# Sheep Thief

(The story of two brothers)

Once upon a time in a land far away, lived two young men. The two brothers were likable, but *undisciplined*, with a *wild streak* in them. Their *mischievous behavior* turned serious when they began stealing sheep from the local farmers, a very serious crime in this *pastoral* place, so long ago and far away.

In time, the thieves were caught. The local farmers decided their fate: The two brothers would be branded on the forehead with the letters **ST** for "Sheep Thief." This sign they would carry with them forever.

One brother was so *embarrassed* by this branding that he ran away; he was never heard from again. The other brother, filled with *remorse* and *reconciled* to his fate, chose to stay and try to *make amends* to the villagers he had wronged. At first the villagers were *skeptical* and would have nothing to do with him. But this brother was determined to make *reparation* for his offenses.

Whenever there was a sickness, the sheep thief came to care for the ill with soup and a soft touch. Whenever there was work needing to be done, the sheep thief came to help with a lending hand. It made no difference if the person was rich or poor, the sheep thief was there to help.

Never accepting pay for his good deeds, he lived his life for others.

Many years later, a traveler came through the village. Sitting at a sidewalk cafe eating lunch, the traveler saw an old man with a strange brand on his forehead seated nearby. The stranger noticed that all the villagers who passed the old man stopped to share a kind word, to pay their respects; children stopped their play to give and receive a warm hug.

Curious, the stranger asked the cafe owner, "What does that strange brand on the old man's head stand for?"

"I don't know. It happened so long ago..." the cafe owner replied.

Then, pausing briefly for a moment of reflection, he continued: "...but I think it stands for ”SAINT”.