

### GOSPEL FOR JULY 5, 2021

Matthew 11:25-30

### OTHER READINGS

Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9, 11-13



**Congratulations to Thrive for Life's founder, Father Zachariah Presutti, S.J., on his ordination as a priest!**

### REFLECTION

We heard the simplest of parables last month when Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to the grain of a mustard seed. How can something so small grow into something so big: the Kingdom of God? As every farmer knows, there are many factors beyond our control needed for a tree to grow from a seed. In the natural world, such growth requires rain and sun and soil. In the spiritual world, we need God's unmerited Grace. But for God's Grace to act on our lives, we must first offer the seed of our faith, no matter how small. It's only human to have limiting beliefs about what is possible for our lives. These limiting beliefs are the loudest, the most powerful, at the times we face overwhelming adversity. At such times, how can we possibly believe that planting so little could create so much? It is not easy. But Jesus tells us the greatest growth springs from smallest start. If we can believe in the power of God's Grace (our spiritual rain and sun and soil), then we can believe that anything is possible. I wonder: How am I pushing away the good Grace that wants to act on my life?

- written by TFL Spiritual Mentor, Bart

### MONTHLY EXAMEN

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

#### *Presence*

Become aware that God's presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

#### *Ask*

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

#### *Gratitude*

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day. What are you most grateful for today?

#### *Review*

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you. What were the good moments of today? What were the greatest challenges of today?

#### *Respond*

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

*Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.*



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FOUNDER!

On June 12, 2021, the USA East Province ordained four Jesuits to the priesthood at the Fordham University Church. One of these newly ordained priests is Thrive for Life's founder, Father Zachariah F. Presutti, SJ!

Father Zach's journey to the priesthood began with his studies at Canisius College in Buffalo. After four years of serving as the pastoral associate at St. Paul's Church in Kenmore, New York, he joined the Jesuits' St. Andrew's Hall Novitiate in Syracuse, where he did apostolic work in the local jail and supported victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse in an emergency shelter. Zach's continued apostolic work with incarcerated individuals led him to found Thrive for Life in 2017 and to open Thrive's Ignacio House of Studies in 2019. Congratulations, Father Zach!

*moment with me... Amidst the nerves and sadness, there is joy. This joy I'm feeling derives from my endurance and perseverance... I didn't give up. Today, I can appreciate the value of honest hard work and dedication - this formula plants seeds of determination, honor, integrity, and dignity. These are ingredients needed to become a certified High Achiever.* - Q

"Q" was recommended to Thrive for Life by a university partner. He is now a resident scholar at our Ignacio House of Studies and is studying to get his bachelor's degree in social work at the NYU school of professional studies. "Q" is passionate about giving back and supporting the people around him. He is an advocate for mental health, a motivational speaker, and is putting in the work, on all levels, to transform his life. We are proud of "Q" and all that he and his fellow resident scholars bring to our community and beyond!

## A TALE OF TRANSFORMATION: Q'S STORY

*My thoughts were interrupted by the sound of names being called. I slid out of that abyss and realized I'd missed half of the graduation lost in thought. My name would be called next. At age thirty-one, I will walk across that stage and receive my GED. This is my first academic achievement. My nerves are all over the place, twisted up like someone wringing out a wet towel. I feel tears welling up in my eyes. I want nothing more at this moment than my momma... My family is not here to share this*

## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

This summer, Ignacio House is offering a number of enrichment activities:

- † Visit to the Bronx Museum
- † Community Picnic
- † Personal Narrative Writing
- † Resume Writing
- † Brainstorming, Outlining, and Drafting
- † Personal Statements
- † Technology 101

## BECOME A RESIDENT SCHOLAR AT IGNACIO HOUSE OF STUDIES!

If you are passionate about your education and wish to continue your academic journey post-release, we urge you to consider becoming a Resident Scholar at Thrive for Life's Ignacio House of Studies.

At Ignacio House, we offer formerly incarcerated students transitional supportive housing along with a holistic suite of services to help them find a sense of purpose and overcome barriers to employment, permanent housing, and education. If you are interested in joining us, please send us the following:

- † Full Name
- † DIN number
- † Current college you are enrolled in and/or where you will study post-release
- † Contact information for college/university where you will study.

To reach us, please see our contact information at the top of this page.