trump, Republican pro-lifer who doesn't care about social justice issues.

We share a common history of struggle for our rights and dignity. Can we stop screaming at each other, caricaturing each other and listen to each other? Please drop the labels and let's talk. My friend, Lee Grady, wrote a column about the Christian foundation of the suffragette movement.

Lee wrote:

It was Christian suffragette leader Lucretia Mott (1793-1880) who said, "The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source." Mott did not live to see American women win the vote in 1920, but she laid the foundation for that victory.

If we truly want to stop the poison of injustice and elevate the dignity of women in the Trump era, we will need more than sassy outrage from Hollywood stars. We need a gutsy, courageous, grassroots Christian women's movement that is not afraid to stand for both gender equality and sexual purity; we need compassion for pregnant women as well as a mother's heart to protect unborn and unwanted children.

Let's come together and pray for our nation. More than ever, we need peace and wisdom. May God bring healing to our nation and wisdom for all us to become the solution instead of looking to the government for the answer. {eoa}

Leilani Haywood *is the online editor for SpiritLed Woman.*

