

# AS WE SEE IT

By DAN PATRICK

From "somewhere in France" a doughboy writes us on "unconditional surrender."

"The views of this fighting man, who is attached to the Infantry, comes as a welcome relief from the unworkable theories propounded by those armchair generals of both sexes who go forth to battle (strictly verbal) armed only with an attic and an exaggerated idea of their own importance."

But let our doughboy tell his story:

"My wife sends me the weekly 'Catholic Courier' which I enjoy very much. The June 15th issue, I think, was particularly interesting to servicemen, containing the Holy Father's speech to the war correspondents and your very good editorial on the 'unconditional surrender' issue of the Allied nations."

"I have never before written a letter to a paper, but I feel forced to raise my humble voice, as an American doughboy, in support of your views. You are not alone in your views either—I also get the weekly 'Newsweek' magazine and saw the same viewpoint expressed by an eminent British retired general—I believe his name is General Fuller."

"He claimed that the unconditional surrender viewpoint will not alter the final result of the war but will only lead to its prolongation, and ultimate destruction to a long suffering Europe. After seeing some of this destruction first hand, dealt by both sides in this conflict, I can only agree with his viewpoint."

"Let's have a little more agitation on this issue, if possible, and maybe the Allies will change their proposal. After all, as you point out, Armistice plans were proposed to Italy and Finland, regardless of the unconditional surrender angle. May Mary, Queen of Peace, intercede for the whole world in the near future."

Sincerely,

(NAME WITHHELD)

The viewpoint, with which our soldier correspondent agrees is simply this—that the "unconditional surrender" terms of the United States and Britain are not practical—that there is no such thing as "unconditional surrender"—that Italy "surrendered unconditionally" after very definite armistice terms had been presented.

That there is a growing feeling in Allied circles that "unconditional surrender" terms tend to bolster rather than break the enemy's sagging morale is evidenced by a significant dispatch sent from London by Raymond Daniell of the New York Times.

This dispatch, passed through British censorship, reads in part:

Recent happenings within the Reich have provoked a rather critical examination of Allied policy toward Germany in some quarters. The question is being asked whether "unconditional surrender" is not a term that needs definition, or at least delimitation. There is no question of softening or relaxing conditions under which the German people can obtain peace, but there is the feeling, not noticeably shared by the Government, that the time has come to take some positive action to destroy Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels' propaganda by informing the masses of the German people that an Allied peace would not be worse than Heinrich Himmler's rule.

It has not escaped notice that the revolt of the generals against Hitler apparently was unsupported by any substantial body of civilians. This has raised the question in some influential quarters here as to whether Allied policy and propaganda are not to some degree responsible, and comparison with the line the Soviets have been taking is inevitable, as this week's Economist points out:

"If it is weakness to try to divide the enemy and to use promises as weapons, then the Russian policy toward Germany is weak."

There are few who would accuse Premier Josef Stalin of sentimentality or weakness. But the Russians have established a Free German Committee which they have used consistently in an attempt to widen the rift between the Nazi party and Army officers.

The Allies, on the other hand, have clung to a strict policy of silence regarding armistice terms and in the opinion of some have created a political vacuum which has enabled Dr. Goebbels to strengthen the will of the people to resist, on the theory that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. These people argue that it is amateurish politics to hold to the thesis of unconditional surrender, and point out that the European Advisory Council has been busy for months discussing the conditions under which German capitulation can be taken.

Meanwhile, Goebbels tells his people they are engaged in a war for their survival as a people. If they lose, they are told, Germany will be carved up among the victors and German men will be put into slavery for generations and the economic life of their country destroyed. A horrendous picture is being created by enemy propagandists of the fate that awaits them if they lose. And while the Allies maintain official silence the thesis gains unofficial support from articles like the recent one by Sir Robert Vansittart in which he proposed that German workers should spend their "period of captivity in foreign labor camps" as one way of limiting the German birthrate.

Our troubles have one bitter root, terrible in its fertility—the ignoring of God's Majesty, the complete neglect of His heavenly commandments.—Page Plus XII.

A good remedy for offsetting the attachment to earthly things which you remark in yourself is not to think of them, but, on the contrary, to raise your mind to God.

