



Vigil
for the
Feast of St. Junia

on Sunday, May 16, 2021

Organized by the #JuniaInitiative – www.juniainitiative.com

On Sunday, May 16, 2021, we will meet in different places and at different times. **We** – women* who are called and prepared to be ordained to sacramental service. **We** – all who support these women*. **We gather** – each in our own places, in local churches and in our communities.

On the eve of the Feast of St. Junia 2021 we come together for prayer. The way to live our vocation is first an inner way, a spiritual way. We connect with one another and with the power of the Holy Spirit, the source and foundation of our being and our mission. From there grows the motivation to commit ourselves to our vocation publicly within the church: a vocation we understand to be in the service of humanity and of our church community.

The Vigil celebration calls us to actively remember the women called to ministry throughout history. In celebration, we spread our prayer out like a colorful fabric. We see and we hold the women called to priestly responsibility, to royal authority, to prophetic power. And like a bright, warming fire we light our prayer for them, so that the suffering in our Church does not remain in the cold and in the dark.

Two ancient liturgical elements will accompany us: the litany, as a form of prayer; and fire, as a fundamental element.

This Vigil Celebration 2021 was created by theologians Barbara Walser, Bettina Wissert, Karin Klemm, Regula Grünenfelder, and Veronika Jehle. The prepared texts for this celebration are available to all interested parties who would like to join us in celebrating the Vigil of the Feast of St. Junia in their own locations.

Framework for the celebration

If possible, the celebration should begin outside by a fire. Afterwards, depending on the situation, it can be continued either in a suitable setting outside or in a liturgical room. If an outdoor celebration is not possible, the Easter candle can be used instead of the fire.

Music deepens and sustains prayer. Live music, whether instrumental or vocal, is certainly a plus.

To be prepared in advance:

- A fire (in a bowl or fire pit) ready to be lit, and a torch or long matches for all participants in the celebration.
- Alternatively, the Easter candle, with thin candles or votive candles for the participants.
- Music
- Bible or Lectionary with the biblical texts – Rom 16:7 and Lk 1:46-55
- Bread and wine in a suitable form for all participants
- Liturgy booklet (PDF template printed as a brochure) for the celebrants
- Participant leaflet with litany, blessing text, information, and music if applicable for all participants (Word template to be adjusted accordingly)

Note: The form of the celebration should be appropriate to the current epidemiological situation and meet all applicable corona protection measures.

Order of Service

Musical Prelude

Greetings

We warmly welcome you here in

I / We, [name(s)], are responsible for this celebration.

We are connected to many places and many people who have come together tonight to celebrate for the same reason.

We keep vigil. That means 'night watch'. In this we follow an ancient tradition of the Church, to keep watch and to pray before important holidays.

We keep watch in honor of an important woman, an apostle: Junia. Her feast day is May 17th.

We pray with women from the past and present who have shaped the Church and our faith and continue to do so today. We pray and watch and advocate in support of vocations in the service of God and humanity.

A fire (or Easter candle) is lit with the words:

In the name of God, primordial power and spark of all life.

In the name of Jesus, the Savior, who came to set fire to this earth.

In the name of the Holy Spirit, power that blazes and burns where and how it will.

Introduction to the Reading

The divine spark, the glow of love, the fire of the gospel has gripped men and women through the ages, and they testified with fiery zeal. The testimony of one woman has brought us here tonight:

Reading – Rom 16:7 ([source](#))

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.

Ritual of Profession

A torch is lit from the fire and passed among those present (if the corona protection measures do not allow this, each participant can be given a long match to light from the fire as they make the profession).

If the Easter candle is used, the ritual can be performed with a thin candle (or, if necessary, with smaller votive candles) for each participant.

After the introductory word spoken by a celebrant, everyone is invited to profess in the form “I – [first name]” and then to pass the burning torch or to light their own candle.

Introductory word (spoken by the celebrant)

We are connected to Junia and to her apostolic vocation. We let ourselves be inflamed by her fire. We carry it forward and desire it to burn – especially in the Church.

I – [first name]

...

the fire is passed to all participants.

Music

If the second part of the celebration takes place indoors, the participants now move into the liturgical space.

Junia Litany (#Junia-Litanei)

The litany can be read together or by a celebrant. Possible responses from the community are noted in brackets.

The litany can be shortened by selecting individual women from each section (and adapting the participant leaflet accordingly).

