***Lift Up Your Hearts***

**Readers’ Comments**

Fr Carl Schafer OFM, Franciscan Priest and Old Boy of St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill, spent two years at Joeys in the Leaving Certificate classes of 1952 and 1953. Known as Len Schafer at Joeys, Carl is his religious name. The 1954 *Cerise and Blue* magazine published the 1953 L.C. results that show his photo in the order of merit and his six A’s, including Honours in one subject. He has had a varied and interesting life, has written an autobiography, and asked that I forward it to any who may be interested. One of Len’s classmates, Owen (“Fred”) Curteis, was quick to reply: “An excellent piece of work by Len (“Prof”). He was always most diligent and studious. What a life! So many stories and insights. Congratulations, Fr Carl!”. Fr Bernard (“Bernie”) Hennessy also replied: “What an amazing life and so gifted in many ways. Carl’s life experiences and dedication to his Order say so much.” Tom Basha, SJC Old Boy

Franciscan Friar Carl and I were students together when we studied Philosophy and Theology in Melbourne, Victoria, in the Nineteen Fifties and Sixties, leading up to the Second Vatican Council. His description of our studies and student community life provides an open window on pre-Vatican clerical and religious life. Regis Smith OFM

With great pleasure, I recommend this autobiography for publication. Not often can a lay person learn about the calling that a man receives from God, and that he dedicates his life to God and follows Him to the ends of the earth. Fr Carl’s autobiography is written with clarity, humour, and an awareness of his surroundings in many places and cultures. He takes the reader on his journey from childhood, and through his obedience to God’s call in a way that retains the reader’s interest. He never loses sight of his family and how the generations have led to his presence today. He is a man of many talents, interests, and gifts, and has enriched many lives through his calling. I have known Fr Carl the Franciscan for more than thirty years. We have constantly corresponded, so I regard him as a brother and a friend.

Rosemary Marriott, sister-in-law, Katikati, New Zealand

Whether you are a person of faith, an avowed atheist, an agnostic, or someone inclined to cynicism, this is the kind of book you should read to deal with those days when you wonder not only why you are, but who you are. An extraordinary life of faith, hope, overflowing life, joy, and humour, *Lift Up Your Hearts* will take you on an astonishing journey. It begins with a remarkable, richly evocative childhood in Australia during the last years of World War II and leads us through the challenges of living with hope through all the dramatic religious, political, economic, and human upheavals and triumphs of the following eight decades. This book offers insights into how a strong, constant, Franciscan faith has carried an ebullient, unwavering spirit safely through all the challenges, joys, sorrows, and dangers imaginable in a human life. There are adventures and misadventures in many countries in the world, an appreciation of living and loving life and people in Eastern and Western countries and cultures, encounters with confounded spies and minders in Communist countries and experiences in South American towns where there is not only gang-related gunfire in the streets day or night, but a hornet’s nest in the friary bedroom.

Marianne Wagner, Catholic convert

Because of his work with the Secular Franciscan Order, Fr Carl Schafer OFM has been directly involved in the worldwide unification of the Secular Franciscan Order into the most significant Lay Order in the Catholic Church. In his ministry as a Spiritual Assistant, he has worked with the Franciscans, the Capuchins, Conventuals, and Third Order Regular friars, who before 1978 ministered to their Order’s separate Tertiaries. The unity of the Secular Franciscan Order speaks firmly of the need for active communication and collaboration within the whole Franciscan Family. Fr Carl’s autobiography gives only the bare bones of his incredible effort.

 John Cooper OFMCap, National Spiritual Assistant OFS-Australia

After reading your Autobiography, I never cease to think about how you, who live in the same world as I do, could cultivate such a powerful Christian faith. Your long service to us, Franciscans without monastic attributes, is important. Everything is simple and clear: to live one's life in the world, to live with one's family, to work and to follow the example of St Francis, and to live the Gospel every day. After your visit to Ukraine in 1996, where religion had been banned for years, the local Franciscan fraternities began to function and formed the OFS National Fraternity of Ukraine. Secular Franciscans, living their secular life, helped bring the Christian faith to many people, especially in Eastern Ukraine, where atheism was strong. Fraternities of Secular Franciscans in Ukraine continue their activities at present. The life and activities described in the Autobiography are important to us because they show all that a person who strongly believes in God can do. The quintessence of your Autobiography is: MY LIFE IN A DAY. If everyone could connect with God, we would never have wars and our lives would be beautiful. Larisa Dubrowska OFS, Lviv, Ukraine

Fr Carl Schafer OFM, throughout his adult life, has been a devoted friar priest of the Order of Friars Minor. In his role as General Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order for twelve years, he has left his mark in many countries throughout the world. Fr Carl must have kept meticulous diaries and have an excellent memory! His autobiography is quite an extraordinary undertaking, most comprehensive and interesting. Owing to his varied avenues of work, his long life would be of interest to a wide section of society.