# STRANGE BUT TRUE

Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY



The Church of St. Anne, St. Denis, France, was built by the Merovingians in the 6th century. It is the oldest in England, and has been used for 1000 years.

## Catholic Information

### Why Oppose the Bible?

That question is about as fair as asking the Supreme Court what it has against the Constitution. Catholics have nothing against the Bible. But they do adopt a very cautious approach towards it. They feel that the written word is dead. It comes to life only when processed by the human mind. And the human mind is as variable as the number of heads. Common sense tells us that for a decisive interpretation we must look up to authority and not down to a book. And that is where misunderstanding concerning the Church's attitude derives.

The Church has nothing against the Bible. On the contrary she is all out for it. She has preserved it throughout the ages in its original and authentic form. For twenty centuries she has used it in her daily service. She employs every means to urge its reading by the people. But the Church will no more permit its children to put their own interpretation upon the words of Scripture than you would permit distant relatives to interpret your last will and testament.

When the Founding Fathers wrote into the Constitution that "all men are equal," they didn't intend to strike off a pliable platitude that could run the gamut of meaning from jungle equality of Capitalism to the flat and insipid equality of Communism. They meant one definite type of equality and had the foresight to safeguard that meaning by entrusting it to a competent interpreter — the Supreme Court. The Constitution was not thereby "sabotaged." It was only guaranteed a survival as vital and authentic as the spirit of the men who wrote it.

And when God through the inspired writer wrote: "This is my Body. This is my Blood." He surely could not have intended to have thrown an insoluble riddle to the guessing minds of men. He meant something definite, and we must credit Him with the same sanity that inspired our Founding Fathers to protect their written words. Christ also established His Supreme Court of interpretation—the Catholic Church. That He acted prudently is evident from the fact that if all the private interpretations of Scripture were laid together they would make the craziest quilt in the world. A crazy quilt is

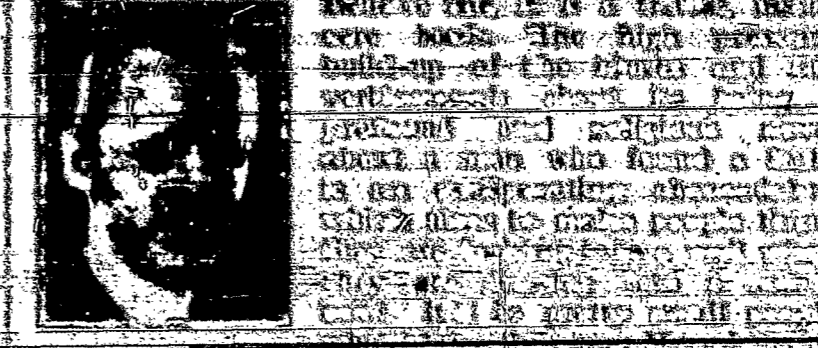
## Feast Days

- Sunday, Aug. 6.—THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.
- Monday, Aug. 7.—ST. CAIETAN.
- Tuesday, Aug. 8.—ST. OVRICUS.
- Wednesday, Aug. 9.—ST. JOHN MARIE BAPTIST VIANNEY.
- Thursday, Aug. 10.—ST. LAWRENCE.
- Friday, Aug. 11.—SS. TIBURTUS AND SUSANNA.
- Saturday, Aug. 12.—ST. CLARE.

## Library Signpost

By Rev. Benedict Ekmann

### VERY BLUNT RAZOR



I would not take the time to report on the exact Birmingham story. The razor's edge, except that many readers will be wanting to know what it is behind all the talk. Believe me, it is a rather insipid, insipid book. The high volume built-up of the story and the workmanship of the book are not to be commended. The book is about a man who found a faith in an extraordinary, almost unbelievable way. It is a story that is not to be commended.

### VALUE CLOSE TO ZERO

As a novel of religious ideas, the value of the razor's edge is close to zero. This, too, would not be a point to fuss over, except that the author, the publisher, and the promoters are all quite solemn about it, and there is every reason to expect that a good lot of the reading public will take it the same way. Here is where the book is shamefully trivial and insipid. Taking itself seriously as a story of a man's search for a faith, it meanders over half of its course through dreary stretches of epicurean living among the strangest set of dilettantes and bohemians and human animals I've ever seen to gather in one book. Occasional society observers tell us was full of this kind of ethnography and vivat. If that is so, this novel war is less of a mystery.