For thousands of years women have been manifesting and celebrating God's presence. We place ourselves in their circle. With this litany we confess that we are their children and carry their fire forward. We profess our own vocation. In connection with you, mothers and sisters, we prepare the path and we pave the way, that God's presence can be seen and experienced today.

We sing together: (Tune: MARANATHA (Coelho), best known in English as "Father, I Adore You")

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with our foremothers in the Torah

We honor you, **Eve**, witness of the good beginning.
(We honor you)

We see you, **Hagar and Rebekah**, stirring up peace like a fire that warms Jewish, Christian, and Muslim children.

(We see you)

We mourn with you, **Shiphrah and Puah**, all the girls who were killed because they are girls.

(We mourn with you)

We follow you, **Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirzah**, on the long road for equal rights.

(We follow you)

We dance with you, **Mirjam**, divine pathfinder and authority on the water of life.

(We dance with you)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with the prophets and wise women

We honor you, **Naomi and Ruth**, for your women's bond, spun out of love, boldly woven and clear-sightedly passed forward: to Jesus, to us.

(We honor you)

We remember you, **Witch of Endor**, and all the women who have shared their wisdom. And we mourn the women who were murdered for their talents.

(We remember you)

We are happy, **Judge Deborah**: your name stands for all women who have over thousands of years administered justice.

(We are happy)

We testify, **Prophetess Huldah**, to your importance at a turning point for Israel. And we honor all women prophets whose names we do not know.

(We testify)

We get up, **Michal**, and like you put words and signs in the way of the warmongers.

(We get up)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with the mothers of the community of Jesus

We sing with you, **Mary**, your passionate words of trust: my soul magnifies the Lord!

(We sing)

We speak with you, **Hannah**, a prophetic word at the right time.

(We speak)

We proclaim with you, **Samaritan Women**, what we have learned from Jesus.

(We proclaim)

We teach, **Woman from Syrophenicia**, as you taught Jesus: Narrow, inhumane boundaries do not apply.

(We teach)

We anoint, **Anointing Woman**, like you anointed Jesus, to strengthen the suffering and to prepare them for death.

(We anoint)

We claim, **Bleeding Woman** – in our own menstrual bleeding and in the incontinence of old age – the right to be healed and to and bear witness to our healing.

(We claim)

We shine with you, **Mary Magdalene**, the tower to Peter's rock.

(We shine)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with our sisters in the early church

We honor you, **Apostle Junia**, Patroness of the Junia Initiative, and we honor the women theologians who reclaimed your memory.

(We honor you)

We are church, **Lydia**, with you, businesswoman and evangelist.

(We are church)

We see you, tentmaker **Priska**, as you work, travel, and teach.

(We see you)

We are your legacy, deaconess and church leader **Phoebe**, filled like you with the good news of the gospel.

(We are your legacy)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with our sisters from the Middle Ages

We remember you, **Theodora Episkopa**, and honor all women in ecclesiastical offices whose memories have been neglected.

(We remember you)

We bow to you, **Abbesses** of Las Huelgas, Quedlinburg, Gantersheim, Remiremont and many others who created spiritual centers and celebrated the sacraments.

(We bow to you)

We open ourselves, **Hildegard of Bingen**, to the greening power from which you created a universe of words, tones and colors.

(We open ourselves)

We are proud of you, **Counselor Wiborada**, because in you the papal church recognized the saintliness of women for the first time.

(We are proud)

We honor you, **Catherine of Siena and Theresa of Avila**, our Doctors of the Church, along with the many other women teachers whose writings we do not know.

(We honor you)

We think of you, **Teresa of Lisieux**, and the suffering you felt because you were unable to answer your divine call to the priesthood.

(We think of you)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We unite ourselves with our modern sisters in Christ

We thank you, **Sojourner Truth**, prophetess for equal dignity and equal rights for all women, for Black people, for enslaved people, and for the poor.

(We thank you)

We think of you with love, **Dorothee Sölle**, and the sparks of theology and light you brought to the darkness of an unimaginative church.

(We think of you with love)

We sing with you, **Mercedes Sosa**, the song of thanks for life, for the siblinghood of humanity with all of creation.

(We sing with you)

God, you give us power / to create the future / in your Spirit.
--

We thank you, God, for the holy circle of our mothers and sisters in faith. We open it wide to include all who use their gifts for

dignity and justice, recognized and unrecognized, invited and uninvited. We pray for all women across time who have felt a vocation to serve in your Church, and for the Church they love. We open our arms and pray for consolation for the women, men, and children abused, injured, and murdered by the Church, and pray that they may be consoled. We hold in the stillness of the circle the desires that have not yet been spoken.

