AS WE SEE IT

By DAN PATRICK

The new Congress which is organizing this week certainly has a job on its hands.

Although outwardly the same Congress which was elected to office just two months ago, indications are that it is a far different Congress in spirit.

Gone are the post-war dreams of reconversion and demobilization. The Atlantic Charter and the Dumbarton Oaks declaration are shrouded in the mists of disillusionment.

Shadowing the new Congress is the spectre of European power politics as played by our two principal allies. Then there's the shattering German offensive on the Western Front, the impending casualty lists from that gory battleground and the sudden resurgence of a multitude of wartime restrictions on the home front.

Yes, victory looks far off in Europe not to mention Japan. The grim reaper is gathering in his harvest and strangely enough we don't hear unconditional surrender shouted from the housetops as was the case last fall when the victory tide was rolling high.

What this 79th Congress does with respect to problems on the fighting, diplomatic and home fronts may well determine the eventual length of the war.

There is no use shimmying over the fact that the American people are beginning to wonder what its all about. They have seen some of their dreams of a post-war security pact shattered at the very inception by a flash of power politics in the cases of Poland and Greece.

Much American blood is being spilled over the world's battlefields and it behooves the new Congress and the President to make every effort to see that this blood is not shed in vain.

The public generally doesn't seem to realize the job which the chaplains are doing in this war. It is true that they have a hazy idea of the duties of these men of the Lord but there's nothing very tangible in their mind's eye.

Here in the Rochester Diocese we are prone to lose sight of the work of our own chaplains on the different fields of battle. These priests face the same risks and hardships which are the lot of their fighting flock. Some chaplains already have paid with their lives for this devotion to duty.

We can honestly say that of all the servicemen with whom we've talked on their return from active duty, there hasn't been anything but praise for the Catholic chaplain. Some time ago a Jewish youngster just back from duty with the Marines in the South Pacific paid a glowing tribute to the padres with whom he came in contact.

Perhaps one of the more notable war records among our diocesan chaplains is that of Father Francis J. Pegnam, who served as assistant at St. Patrick's Church in Elmira before he entered the Navy.

Father Pegnam, a native Rochesterian, is home after almost eighteen months of continuous battle action in the Pacific.

During the course of those months, he was under air attack more than [illegible] times and probably has seen more combat action in the Pacific area than any other chaplain.

His travels took him across the equator [illegible] times, the international date line [illegible] times and carried him a total of 147,000 miles. His is a record typical of those men who have gone forth in a world at war to serve the Prince of Peace.

Feast Days

Sunday, Jan. 7—FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY.
Monday, Jan. 8—ST. APOLLINARE, APOLOGIST.
Tuesday, Jan. 9—SS. JULIAN AND BASILISSA.
Wednesday, Jan. 10—ST. WILLIAM, ARCHBISHOP.
Thursday, Jan. 11—ST. THEODOSIUS.
Friday, Jan. 12—ST. AELRED, ABBOT.
Saturday, Jan. 13—ST. VERONICA OF MILAN.

Lost Weekend

You probably have read Lost Weekend. If you haven't read it and want to read the ghastly story of an alcoholic, with all the romance and comedy stripped away, you might do so.

A mature friend who has known what it means to have an alcoholic in the family writes us her comment that all inebriates evidently follow a common pattern. "There was, however," she writes, "one false note. That was Helen, the girl who is in love with him . . . and would marry him if he'd marry her. That a girl, knowing what he was, should still want to marry him makes about as much sense as would a normal, intelligent woman's walking up to a butcher murderer and saying, 'Darling, I love you so much that what you are doesn't matter. I still want you to be the father of my children.'"

[illegible] Helen, wanting to marry a confirmed addict, is undoubtedly a triple-starred fool. But as regrettably are the thousands and thousands of women who marry men like that — convinced that they will reform them.

Philosophy, when superficially studied, excites doubt; when thoroughly explored, it dispels it. — Bacon.

[illegible]

STRANGE BUT TRUE
Little-Known Facts for Catholics

By M. J. MURRAY

The Literary Cavalcade

'BEYOND ALL FRONTS' (exclusive)

By John O'Connor

The tall slender man behind the desk leaned forward. He spread his strong, tanned hands upon a brown blotter until they seemed to merge with the surface. "The final choice today," he said earnestly, "will be between materialism — no matter its form — and the principles of Christ. That is the one most important factor beyond all fronts."

