

# *Project Notes*

For the making of a Bishop's Crozier  
for Anne Van Gend

by the  
Little Brothers of Francis  
Franciscan Hermitage  
PO Box 162 Tabulam NSW  
Australia 2469 16/01/2025



CHRIST IN THE MARGINS

## 1. The Candidate

Once I accepted the wonderful task of creating a Bishop's Staff for Anne, my first job was to find a suitable piece of timber. This is easier said than done! I knew the criteria. It had to be simple, beautiful and Franciscan by nature. I also realised it needed to be solid and lasting something that will not fall apart or splinter when knocking on cathedral doors!

I scoured over the hermitage property on more than one occasion. Up and down rocky hills and exploring along the valleys. I noticed lots of proud and stout limbs from many wonderful species – Stringybark, Tallowwood, Ironbark and Blueberry Ash. The stately Brush Box which grows along the creek bank gave me great promise. So much choice, but my eye past over them not sure about what to think.



Some days later, much to my surprise and not a stone's throw from my hermitage, a tall, stout Bloodwood grew. Of course, I had always noticed and enjoyed this tree, but it never spoke to me as it spoke to me now! Within its leafy canopy there grew a limb and at first glance it was such an odd-looking branch. Crooked and bent compared to all its sister limbs it looked so out of place. *"I will give you what you want,"* said the Bloodwood tree. *"This limb of mine is so crooked and odd looking; it doesn't blend well with my other lovely branches."* My

heart leaped. This is it. This was my candidate holding the potential I was looking for. The decision was made and up the ladder I went with my trusty saw. Down the branch came with a great crack and thud just missing Brother Wayne at the bottom of the ladder but wiping out a section of my little fence around my hermitage. What an odd-looking candidate it was. I knew with the hand of grace something beautiful can be formed from you.



PHOTO'S: lopped branch at the top of ladder & Brother Geoffrey holding the prize candidate.

## 2. The Process

The work had to remain still under my hand, so I locked it up in my big wood-vice. With care and a prayer, I set too with my saw and blade. First, I took off all the bark exposing the new and immature timber (sapwood). Next, I had to remove all this immature growth leaving the hart-wood revealing its true colours. This was a process of considerable length, and it took a number of days to complete. What a mess I made!!! I stood ankle deep in wood-shavings and bark.



Still more timber had to be removed. On reflection, I think the process was quiet extreme but necessary to bring out what lay hidden underneath. In the end I removed nearly 80% of the outside to expose the real beauty and colour of the inside.

I could see the form and shape I wanted. It was already there in the natural shape of the timber. It was the bent and crooked bit that I used to my advantage. What seamed wrong and deformed on the tree was now necessary to use to shape the "Shepherds Crook." This, I believe, to be the heart of the piece.

Next came rasping off followed by a heavy and light sanding. Finally, it was given several applications of a fine bench oil to bring out the natural colour and beauty of the timber. The work was then left to harden over a few weeks.



### **3. The Blessing**



Two days before, the Staff was placed in the brother's prayer room and on the third day we had a special service for the blessing.

*Some highlights were the following:*

We bless this Staff in the name of Jesus the Good shepherd who knows his sheep by name, in the love of the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, three persons in one God of love. Amen.



Jesus, you are our Shepherd, who loves each of us with a profound personal love that is beyond our comprehension. You have called our sister Anne to be a Bishop in your church and share in your ministry as a Shepherd. Like you, it is a costly responsibility but in times of prayer and solitude may she meet you and find grace and strength. Find joy, comfort and support in friends and the people she is involved with. Amen.

READINGS: 1 Peter 5:1-11   Psalm: 15  
                  John 21:7-22   Hymn: 385 AHB

If you are reading this the Crozier has arrived safely and it comes with our prayers and loving support for you and Michael. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you on the special day 29<sup>th</sup> March. May it be a day of great joy and confirmation, and a day to experience God's loving embrace for you Anne, as you step into this new ministry and role for his church.