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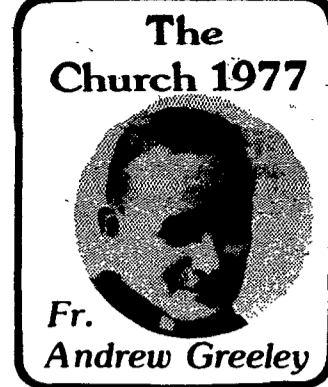
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**The Church 1977**  
Fr. Andrew Greeley

A snob is not merely someone who thinks he is better than everyone else. A snob believes that the fact of his superiority is so self-evident that he does not need to prove it. American Catholicism as an immigrant subculture striving to gain acceptance in the larger society has been plagued with snobs for more than a century.

The Catholic snobs are those who think they have made it into the larger world of secular America and that they have done so on the basis of their own inherent superiority to the rest us.

One kind of snob is the "Commonweal" snob.

There was a time when Commonweal could claim some grounds for its feelings of moral and intellectual superiority over the rest of us. Catholic intellectuals were few and far between. The institutional Church didn't know what to do with them, so it drove them out — or tried to. The Commonweal was the rallying point for those stubbornly loyal intellectuals or quasi-intellectuals who would not be driven out.

But the pose of the battered elite keeping masses of immigrant blue-collar morons at bay has worn thin. The number of Catholics who can claim to be intellectuals has increased many times in the past two decades. Most of them find that the Church



**AS I SEE IT**  
Pat Costa

Syndicated columnist Sydney Harris while admitting there should be less violence on television says that most complaints about the quality of TV are a copout

He asks, "Who lets the kids watch the tube so many hours a day and into the night? Who makes TV an integral part of their lives, so that reading and playing games and conversation have become wholly subordinate, if not extinguished, forms of family living?"

Harris also notes that the most popular programs on TV among adults are the "absurd and stupidly vicious" police serials

Children, he asserts, reflect our standards, our interests, our values

In other words, if Dad can't tear himself away from "Charlie's Angels" why is he surprised when his sons indicate interest in the same kind of programming? Harris makes a good point.

may ignore them, but certainly, it has no desire to drive them out. Commonweal circulation has plummeted; now it stands on the brink of extinction. Better to die as a journal for snobs than live as a journal for the masses.

One of the quintessential Commonweal snobs is a man named Joseph Cunneen. In a recent issue Cunneen took out after Chicago's ethnic Catholics. Why do these Catholics hate the blacks, he asks, "seeking to move in or simply living a few blocks away?"

One wonders how Cunneen knows so much about Chicago ethnics. When was the last time he was in Chicago? How many ethnic neighborhoods did he visit? How many people did he talk to? Does he know how many ethnics and blacks are cooperating in the Metropolitan Area Housing Alliance? Did he interview any of them? What does he know about suburban discrimination against the city? Has he been told about redlining and blockbusting?

Maybe Cunneen has survey evidence? No, the survey evidence runs to the contrary. Cunneen airily dismisses such systematic data as "superficial attempts at outmoded apologetics."

How does Joe Cunneen know about Chicago ethnics? The answer, I'm sure, is obvious. He just knows, that's all.

Cunneen, in other words is a snob.

It is essential for the self-image of the Commonweal Catholic to believe in the inferiority — mental and moral and religious — of the neighborhood Catholic. Joe Cunneen is merely keeping that self-image alive.

It might be interesting for parents, especially those who scream indignantly at the garbage the networks dish out, to sit down and list by night (and day) the programs they have watched in the past week. Ask the kids to do the same

If the parents' list is top-heavy with sex and violence chances are pretty good the kids' preferences will reflect the same spicy consumption

We finally got a chance to see one episode of "Little Women" on Channel 21's "Family Classic" which is seen at 5 p.m. Saturdays. It was disconcerting to hear the English accents of the casts in this British production and even more upsetting to realize that the book's figures as portrayed on film resemble not at all the characters as we had imagined them at the age of eight upon first reading Louisa May Alcott's beloved story. Not that we had expected them to, of course. Stories and film seldom, if ever, mesh in that area. So while we are extremely grateful for this kind of programming (adaptation of classics for TV) we personally think it is much better if a child reads the book first and can rely on his or her own imagination and the author's to form images which in some cases last all their lives. It would seem by far the more enriching course

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