

## **A New (from Old) Hope**

I do not know when this really began, the first thought of, “Hey, we should find some way to get this out to the world.”

I began to get serious attempting to transcribe the first disc about seven or so years ago. After more than a year or more with less than one disc transcribed, I sought help, praying over and over again for years for Him to send me someone!

Last spring He did. A classic example of ‘All in good (or His) timing.’ Fishtown Productions stepped in and completed the ‘missing’ but HUGE link or cog, in our small gear, that we hope will help turn the greater gear of the world into a better place, as Mary finished the three un-transcribed discs.

Our sole mission became and always will be... we wanted the world to hear his voice, my father’s, known most of life as Big Al. We do that with the literal transcription of his words, an eighteen hour interview done by a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force as part of her dissertation for her Ph.D. on why some POWs survived while others did not, into a book.

We called it Faithful. With the byline... Because of Love – A True Story of Survival of the Defenders of Bataan. It officially goes on sale April 9, 2022, the eightieth anniversary of the surrender of Bataan to the Japanese, though pre-orders are available now by searching on Amazon (exact words) Faithful Clement Charles.

So I’m letting me my parish know first. It is they who have published my spiritual missives for almost three decades, supporting my writing.

I begin this announcement with Big Al’s own words, from a video made about him shortly before his death, October 29, 1999, a Friday.

Big Al says: We lived in Oldenburg, Indiana, where the Franciscans had their finishing monastery, where they did their last four years. Both my brothers, the oldest one joined the order first, and while I was in World War II, the second brother went. My mother being a very religious Irish person, urged her boys to become priests.

But they didn’t get me! Patti did! And we've been blessed ever since because this year we're celebrating #52 and it's all been blessing! Both of us have had a love affair with our country and with our church and with each other for all those years. It’s paid off in so many ways!

In order to give, you need to make a commitment for one thing, and if you don't commit to give, then it becomes a wisp in your mind and as a result is it disappears. But once you make the commitment to give, you want to follow through.

This is true of my generation in particular, those involved in WWII. They gave a lot and they've been giving ever since. I love these people for doing it. Many of my friends are gone now but those who are still here, they still give the time and effort to their community, to their church and to their country.

We started from nothing, so we had much to gain by giving, which we did! As a result we gained a lot! We were poor people and my father only made twenty dollars a week but he tithed two dollars, ten percent! When you give, it hurts. But hurting can become strictly joy!

The greatest gift for me is life, having had as many close calls during the war and afterward, through the illnesses and heart attacks and so on...

When my wife and I put it all together, you get love right? And that is a great gift. It takes responding to it, by saying yes. If you truly love someone, you say yes as often as you can because you love the Lord. When you do these things, you please Jesus! And of all people, you want to please, it's Jesus, don't you?

You get back so many blessings. We are very blessed! We only have two children but they're great special examples, both of them, as to how you love Him. They are both so deeply spiritual.

As one young man who was once our president said, "It's not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country."

Major Aloysius Suttmann (Big Al) May 28, 1920 – October 29, 1999



## Faithful

Because of Love - A True Story of the Survival of the Defenders of Bataan

An interview with Major Aloysius Thomas Suttmann

By Lieutenant Colonel Carol Erich Ph.D.

Transcribed by Mary Leon, S.W. Edited by Patricia Aileen Suttmann B.A., M.C.P., Juris Doctorate