

Beads for Christian Character

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We are transformed when we imitate the attitudes and actions of Jesus. Though made in the image and likeness of God – having the ability to choose and the freedom to love – original sin caused a separation from our true selves and it distanced us from God. Original sin did not distance God from us; it distanced us from God! God is within us and, therefore, not far from us but we are far from ourselves and, therefore, it seems to us that we are far from God. Too often we live as though we are separated from God. Our limitations interfere with claiming the “Imago Dei” (*Image of God*) that we are. Transformation is the process of cooperating with God to remove the separation by allowing Jesus to be revealed in us and to us.

Prayer is God-conversation that helps us to recognize the attitudes of Jesus. This divine conversation strengthens us to respond to God’s will in the manner that Jesus did. Little by little we are transformed into the image of Jesus. Even the parts of our selves that we reject, resist, dislike, and try to disown can become building blocks of our redemption.

Meditating on the mysteries of the rosary is one way to explore the challenges and life-giving responses of Jesus, Mary and others like Joseph, Zechariah, Elizabeth, angels, shepherds, Simeon, Anna, the apostles, John the Baptist, etc. They can become mentors that help us to make parallel decisions in our lives. Similarly, other figures in the rosary-mysteries can provide a context for us to name, claim, and tame some of the life-blocking aspects of our selves, for instance, Herod, Pilate, traitor Judas, doubting Thomas, etc. We can intuit life lessons like how to deal with interruptions to our plans (annunciations), how to respond to the needs of others (visitations), how to recognize and respond to epiphany experiences (presentations), how to embrace the crosses placed on us by others (crucifixions), or how to accept death to self and bury past hurts so as to rise transformed in Christ (resurrection). (McCormack, P. *Beads of Transformation*, p. 6-7).

The rosary is a prayer-form that can aide the process of transformation particularly when it is prayed in the style that Popes Paul VI and John Paul II recommended, that is, Hail Mary beads that use a “who clause” – [a clause that refers to Jesus](#). For instance,

- Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus . . . who** *was scourged, mocked and spit upon.*
- Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus . . . who said**, “*Come to me if you are weary and over-burdened and I will give you rest.*” (Matthew 11:28)

- Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus . . . of whom** it was said, *“He makes the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and the broken hearts consoled.* (John 10:10)

There is no one “right” clause. It truly is easy to create a “Jesus Clause” when praying with scripture. Read a Gospel story and isolate specific character traits that Jesus is teaching. Express each trait in a clausal statement that refers to **JESUS** and begins with the pronoun **WHO, WHOSE or OF WHOM**. Then connect the clause to the first part of the Hail Mary prayer. For example, refer back to the Gospel story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). What “Jesus Clause” can you add to these sample clauses?

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus . . .**

- who chose to eat at the home of a despised tax-collector.
- whose choice for Zacchaeus caused people to mutter ‘he has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’
- who came to seek and to save what was lost.
- for whom Zacchaeus climbed a tree to satisfy his need to see Jesus.
- who gave Zacchaeus more than he hoped for or dared to ask.
- who demonstrated that his opinions were not shaped by the “in group” or peer pressure.
- who invited himself to Zaccheus’ house.

Engage groups of folks in an exercise of creating “Jesus Clauses” for various Gospel stories. Initially assign the same story to all families/participants. Go “round robin” proclaiming aloud the “Jesus Clause” that each family/participant wrote. The result will probably confirm three things: (1) that there is no one “right” response and that there are many possible “fits;” (2) that the Spirit is alive and well in the group; and (3) that a person’s responses relate to something happening in his/her personal life. Gospel-prayer intersects with personal life and often issues that have been hidden or pushed down rise to the surface of consciousness.

Once the participants are comfortable with the method of creating “Jesus Clause Hail Mary Beads” either assign each person/group a Gospel story or assign a portion of the Gospel (a Gospel chapter) for the individual to make a self-selection. Every ten beads forms a decade of a personal rosary... a rosary that places personal concerns within the context of the Gospel mystery so that, in turn, the Gospel tutors the heart.

A helpful visual is to make available paper circles with a minimum diameter of eight inches. Instruct participants to write on one side only (1) a “Jesus Clause” and (2) the scripture citation as well as (3) a title for the Gospel story. Tape the circles on the perimeter of the wall in groups of ten to form a decade of the rosary. Continue the pattern until 50 beads are posted. It may require several sessions to build an entire rosary. Pray a group rosary of Christian Character.

Following is a rosary starter. Ten groups were each assigned one story from the Gospels. Each group submitted one “Jesus Clause” even though many variations were possible. In some cases the group had multiple choices and then used consensus to decide the one clause that they would submit to represent the group.

A “Jesus Clause” Decade of the Rosary
A Rosary of Christian Character

Example: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, **Jesus . . . *who wants us to give second chances as he did for Peter*** (Jn. 21: 15-17).

Gospel Story	Suggested Clausal Statement
Ten Lepers (Lk. 17: 11-19)	Who taught us the value of <i>saying “thank you.”</i>
Paralyzed Man Cured (Lk. 5: 17-26)	Who asks us, like the Scribes and Pharisees, why we hold onto <i>hurtful thoughts.</i>
Son of Widow of Naim (Lk. 7: 11-17)	Who desires us <i>to help others without being asked</i> , as he did for the Widow of Naim.
Woman at the Well (Jn. 4: 1-30)	Who is happy when we <i>tell the truth</i> like the Woman at the Well did.
Avoiding Judgment (Mt. 7:1)	Who commanded us <i>not to judge</i> other people.
The Golden Rule (Mt. 7:12)	Who taught us to <i>treat other people the way we want to be treated.</i>
Forgiveness (Mt. 6: 14-15)	Who told us to <i>forgive</i> each other
True Riches (Mt. 6: 26-34)	Who reminded us to <i>depend on God’s providence</i> to take care of us rather than worry about tomorrow.
Love of Enemies (Mt. 5: 43-48)	Who gave us an example to <i>love our enemies</i> and to <i>pray for people who have hurt us.</i>
Purity of Intention (Mt. 6: 1-4)	Who advised us to <i>keep our good deeds secret</i> instead of bragging or showing off.