

Jesus said to the crowd, "Avoid greed in all its forms. A man may be wealthy, but his possessions do not guarantee him life" (Luke 12:15). Greed is contrary to life. It causes sadness, loneliness, and separates us from one another and from God who is the source of true abundant life. Jesus teaches us in the Parable of the Sower that the desire for things (avarice or greed) "chokes" the word of God and prohibits us from growing spiritually and bearing fruit—the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal 5:22-23). Jesus wants us to be filled with the fruits of the spirit—to have an abundant life—and that is why he exhorts us so passionately to avoid all forms of greed. How do we do that? Let me mention two ways.

One form of greed is envy. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us what envy is and how to combat it:

Envy represents **a form of sadness** and therefore **a refusal of charity**; the baptized person should struggle against it by exercising good will. Envy often comes from pride; the baptized person should train himself to live in humility: "Would you like to see God glorified by you? Then rejoice in your brother's progress and you will immediately give glory to God. Because his servant could conquer envy by rejoicing in the merits of others, God will be praised" (St. John Chrysostom). (#2540).

Charity and humility dictate that we should rejoice with others inasmuch as they are blessed with good things; envy and covetousness say the opposite. As the Catechism says, we should struggle against envy by exercising good will and rejoicing in the merits of others and thereby train ourselves to live in humility.

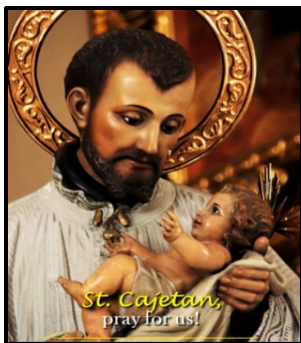
The second way to avoid greed is to cultivate our desire for God. The Catechism says,

The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods (Lk6:24). "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" (St. Augustine). Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow (Mt 6:25-34). Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God. (CCC #2547)

We find in the teaching of Jesus a superior way of life. The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness, grace, beauty and peace which surpasses all the treasures of the world: blessed are the poor in spirit! We need to learn how to be poor in spirit, to lay up our treasures in heaven, to find our consolation in abandonment to the providence of our loving Father. Greed offers us a pitiful counterfeit to the true meaning of life. It strips man of his God-given magnanimity as a creature fashioned by the hand of God to be formed in the image of the Son. Greed deprives the soul of the fruit of the spirit; greed is contrary to life. Rather than cultivating a thirst for things, Jesus teaches us to cultivate a thirst for God. If we want entrance to the Kingdom of heaven, we must avoid greed in all its forms.

Your Servant in Christ,
Fr. Terry Staples





St. Cajetan (also called St. Gaetano)

Feast Day: August 7

Born: Oct 1, 1480

Died: Aug 7, 1547

Beatified: Oct 8, 1629 by Pope Urban VIII

Canonized: April 12, 1671 by Pope Clement X

Patron: unemployed, bankers, gamers, and good fortune

Born into nobility on October 1, 1480 in Vincenza, Italy, St. Cajetan (also known as Gaetano) was the son of the wealthy Lord Caspar and Mary Porta. His father died when he was 2 years old. His mother raised Cajetan to be pious, devout and well educated.

Cajetan studied in Padua, Italy and became a lawyer by age 24. Being an exceptional student, he was highly sought after for employment. He turned down government jobs to pursue the priesthood. However, he was ordered to work as a jurist in the papal court of Pope Julius II. Upon the death of the pope, Cajetan gave up law and joined the *Confraternity of St. Jerome* which normally attracted the poor and lower-class. His family was scandalized. He was 36 when he was ordained.

This was at a time when corruption of the Church was rampant. Martin Luther's response to Church corruption was to separate from the Church and form his own doctrine leading many into heresy. St. Cajetan combated the corruption through prayer and depravity and by establishing the Congregation of Clerks Regular (also called the Theatines). He started his order with only two other priests, one of whom went on to become Pope Paul IV. The Theatines used all their worldly possessions to do good works while they themselves lived in poverty. They worked to restore integrity of the Sacraments and rites and the apostolic way of life among priests.

The first house of the Theatines was forcibly shut down in Rome when mutinous soldiers of Charles V of Rome sought to pillage and loot under the guise of supporting Luther. One of the soldiers knew Cajetan to be wealthy and demanded money. Cajetan was severely tortured and imprisoned when he could not produce any wealth. The Theatines escaped and fled from Rome.

Cajetan moved his order to Naples. He worked tirelessly to win souls back from Luther's heresies. They sought out the sick and poor, establishing hospitals. They even formed a bank for poor people to lend them money, taking pawned items as collateral. This spared the poor from the rampant practice of usury where loans were given at outrageous interest. Cajetan's little bank was called the "mountain of piety" which eventually became the Bank of Naples.

Cajetan's holiness was evident. He prayed and fasted continuously, he was seen in ecstasy during prayer, he had the gift of prophecy, and miraculous healings. A fellow priest had a badly infected foot and was about to undergo amputation. Cajetan kissed his foot and blessed it with Holy water. The next morning, the foot was completely healed with no need for surgery. Cajetan was so dedicated to saving souls through mortification that on Christmas Day he was visited by the Blessed Mother, carrying the child Jesus. She laid Jesus in Cajetan's arms. Cajetan became ill and he offered his life for the salvation of souls. He died on the Feast of the Transfiguration.

"There is no road leading to Heaven but that of innocence or repentance. He who has departed from the first, must take the second; else he is eternally lost." ~St. Cajetan"

Do not receive Christ in the Blessed Sacrament so that you may use Him as you judge best, but give yourself to Him and let Him receive you in this Sacrament, so that He Himself, God your Savior, may do to you and through you, whatever He wills." ~St. Cajetan