

## Soul Sisters 7 – Joanna or Junia

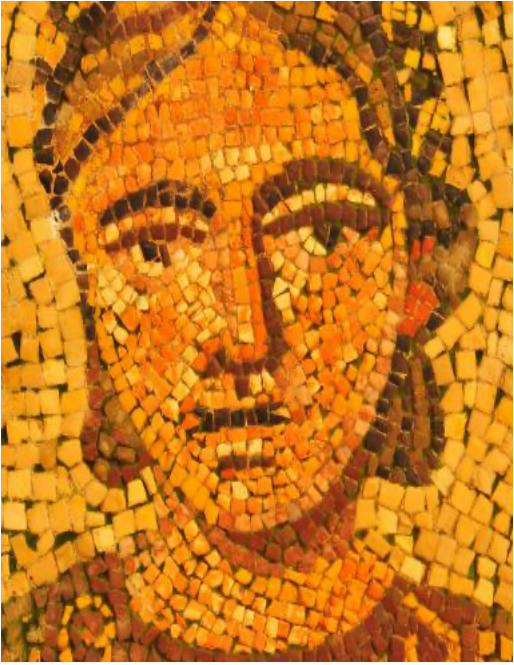


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### Luke 24:1-11

*But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, (the women) came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’ <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*

### Romans 16: 7

*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.*

Both Junia and Joanna are the subject of some dispute among biblical scholars. Some say they are one and the same, with Roman and Jewish versions of the same name. Joanna, as we can see from the gospel of Luke, was one of the earliest followers of Jesus. Junia is described by Paul as being “in Christ before I was.” Joanna, along with other women, followed Jesus all the way to the cross – when his male disciples were hiding in fear. Junia was imprisoned for her role as an apostle. Whether they were one, or two different women, they were both women of courage who were passionate about following Jesus.

You might not find the name **Junia** in your translation of the Bible. Though the earliest manuscripts contain the name in its female form, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century her name began to appear in the male form **Junias**, due to the belief that women could not be, nor had ever been apostles. Though now it is widely accepted that Junia was likely a female apostle, some translations continue the use of the male name.

**What can we learn from our Soul Sisters Joanna and Junia?** Both were “mansplained” out of history, but were reclaimed by female biblical scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It’s never too late to reveal the truth.

**Question for Reflection:** In community, the impact of an individual is sometimes watered down, in theory to strengthen the whole. When have you been expected to step into the background “for the good of the community”?

**Prayer:** *Holy God, who welcomes us into the household of faith, we pray for all who have found the doorways of faith closed to them. We pray for all who have been rejected or weakened because of gender or racial identity, economic status, language or ethnicity. Make us truly apostles, O God, that we might go out as good news to the world. Amen*