The book was disgusting to me not only because of the explicitness with which the acts of life and this lust of the eyes and of the flesh were presented, but also because of the stuffy air of showings-off which runs through it all. Like a tireless dog's tail, who has been everywhere and seen everything, all within the select circle, of course. Evelyn Waugh in our day has written in this kind of faded sophisticated, and Thackeray in an earlier generation wrote about the ways of Victorian worldliness but always as detached observers aware of the follies of life. But Birmingham seems to have mangled no feathers of worldliness, even now in his old age. He seems to be part and parcel of the world he writes about. This may make him, to a certain class of people, an oddly interesting as Lucius Beebe or Walter Winchell, but to the wise and the connoisseur hardly as valuable as Evelyn Waugh or William Thackeray.

### PICT IS DULL

I found no "razor's edge" in the whole story. The plot is dull, the characters are dull, and the observations are dull. Yet it is right to expect honesty of wit and wisdom from people who are so occupied, either with high calling and thinking, or with irresponsible sex expression, or with roaming the country. But even in the best of us, there is no faith out of his agonistic darkness, there is no evidence of "the razor's edge." He is no rebel strapping his mind thin against the hard realities of sensual and vain being. He is represented as a kind of "innocent abroad," but not in innocent, however, as to refrain from entering without question into sexual relations with two women, one of them a kept woman of many men, and the other an unwedded mother who was planning to marry the father of her baby after his military service was up. For all his magnetic qualities, this "innocent" is a moral dolt and an intellectual null.

There are constant hints of his reading the mystic and of doing research in European libraries. But what is the course of his researches or the conclusion of his studies, is never revealed. He finds his way, through a chance meeting, to a Benedictine monastery in Alsace, where he spends some time observing the services and questioning the monks about God and evil. You do not find out what the good monks answer were, but only that the boy was dissatisfied. No hint whatsoever is given of the vast legacy of Christian wisdom for men's problems of life.

He comes at last to India, where he learns Ford and the wisdom of the Brahmins. Here at last he finds what he is seeking for. Different from the interviews with the Benedictine monks, his lessons from the Indian holy men are minutely recorded. At last, after an experience of the Akashic, he returns home to a prospect of enlightenment, poverty and detachment.

The exposition of the Brahmin philosophy is the sincerest part of the book. But it is patently unfair not to give equal space to the Christian philosophy, as if it had nothing to offer comparable to the wisdom of India; and the Benedictine philosophy in page 228, rehashing Swinburne about the "spirit of the man," should show Christian readers who are to be guided in this allegedly "honest" way to a better path.

THE BOOK CAN BE RECOMMENDED TO NO CLASS OF READER, except to professors of modern mores who may find some interest in a particularly noxious specimen of contemporary stupidity and decadence. It is a frustrating experience to consider the homage to faith and morals being inflicted by the more than 100,000 copies of the book which the publishers say have already been sold.

### 'Quiz' Corner

I was taught that the three letters, "IHS," are the Latin abbreviation for "Jesus Saviour of Man." In a local newspaper a reader evidently made inquiry as to the interpretation of these letters. The reply was that these letters are the Greek name for Jesus. Which is correct?

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, the local newspaper would be correct. The "IHS" is a monogram in composition of two or more letters interwoven or combined to represent a name of the name "Jesus." From the beginning the name Jesus was shortened by contraction—IHESUS in the Greek becoming IHS. This use was continued in the Latin language. "IHS" was sometimes wrongly understood as "Jesus Hominum Salvator"—Jesus, Saviour of Men.

### Five and Ten Years Ago

(From the Files of the CATHOLIC COURIER)  
From Aug. 2, 1931, Edition  
The Bishops' Committee on Motion Pictures announced its decision to form National and Local Councils of the Legion of Decency to carry on the campaign for the elimination of indecent film productions.

From Aug. 3, 1929, Edition  
At a meeting in Mexico City, representatives of the Hierarchy of Mexico and the Hierarchy of the United States made plans for the future of Montezuma Seminary, Las Vegas, New Mexico, an American seminary established for Mexican students. The American prelates going to the meeting homed secular goals to conform with Mexico's laws on attire of clergymen.

The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.—Thomas Carlyle