For the moment there was silence. Waltz music from the skating rink far below in the Plaza drifted faintly through windows of [illegible]. Max Jordan, the man who was speaking [illegible] had long been the European representative of the National Broadcasting Company and [illegible] was leaving his present position as associate director of the University of the Air and director of religious broadcasts for a new assignment. I had managed to see him just a few days before he assumed his new task.

There are few men today who can command the background and experience that is such a part of Max Jordan. And with his book BEYOND ALL FRONTS (Bruce, $3.00) the year 1945 is off to an auspicious start, for this veteran of the press and the airwaves and the universities of Europe has poured a wealth of his talents into this book.

"These pages," he stated, "are dedicated to the memory of the men and women who gave their lives in the most heroic of battles, on a field that stretches beyond all fronts, across all border lines — the battlefield of the European 'Underground.'

". . . also . . . to the 'Underground' in the lands that first became victims of tyranny in this age of darkness — to martyrs of freedom in Italy, Germany, and Austria." Nor does Max Jordan mean merely the political and guerilla underground. He stresses even more the spiritual and intellectual underground as does no other writer.

Nor do you have to get far into the book nor talk with the author very long when you sense a deep spirituality, a sympathy for all the down-trodden, [illegible]

[illegible] of a few ruthless and intelligent men, the result is inescapable . . . and despair is the result.

Due to his thorough grounding in scholastic philosophy and the history of religion, Max Jordan [illegible]

[illegible] with European tongues is yet another arrow in his quiver.

His first consideration is the human being, the inviolable created person. [illegible]

[illegible]

AN IDYLL OR A CALL TO ARMS?

To the Church, Bethlehem is not just a lovely idyll, a charming pastoral scene, a harmless little diversion between God and man. It is not a place where we go to family once every year to indulge in wistful thinking. The Babe in the manger did not come to show a lofty ideal with a "Take-it-or-leave-it" tag attached. He came to give Life and Strength as well as Light and Love. Bethlehem was the [illegible] beginning of a [illegible] among us, giving [illegible] fruitful in us.

That is what Bethlehem means to the Church, and she reveals it by following up the Birthday of Christ with the Feasts of St. Stephen, of St. John and of the Holy Innocents. These [illegible] are not merely [illegible]. They carry on and illustrate [illegible] the real spirit of Christmas: a spirit of faith, a spirit of courage, a spirit of apostolic action, a spirit of love even to the point of forgiveness of the enemies that are putting you to death.

There is a certain drabness about the 26th of December, going back to the shop and office, putting the clearance sale ads in the papers, warming up the leftover food. Christmas then seems to many people like a pathetic [illegible]. But the Church says [illegible] at all. The light and faith, the beauty and [illegible] of Bethlehem were not meant to take us out of [illegible] the commonplace, but to cast a new light upon the commonplace and to give us the spiritual strength to transform it.

That's what the young St. Stephen shows us: and the young St. John (even though he died very old, we somehow think of him as very young, [illegible]) and the Holy Innocents. If our Christmas celebration does not help us along the road to [illegible] another Stephen, or another John, it misses the most important thing of all. The Church's Christmas celebration does not [illegible], but invigorate.

For the Christ-Child is our King. They call Him King of Peace. And so He is. But they speak of it as if our Christ's Peace was a sort of polite noninterference, a glorified kind of Casper Milquetoast leave-things-alone-and-they'll-come-out-alright attitude. But that's a "Munich" kind of peace. Appeasement is not peace. Christ is no Appeaser. His answer to St. Stephen, to St. John, to the Holy Innocents. He is no King of Peace for the [illegible] who will not have His kind of peace. It is of them that His word cries out that He came "to bring not peace, but a sword."

The Babe in the manger is not God saying to the world, "Excuse Me; I hope I don't bother you too much, but all I want to say is, My Father thinks you're not so bad and He loves you so much, anyhow, that He's more than willing to put a liberal discount on your misdeeds. Just think of Him once in a while, and try not to be too bad."

That's the kind of Babe the sentimentalists think they see in Bethlehem's manger.

But the Babe whom true Christian saints and [illegible] of all the ages have seen in the manger is God saying to the world: "Things are very bad [illegible] I've come to fix them up. This won't be easy, for Me or for you. It will mean [illegible] and blood, and death. He that is not with Me is against Me. To those who receive Me, I give them power to be the sons of God. This is the new citizenship, the new Kingdom. [illegible] Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

This is the way [illegible]

[illegible]