



April 30, 2023

### Fourth Sunday of Easter

*A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy;  
I came so that they may have eternal life. John 10:10*



Dear Friends,

Someone I know used to raise horses and race them. Occasionally, they would put a goat in or near the stall of a skittish horse to calm them down. Also, on occasion they would find the remains of a campfire and the goat was missing. The goat was taken to provide a meal for the persons who stole it.

It is this kind of image that Jesus uses to describe false leadership which is opposed to true leadership that cares about the welfare of all. True leaders, as Pope Francis points out, *"smell like the sheep."* He first used this image to speak of the leadership of priests and bishops. But the image of the "Good Shepherd" can be applied to anyone who exercises authority in families, business, or government.

In January of last year Pope Francis spoke to a group of entrepreneurs from France. He spoke on the theme of the common good and to on how they might implement Gospel values to their business. The pope said he, *"finds it very beautiful and courageous, that in today's world often marked by individualism, indifference, and marginalization of the most vulnerable people, some entrepreneurs and business leaders have at heart the service of all, not just the interests of individuals or restricted circles."*

Francis always reminds us that any authority is exercised in service to the common good. He offered the French entrepreneurs the model of the Good Shepherd. Jesus *"knows how to go in front of the flock to show the way, he knows how to stay among them to see what is happening there, and he knows how to stay behind, to make sure no one loses contact."* He said, *"I believe that this advice applies to you."* The pope encouraged them to be close to those with whom they work at all levels, to take an interest in their lives, to be aware not only of their difficulties, but also their joys, plans and hopes.

Pope Francis makes a distinction between "entrepreneurs" and "speculators." In a speech he gave to steel workers in Genoa in 2017, he describes the virtues of entrepreneurship. *"Creativity, love for one's own business, passion and pride for one's own work done with the hands and the intelligence of his workers... There is no good economy without a good entrepreneur..."* The pope tells us that the good entrepreneur cares for his/her city, for its economy, the quality of the people, his workers, and for the environment in which we all live.

The pope warns against entrepreneurs transforming into 'speculators.' *"The speculator is a figure similar to what Jesus in the Gospel calls a 'mercenary,' in opposition to the Good Shepherd, they use companies and workers only as a means to make a profit... they don't love them. They don't consider laying off, shutting down, and relocating the company a problem, because the speculators use and exploit—eat people and means for their own profit. When good entrepreneurs inhabit the economy, then businesses are friendly to people. When the economy is in the hands of speculators, everything is ruined. It becomes a faceless, abstract, economy."* We just saw the fruit of speculation in the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank. The pope is calling us to a better social economics.

Obsessive self-service is another word for thievery. But when we use our talents, leadership, and abilities to serve others we follow the example of the Good Shepherd who loves his sheep.

Christ is risen!

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)*