Helen Britton, Secular Franciscan International Councillor (2002 – 2013)

Congratulations on what must have been an enormous amount of work in writing your Autobiography. To my knowledge, you are the only Local, Regional, National, and General Spiritual Assistant to have done this. We share so many things. I am Irish/Welsh, and my husband's family is German, so my children share your background. At around the time I was born, you left for Dudley at six years of age. My husband’s name is Dudley. You were ordained in the year that I was married. I love the final words at a funeral, which you have quoted. I have every confidence that you will be met by a flock of angels - not so sure about myself! Helen Jarick OFS, Minister, The Hills Fraternity, NSW

﻿ Fr Carl was a Spiritual Director of the Third Order of St Francis (TOSF) from 1975 to 1978. Since then, he has been a Spiritual Assistant in the Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) and has served at all levels - Local, Regional, National, and International – and has been instrumental in the growth in faith of many Secular Franciscans, especially those in their initial formation. Owing to Fr Carl’s extensive involvement in the OFS, he has made many friends and acquaintances who, I am sure, would enjoy and benefit from reading about his life. Fr Carl has dedicated his life to serving not only Secular Franciscans but also people from all occupations. I believe that his knowledge, wisdom, and experience, shown in his Autobiography, will continue to assist many to grow in their faith.

 Margaret Britten OFS, Formator

It is my pleasure to submit a comment regarding the description of your service in the RANR [Royal Australian Navy Reserve] and subsequently the RAN. Your immediate acceptance when you joined the RANR by our Commanding Officer Reserves Commander Ray Williams DSC in your role as Chaplain says it all. You were well regarded from the bridge to the lower deck and now, 25 years into your retirement from active service, you still attend and enjoy the companionship of your shipmates at the “Olds and Bolds”, which your friend, our long-departed shipmate LCDR [Lieutenant Commander] Keith Donoghue, commenced many years ago. Yours aye, Brian Barnett OAM RTD LCDR RAN (Ret’d)

Carl’s autobiography offers an interesting insight into life within the Franciscan Order including its culture, diversity, geographic spread, and history. Carl’s mother was not happy in ‘surrendering her son’ to the Order. In my view, Carl was always destined for the priesthood, in this case the Franciscans, where he was to find his peace and meaningful work. Carl was a particularly good student enabling him to optimise the higher education opportunities to be found in the Order. This education included the Classics, Science, Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, Psychology, language(s) and subjects of a more esoteric nature Including Metaphysics, Scientific Cosmology and, of course, religion in all its forms including the skills that support the crafting and delivering of a fine and useful sermon.

In my view, an ‘ordinary person’ is likely to regard the enormous personal sacrifices required by the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, which the Order aspires ‘as liberating,’ is likely to be a challenging proposition to the ordinary mind. The deep contemplation and demanding work required by Franciscan practice is overlaid by a sense of fun, good humour, warm human relationships and doing good in the world!

I learnt of Carl via the Royal Australian Navy although he was a few years before my time. Chaplains are an important part of military life, particularly in intense operational environments when the possibility of ‘meeting one’s maker’ springs to mind.

Carl always availed himself of an opportunity to reconnect with his family, relations, and friends. These connections represented an important ‘personal’ anchor especially (using Carl’s words) the hatch (Baptism), match (Marriage) and dispatch (Burial) of his fellow humankind.

As Carl progressed into his senior years, like most of us he has faced a number of significant medical challenges. I am sure his deep faith, mental strength, and the support of his brotherhood, coupled to some first-class medical care, have allowed him to continue his worldly and spiritual observations and inputs into this fast-changing, increasingly crazy, and complex world that we now inhabit. Carl’s life has been and continues to be a life well lived! It has been my pleasure and privilege to provide this potted view of Carl’s wonderful life!

 Yours aye, Commander Peter Saxton RANR (Ret’d)

Fr Carl Schafer OFM was the Holy Land Commissary in Australia for twelve years. His major task was to organize the Good Friday Collection in all the parishes of Australia, to maintain the Christian Shrines of the Holy Land and to support the local Christian communities. True to his name - Schafer, meaning Shepherd - Fr Carl made pastoral visits to the Secular Franciscans in five countries included in the Custody of the Holy Land. He records cherished memories in his Autobiography.

 Brother Fabian Adkins OFM, Holy Land Custody (1975-2016)

Congratulations on writing your autobiography. I took it to bed, and read it cover to cover last night. It brought back many memories and highlighted the wonderful global contribution you have made to SFO/OFS and also to the many works of our Province. Well done. It was a pleasure to read. Stay as well as you can. Stephen Bliss OFM, Parish Priest

Congratulations on your autobiography! What a huge effort you made to record the remarkable events of your life. Your travels as General Spiritual Assistant OFS provide a valuable story of the Order, particularly in Europe. I hope you will place a copy of your story in the OFM Provincial Archives. I am amazed how you travelled from county to country, adjusting to the language and having your material ready for a formal meeting. Well done, for a significant work for the Church and our Province. With fondest regards. Allan Hartcher OFM, in Retirement.