

Daily Meditation 11-04-24

On Evil, the Sacred, and What is at Stake in this Election

Good morning.

Today as I record this video, it is Sunday, the Feast of All Saints, and as you're reading it, will be on the eve of the election. That is to say the last day of the election, because people have been voting for several weeks now.

Now, one thing I like about the Feast of All Saints, is the invitation to enlarge our souls, and to undergo and display the courage that is integral to all holiness. We can think of Navalny, for example, this election day, because he stood up to the dictator Putin, who is obviously in league with several of our big billionaires in America today. But he stood up to him, knowing that it was a very, very dangerous thing to do. In effect, he was saying there are values that are greater than just one's survival, or one's survival in politics.

Just this morning, I heard an interview with Liz Cheney, and she was asked about the smallness of the soul of many of the Republican congresspeople who have not stood up to Donald Trump, because they're afraid of losing an election.

She talked about fear, and how powerful fear can be, and how all tyrants operate on fear, how autocracy is about making people fearful. And so, for her fellow Republican congresspeople not to stand up against certain attitudes and language coming from their leader, she said, "This is not only about hypocrisy" because she knew them well enough to know that many of them are not on board with everything being sold there, "but at the bottom is fear. And that fear is what tyrants want. They want to make people afraid so that they can rule unimpeded."

So this story is so deep in the story of holiness. I'm thinking of Mary's Magnificat early in Luke's gospel, how the rich will give way to the poor and the oppressed. What a pride that is, about our inherent greatness, all of us.

But in my essay, I talk about the Sacred, and that this is really what's on the ballot: that evil is the opposite of the Sacred, just as the Antichrist is the opposite of Christ. And that we need to recover a sense of the Sacred, and that we find it in nature, that which is greater than ourselves. And the sacredness of the Earth is at stake with this election, because one camp is calling global warming a hoax, and the other camp is trying to do something about it, in league with all the other millions of people around the world, who recognize the warming of the planet, shifting of weather, the wildfires, hurricanes, etc.

So that's how part of holiness is recognizing the Sacred, and bringing forth our our courage and our sense of the truth, and our quest for the truth to do something about the traumas that our generation is facing. I also talk about the sacredness of animals. One of my favorite lines in Thomas Merton (and he has a lot of good lines in a lot of books), the Catholic monk Thomas Merton said that every "non-two-legged creature is a saint." Think about that in your relationship with your cat or your dog. Or trees and forests, and the rest. We're surrounded by holiness on this All Saints Day, because we're surrounded by the sacred saints therefore.

So sainthood holiness is not that far away. So being true to our nature, to our best nature, humans have so many options that we can easily get detoured from our best nature. And we have to return, and we need criticism from others, and from ourselves, and understanding, for all that to happen.

Now I refer to Michael Moore's very fine essay called "A Letter from Michael Moore to the Non-Voters of America." And he points out to non-voters that in 2016, 100 million Americans did not vote, and that made them by far the largest political party in America. Because the Democrats and Hillary Clinton voters were about 73 or 74 million people, and the Republicans around 70 million. Then in 2020, the Democrats voted over 80 million, and the non-voters were at about 1 million less. So he says that that the non-voters are the largest political party America, although they came in second in 2020. And each time, the Trump followers came in third.

And he himself, just as I listed some issues that are on the table for this election, he created his own list as well. And I'd like to to share that with you. He says that for him, these are the crux of the agenda for our election, this time around.

Number One: Only women have the right to control their own bodies. These are the votes that are up for grabs on Monday and Tuesday of this week.

Number Two: Tax the rich. And I talk about the truth that's coming out about the billionaires, so many of whom own powerful media platforms. The Murdochs, of course, have been putting out their version of politics and government for decades: Fox News and the rest. Now we have the billionaire in Los Angeles, owning the Los Angeles Times, and the billionaire owning Washington Post, refusing to endorse Harris. In other words, operating out of fear, and giving back that message to a person who is a bully and wants to be a dictator, that his subjects are full of fear. Very dangerous. And I tell the story of the billionaire family who are so busy tearing down the rainforest in Brazil and so forth. Now, some billionaires have a conscience, but many do not. And this is what democracy is supposed to do, is to check the extremes, for the sake of the common good.

The Number Three issue on the ballot, according to Michael Moore, is to ban assault weapons.

Number Four: Everyone should be able to afford their own home.

Number Five: Double or triple the minimum wage.

Number Six: Stop corporate price gouging.

Seven: A cease-fire in Gaza.

Eight: Expand Obamacare. That's very different from trying to kill it, which is still on the agenda of the Trump people at Project 2025.

Expand Social Security and Medicare. This, again, is the opposite of what Project 2025 is seeking.

Cover at-home care for seniors. Child Tax Credit. Let workers join a union. Paid family and medical leave,

“On all these issues,” he said, “I stand strongly with Kamala Harris. Donald Trump does not. Do you? It really is that simple,” he says.

And another piece of research that struck me as significant, is a further dive into the issue of power billionaires. Not only has \$2 billion been poured into the election by 150 of the wealthiest families in the world, they aren't done yet. Elon Musk, the Koch network, are spending record amounts. And not to ensure the good of our democracy or the common good, but to ensure that they can control it.

And so the Americans for Tax Fairness Action Fund released the latest report on billionaires buying elections right before election day.

Make no mistake, they say, these mega-donors are shaping policy in ways that hurt American families. Since last week, the Wall Street Journal revealed that hundreds of millions of dollars from the ultra-rich are fueling “Stop The Steal 2.0,” an organized effort to challenge election outcomes that they find inconvenient. If they have their way, our tax code and laws will serve only the super-wealthy, leaving working families to foot the bill for essential services like health care, education and infrastructure.

And this is what Project 2025 is talking about, too: to essentially do away with an education department, and that the super wealthy run the show.

So, blessings on your choices tomorrow and today, and on helping those to the polls, especially those who have not been planning to vote. Because all of us are implicated in the results of this election.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.