

In 1954, Ray Kroc drove out to California to see the original McDonalds fast food restaurant. He was so impressed with the operation that he begged the McDonalds brothers to let him be part of the business. As a salesman, Ray thought he could make money for himself and the brothers by selling franchises. Proud of their success, the brothers were hesitant. Their own efforts to expand had failed because they could not maintain the quality. Ray Kroc was persistent. So, the brothers drew up a contract spelling out the fine details for expansion so quality could always be maintained.

Little by little, Ray sees his path to fame and fortune involves wresting control of McDonalds away from the brothers. He begins to cut corners on quality. He wants to get rich and he realizes that if he tells people he is the originator of the concept and people follow his guidelines then he will become richer and the business will expand faster. Ray nearly goes broke and is called into the bank when his franchise business is about to go under.

A financial consultant helps Ray to re-envision the business by providing real estate to new McDonalds business partners. Ray is thrilled with the idea because it will give him leverage to oust the McDonalds brothers and help him to have an inexhaustible source of income.

When the brothers try to hold him accountable to the original contract, they find they are no longer able to do business with him. They are so upset with the underhanded dealings of Ray Kroc, that one of the brothers goes into diabetic shock. They sell the business in order to keep peace of mind. The terms of the deal called for a lump sum of money plus a 1% annual royalty for future sales. Lying through his teeth, Ray says that they must do this by a handshake rather than a written contract. Ray never honors his word. He makes the McDonald brothers take their own name off of the original restaurant and forces them out of business. To add insult to injury, he never pays a penny in royalties which would have amounted to about \$100 million a year.

Jesus tells us, "Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy" (Luke 12:33b). Ray Kroc was a rich businessman whose treasure was in his own personal wealth and prestige. When he died, he could not take his money with him. He could not buy or lie his way into heaven. Ultimately, he had to answer for each of his sins.

Jesus teaches us that a sure way to heaven is to "Sell your belongings and give alms... For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (12:33a, 34). A fine example of this way of life is Saint Cajetan, the patron saint of the unemployed. One Christmas Eve, Cajetan had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Christ child, and placing him in his arms. His heart, his treasure was seeing Christ in the lives of the sick and the poor.

Cajetan was ordained a priest at the age of 36 and established a religious order of men who wanted to live as simply as the original apostles. He gave up a life of nobility for a vow of poverty. In time, he founded a hospital for "incurables" in Venice. Although many died from the bubonic plague, he worked tirelessly to comfort the sick and treat everyone with compassion.

Later on, the pope sent him to Naples where he helped to establish a nonprofit bank whose purpose was to protect the poor from exorbitant interest rates. He died on the Feast of the Transfiguration in 1547 and is buried at the Basilica in Naples.

In death, his heart and treasure still reach out to the sick and poor. 112 years after his death, the plague struck Naples again and 600-700 people were dying each day. The city prayed for God's help through Blessed Cajetan on his feast day, the 7th of August, and there were no deaths recorded that day. The plague ended soon afterwards.

Study the generations long past and understand; has anyone hoped in the LORD and been disappointed?... Compassionate and merciful is the LORD; he forgives sins, he saves in time of trouble and he is a protector to all who seek him in truth" (Sir 2: 10a, 11).

Sources:

1. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Founder
2. catholicnewsagency.com/news/unemployed-due-to-coronavirus-theres-a-saint-for-that-43154
3. <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-cajetan/>