

Daily Meditation 10-26-2026

What are MAGA's Worst Mortal Sins on the Ballot a Week from Today?

Good morning.

In today's meditation. I'm teaming up with Charlotte Clymer, sharing her list of what I call the mortal sins of the current MAGA presidency. I share her main summary, and then I offer another two paragraphs from my perspective because she can't say everything. This is a very long list of mortal sins.

And I'd like to share with you now a letter to the editor from a newspaper, by an ordinary citizen from Northport, Illinois, who entitles his letter "Thanks, Mr. President."

To the editor: Donald Trump asked me to vote as if he is on the ballot. Gladly. Thanks for war with Iran, disrupting oil, erratic tariffs, unraveling global economics, and raising the cost of living for Americans. Thanks for January 6 and pardoning all the rioters. Thanks for putting masked, unidentified militia on American streets to survey, track, and kill U.S. citizens. Thanks for implementing inhumane deportation policies, detention centers, and denying due process. Thanks for disrupting billions in medical research, stalling alternative energy initiatives, destabilizing the State Department, DHHS, CDC, EPA, National Parks, Smithsonian, Kennedy Center, and more. Thanks for ruining and politicizing the DOJ, Secretary Hegseth's whimsical decapitating military leadership and sanctioning live-streamed execution. Thanks for increasing the deficit by \$11 trillion, and discriminating against Republican supporters in blue states by withholding grants, disaster aid, and congressionally-authorized spending, in spite. Thanks for disparaging our Canadian neighbors, excusing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, undermining NATO, ignoring international law, praising dictators, and generally destroying decades of trust-building and respect for American influence around the globe. Thanks for demonstrating what autocratic despots can do to enrich family and friends when granted unchecked power. Thanks for reminding us how easy it is to undermine the values of a 250-year-old democracy

that heretofore depended upon honorable people of goodwill serving the public's interest. Democracy is in peril when truth, facts, and history is distorted, and a free press is undermined. Thanks for chaos.

This is a very powerful and succinct letter to the editor from a general citizen in America, and I thank him for his writing, and I'd like to include it now as the third document, if you will, about the mortal sins of the current MAGA presidency as we head into an all-important election.

And I want to share with you once again this very important statement by James Madison, one of the founders of our country, and found the very front page of this important book on evil, *Call It Evil: Understanding the Trump Era* by Susan Neiman. So right up front, right before the introduction, facing the introduction page, is this quote from James Madison:

Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks, no form of government can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government would secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people is a chimerical idea.

So virtue is presumed among these founders of our republic. And of course virtue is an aspiration, if you will. It comes and goes. None of us have mastered it perfectly. But at least there is an effort. And for leaders representing us, there must be some evidence that virtue matters, and not just greed, not just power for power's sake, and not lies that go on and on.

I end my essay with bringing up the quote that I've invoked earlier in my daily meditations, my favorite, my current favorite definition of hope:

"Hope is a verb with the sleeves rolled up."

I just love that definition of hope because it's so inclusive. Are we working or aren't we? Are our sleeves rolled up or not? At seeking the truth, at seeking virtue, at seeking the common good, bringing in justice, standing up to injustice, naming injustice, naming evil for what it is.

This is one reason that I invoke artists like Hildegard of Bingen in the 12th century and Luca Signorelli in the 16th century, who took up the archetype of Antichrist and painted pictures about it. Because it is through the

imagination in the arts that we most cleanly tell the stories of virtue and vice.

Jesus chose storytelling. He was an artist. He chose parables, the telling of parables with stories, to provoke people, to awake people, get people to think and to see more clearly, see the truth, and to come up with imaginative alternatives. In fact, he put forward the most wild imagination ever when he talked about how the kingdom/queendom of God, can stand up to, can displace, can offer alternative values to a an imperial view of the world, such as he and his fellow citizens, if you will, of Israel were undergoing at the hands of the Roman Empire, the same empire that crucified him because he was speaking truth in language that ordinary people understood. That is to say, by way of art, by way of storytelling, parables. The word "got around." There are different ways that we can treat one another. That compassion is possible, and justice, and speaking truth to power. Of course, he paid a tremendous price for that.

So all of us at this time are called to roll up our sleeves and to stand up, and to put virtue, which really means this inner strength and power that right decision making brings about, put this forward.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.