

Good morning. Thank you for inviting me here every year and congratulations on the work you do studying about the Kennedy family

Today I want to speak with you about President John F. Kennedy, and as I look at you third graders I also feel much older this year. Both my daughters participated in this Devotion School tradition of honoring and studying about President Kennedy when they were in the third grade, and they have now both graduated from college. My youngest daughter just graduated last month.

I am not sure about you, but I can't get enough information about the Presidential Primary that seems to have been going on and on. I know you have lots of homework and have other favorite shows to watch on TV. Myself, I watch every news show that I can. My wife asks me if "we can't just watch a movie."

I am fascinated with this election because I can see a country today that is changing and maturing. When I was younger I observed the election of John F. Kennedy for President. The major issue in his campaign was whether we should elect a Catholic President. He faced the issue head on and said "I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic."

In this year's Democratic primary, voters have the opportunity to elect a woman or an African American man to be President of the United States. If John Kennedy were alive today he would be proud. In his campaign he spoke out and fought back against discrimination. He fought for diversity and made elections like the one we are having this year possible. He said "If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity."

It is interesting that his brother Ted Kennedy and part of the family are supporting and working for Barack Obama, and another part of the family is endorsing and working for Hillary Clinton. That shows us that we are fortunate to have the right to choose whomever we feel is the best candidate and that even political families may differ on the candidate.

Our country will be better off after this election. We are living through a change that was made possible by leaders like John F. Kennedy. He said to the voters "I hope that no American will waste his franchise and throw away his vote by voting either for me or against me solely on account of my religious affiliation. It is not relevant."

Persons who have religious, racial backgrounds or genders that are different than the majority must have the same rights as that majority. This is an important lesson for all of us to remember in order to keep our country free and democratic. President Kennedy was a great leader who reminded us of our history and the law that gives rights to all American citizens...and that is why I am proud to be here today to celebrate his memory.

Thanks again for inviting me.