Silence

You are here with us, in this eternal circle. And with you, the hope that every tear will be wiped away and that change is possible, through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Music (if the litany is used without musical accompaniment)

Introduction to the biblical text

The Bible gives us many visions of God's future.

One of them is the Magnificat, Mary's hymn of praise, the song of a God who exalts the lowly and who throws the power-obsessed and arrogant from their thrones, who gives the hungry what they need and turns towards those who are not already satisfied.

Let us hear this good news.

Gospel Lk 1:46-55 ([source](#))

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Hallelujah, e.g. Katholisches Gesangbuch

der deutschsprachigen Schweiz 93 (Tune: LAFFERTY, best known in English as “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”)

Introduction to Blessing and Sending Forth

Fire is power, transforming power.

Fire is also used to bake bread, which nourishes us.

Let us join with the forces of transformation and nourishment.

Let us seek blessing for our fires, in our hearth and in our hearts.

Let us also seek blessing for the bread and wine we eat and drink

– bread that nourishes us and wine that delights our hearts.

The focus here is not on sharing bread and wine during the service, but on the idea of being nourished with food and joy. We recommended that the bread and wine are prepared ahead of time and remain untouched until the blessings have concluded. Depending on current/local corona restrictions the bread could be individually packed rolls or a shared loaf. If the celebration takes place around a fire and circumstances permit, the bread could also be baked directly in the fire.

Blessing of the fire

Ash is made of wood

transformed in fire

to its essence.

May we, like the wood
be transformed in fire:
purified of prejudice,
freed from discrimination.

ETERNAL

YOU

Mystery of our life,
in flame in us
the vision of Jesus and Mary
that a world without hierarchy is possible:
not just in church
but there as well. Amen.

Blessing of the bread (and the wine)

ETERNAL

YOU

Mystery of our life,
you want us to be
a human community
that loves,
allows mistakes,
learns from them,
and celebrates.

That forgives,
takes courageous dreams seriously,
believes change is possible;
that dares,
and celebrates.

That invites to the table especially
the hungry and the oppressed,
to share bread and wine and music.

Only all together can we be truly satisfied in body and soul.

Bless our bread

and it will become for us bread from heaven.

Bless our wine

that tastes of breadth and abundance.

And bless our song

that we sing with Mirjam

of you, God,

and the freedom you dream for us.

Amen.

We pray together as Jesus taught us:

'Our Mother and Father in heaven...'

Sending Forth

ETERNAL

YOU

Mystery of our life,

bless us with fire

that blazes or glows,

always warms

sometimes gets dangerously hot

for all

and transformation happens!

Bless us through bread and wine,

that nourish and delight,

unearned gifts

consciously shared

with all

and transformation happens!

ETERNAL

mystery of our life

YOU

see us,

know our longing for justice,

and nourish it.

You see us

and our dignity shines

and all can see it!

You see us

and we see each other,

and secure in the knowledge

that we are seen,

let us move forward

starting today.

Amen.

Eating and Toasts (as possible)

Music

Acknowledgements and Announcements (see general information below)

******* End of Service *******

General Information

If the epidemiological situation allows, we JuniaWomen* and our friends will meet on the Feast of St. Junia: Monday, May 17, 2021 at Fahr Monastery, Canton Aargau, Switzerland. We will focus on deepening our spiritual and theological understanding of vocation and our relationships with each other. All are cordially invited! More information is available [on our website](#) (event information in German) - registration by email to info@juniainitiative.ch before May 6, 2021.

The #JuniaInitiative bears witness to the fact that the Holy Spirit's call to celebrate the sacraments is not a function of position, partnership status, or gender. With their pastoral ministers, counselors, and companions of all genders, Catholics experience the strengthening and healing closeness of God, both within the seven sacraments and more broadly in the sacramental celebration of all life. But many sacramental acts are not officially recognized by the Church. The #JuniaInitiative promotes the idea of "ordination to sacramental service" – official recognition of the sacramental service that lay ministers and women religious can (and in many cases already do) perform. The #JuniaInitiative sees in this possibility a path to a sustainable and credible church and invites all who are struggling with these questions to join us on the path of creative theological debate.

May 17th is the official feast day of Junia, a woman of the early Church who is called an apostle by Paul in his letter to the Romans. She is the patroness of the #JuniaInitiative.