

# Awaken to God's Presence | The Power of Story

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

God, All Saints Day, story, spiritual practice

## SPEAKERS

Joelle White, Blake Smith

### Joelle Wight 00:00

A gift of peace in the midst of troubling times. Project Zion Podcast offers this series of guided practices to help you connect with the divine. No matter where you are, and what's going on around you. Take a deep breath and allow your Spirit to find calm in the storm of life.

### Blake Smith 00:28

Hello and welcome to this episode of Awaken to God's Presence. My name is Blake Smith, and I will be leading you through a spiritual practice that acknowledges the power of story ... your story, and the people who have been a part of shaping that story.

October is a month in which we are surrounded by images and sounds of ghouls, goblins, and all things spooky. At the end of the month, many will celebrate what has become known as Halloween, where, for one night, children create their own fantasy "story" by dressing in costumes that allow them to pretend they are someone else for a few hours. It is, in itself, a way that many engage in story-telling.

In the Christian tradition, Halloween is better known as "All Hallows' Eve" ... the night before "All Saints Day" which falls each year on the first of November, and is the day in which we remember those who have gone before... those often considered to be saints. It is also, however, a time to remember those in our own lives who have saints for us. They are those who have been companions on our journey of life and faith, and who have been a part of writing our story. In her book, *Accidental Saints*, Nadia Bolz-Weber says that "what makes us saints of God is not our ability to be saintly but rather God's ability to work through sinners." We often think of saints as those who have reached perfection or have performed great deeds of service and sacrifice, but in reality they are often ordinary people who have touched our lives in quiet yet extraordinary ways.

Writing about All Saints Day, Rev. Aurelia Davila Pratt, lead pastor and cofounder of Peace of Christ Church in Round Rock, TX writes ...

"Truly, we are story bearers. This is who we are. This is what we do. We bring our stories and the stories of others with us into the present moment. Through stories, we make sense of things. We take big ideas and bring them down to earth. Stories help us cultivate a posture of gratitude. Stories help us humanize people we are tempted to hate. Stories hold power. They mold us, change us, ground us, and heal us. They propel us toward a more hopeful future.

On All Saints' Day we honor the lives of those who have blazed trails of divine love in our world and in our lives. This matters because it reminds us that we are part of a larger narrative. We are connected, and the more we connect with the stories of those who have gone before us, the more we are able to cultivate a listening and curious posture in the present."

Depending on when you are engaging this practice, All Saints Day may still be a month away, or it may be tomorrow. Either way, it is never too early or too late to remember the saints in our life and the ways they have added to our story. As you enter this time of reflection, you may want to have a journal and writing utensil close by. Feel free to listen all the way through and then contemplate the answers to the reflection questions, or pause the audio after each question, returning when you are ready to re-engage... whatever is most helpful for you.

Now... Make yourself comfortable. Take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to focus in on your story. Pay attention to big events and interactions in your life as well as the quiet teachable moments that may have previously gone unnoticed...

Who are the people who have journeyed with you or with whom you have journeyed in big and small ways?

Pause...

What images, smells, objects, sounds do you associate with those individuals?

Pause ...

What roles did those individuals play in your life? Teachers, friends, relatives, acquaintances... perhaps even author, poet, or musicians?

Pause ...

How did those individuals contribute to your life story?

Pause ...

In what ways did they influence the plot line of your story?

Pause ...

What words of gratitude would you share with them if you had the chance?

Pause ...

How might you best honor them as a "saint" (accidental or otherwise) on All Saints Day?

Pause ...

As we come to the end of our time, pay attention to the feelings or emotions that have arisen in you as you remember your saints.

Take a moment to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the ways in which these individuals have added blessing to your story.

May you be blessed as you continue to write your story, and as you find ways to be a “saint” in the lives of others, contributing to the larger narrative.

Amen.