

Still Not Jesus

Jonathan Roumie on the Anger, the Prayer, and the Cross for *The Chosen* Season 6

On set for the most demanding season yet, the actor who plays Jesus talks about the emotional cost of confronting the Pharisees, the prayer that precedes every scene, and the one image from Matera that still overwhelms him.

Interview by Paul Salfen and Ronald Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine



Jonathan Roumie. Courtesy photo.

On the set of *The Chosen* Season 6, the air still carries the weight of the final hours. Jonathan Roumie, the actor who has carried Jesus through five seasons of teaching, healing, and table-turning, is nearing the end of the most physically and emotionally demanding stretch the series has ever asked of him. One more week of difficult scenes remains—scenes that will match the intensity of what was already filmed on the ancient streets of Matera, Italy. For the most part, though, he says, they are through the weeds.

Paul Salfen and his father, Ronald Paul Salfen, sat with him there. The conversation moved quickly from the season's remaining physical demands to the scenes that still live in the body: the confrontations with the Pharisees, the muscles in the neck that strain when Jesus calls them a brood of vipers, and the daily practice that keeps the man separate from the role.

THE ESSENCE OF THE ANGER

Ronald Paul Salfen had been watching the Pharisee scenes again—the scribes, the hypocrites, the brood of vipers. He could see the muscles in Roumie's neck standing out. "This takes a lot of emotional energy to get that angry," he said. "How are you able to generate that being Jesus?"

Roumie does not treat the anger as a performance technique to be summoned. It comes, he said, from the essence of the scene. Jesus is extremely upset that his Father's house, the temple, is being used or misused in a way that is anathema to him. He has reached his limit of what he is willing to tolerate. And he knows—Roumie believes—

that by standing up to the Pharisees in that moment, he is sealing his fate. The narrative must move toward the crucifixion so that the redemption of mankind can come within arm's reach.

He had reached his limit of what he was willing to tolerate. And also, I think, knew that by standing up to the Pharisees in the way that he did at this point in time, he knew that that would seal his fate as far as moving the narrative forward in the direction that he unfortunately recognized it needed to go, which was towards his crucifixion.

— Jonathan Roumie



Jonathan Roumie as Jesus in *The Chosen*. Courtesy of 5&2 Studios.

THE PRAYER BEFORE ALMOST EVERY SCENE

Paul Salfen asked what keeps him on the right path once he steps onto the set. Is it a prayer? Something he tells himself?

“I am always praying before almost every scene,” Roumie answered. The thing he wants most is that people hear Jesus’s voice through the words he is saying, feel his heart, and see his face—not Roumie’s own. For believers, he hopes they feel the weight of Jesus’s authority as a character on screen. That, he said, is his hope and his prayer going into every scene.

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— Jonathan Roumie

HOW JONATHAN STAYS HUMAN

Ronald Paul Salfen asked the question that has followed Roumie for years: “How does Jonathan Roumie stay human?”

The answer is practical. “I look in the mirror. I’m just like, yep, not Jesus. Still not Jesus.” He is thankful he does not have to fill those shoes. When people call out to him as Jesus or try to introduce themselves that way, he corrects them: “Hey, I’m Jonathan.” He needs people to hear that his name isn’t Jesus. The correction, he hopes, psychologically and consciously divorces the idea that he can somehow meet whatever spiritual or physical needs they might bring into a one-on-one encounter. “I’m not Jesus.”

I look in the mirror. I’m just like, yep, not Jesus. Still not Jesus. Thankfully, I don’t have to fill his shoes.

— Jonathan Roumie

THE STAND-OUT MEMORY: MATERA

Asked for his biggest standout memory from the season, Roumie did not hesitate. Outside, in Matera, Italy, he was on a cross on the top of a hill, looking out at all of the other figures and characters in the story. “Yeah, I just been overwhelmed by that scene,” he said. “The crucifixion, really. In one word, two words. The crucifixion is the thing that stands out for most.”

The production notes for Season 6 confirm the scale of what he is describing. For the first time, the series filmed the crucifixion sequences in Matera, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. The stone streets and carved dwellings required little transformation to stand in for first-century Jerusalem. Hundreds of extras filled the streets. Makeup took up to three and a half hours a day to track Jesus’s physical state from arrest through scourging to the cross. Roumie had lost roughly 25 pounds and held his weight within a single pound for the entire three-week shoot so that the image would match the crucifixes and paintings of art history. Director Dallas Jenkins has called Season 6 the hardest logistical undertaking of his career. The series begins streaming on Prime Video November 15, 2026, with a three-episode premiere, followed by weekly episodes through December 6. The two-hour theatrical film *The Chosen Crucifixion* opens in theaters March 12, 2027.

As the interview ended, Roumie thanked them and asked them to keep praying for him. On a set where he has spent years asking audiences to see someone else’s face, the request was simple and human.

FIND JONATHAN ROUMIE

The Chosen Season 6 streams on Prime Video beginning November 15, 2026 (episodes 601–603), with new episodes weekly through December 6. The Chosen Crucifixion opens in theaters March 12, 2027.

Seasons 1–5 available on Prime Video and The Chosen app. Follow @thechosentvseries and Jonathan Roumie on social platforms. thechosen.tv

Interview conducted by Paul Salfen and Ronald Paul Salfen for AMFM Magazine, October 2026.

Paul Salfen is Managing Editor of AMFM Magazine and a veteran interviewer of film, television, music, and sports figures. He is the author of Going For It!, a collection of Hail Mary moments from the artists and athletes he has spent two decades putting on the record. Ronald Paul Salfen joined him for this conversation on the set of The Chosen Season 6.