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The Church 1979

By Father Andrew Greeley

Denouncing American Catholicism

Back in the days before he had sold out to Berriganite enthusiasts, Jesuit Edward



Duff once remarked that there was a tendency in the American church to indulge in mass masochism. The selfbother to deny it. Still the

Fr. Greeley hatred of American Catholics in the late '50s was indeed intense. Monsignor Ellis's research had demonstrated that Catholics were not seeking scholarly careers. Father Weigle and Professor Thomas O'Dea had analyzed the theological and sociological reasons for Catholic anti-intellectualism. One had only to pick up the most recent issue of Commonweal or America to find some new acerbic criticism of what was wrong with the American church and the American Catholic people.

Catholic intelligentsia has emerged, both solidly Catholic and professionally intellectual. The signs of the change were to be seen even in 1960, though Commonweal denied that such a change was occurring or indeed could possibly occur. But the evidence that Catholicism is no bar either to economic success or intellectual excellence in American society is now so overwhelming that even Catholic liberals don't

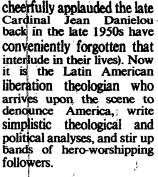
self-hatred continues.

This tide was turning even

then, and since 1960 a new

In the '40s and '50s American Catholicism looked not to its own experience, which was deemed to be worthless, but to the experience of French Catholics for ideas and wisdom. As time went on we shifted our focus first to Germany then to the Netherlands and now to the Third World and particularly Latin America.

At one time we adored the French prophets who got on the American lecture circuit (presumably those who



In the '50s it could have been argued that we had no American Catholic thinkers or scholars or prophets or poets. In the '70s we have them and it doesn't matter. Our self-hatred is so strong we still are eager to look at everyone else but ourselves for insight and wisdom. Jean Daniclou was replaced by Juan Luis Segunda (lecturing at the Catholic Theological Union and the Jesuit School of Theology in the University of Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood where Danielou prophesized 20 years ago) as the piedpiper to whom docile, servile

Wednesday, March 28, 1979

American Catholics look for inspiration. It is enough to make one sick to one's stomach. Segunda, like Danielou, comes from the part of the world where the church has failed abysmally for hun-

> evidence that his liberation theology has any effect on either political or religious life in Latin America. His identification of religion with a political system is exactly the same as the identification of Catholicism with right-wing regimes which liberationists criticize. In both cases, the church

dreds of years. There is no

and religion are in the service of political systems. The liberation theologians like their conservative enemies stand in the service of political regimes, the latter the Old Regime and the former what they hope will be the New Regime. But the enthusiastic devotees of liberation theology don't seem to notice the similarity.

By Sarah Child

I'm not

All in the Family

Our Love For the Land

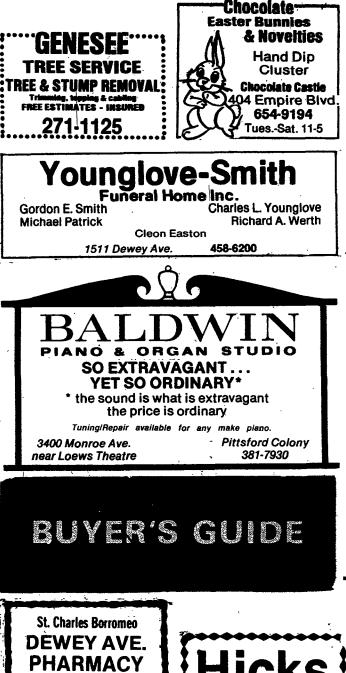
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Some years ago when we felt the need to go to Mass than we now do the standard joke on a beautiful Sunday morning was how own great cathedral."

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the fingers.



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