

WHAT'S WRONG WITH LIBERAL CATHOLICS?

Peter Steinfels, in his obituary on Father Andrew M. Greeley in the *New York Times*, notes “there was resistance among liberal Catholics to his [Greeley’s] positive findings about Catholic schools.”

This is striking. Steinfels, who is himself a liberal, writes about Greeley, another liberal (on most subjects), about how liberal Catholics react to good news about Catholic schools. Which raises the question: Why do liberal Catholics treat good news about Catholic schools as bad news? Would they prefer that they fail?

Steinfels added that Greeley’s “research debunked the received view at the time that Catholics had low college attendance rates. He found instead that white Catholics earned bachelor’s degrees and pursued advanced degrees at higher rates than other whites, and he attributed their success to the quality of education in parochial schools, a controversial assertion in a time of public-school ascendancy.”

Conservative Catholics cheer such news about Catholic education. Apolitical Catholics cheer such news. So what’s wrong with liberal Catholics that they resist such news? Is their craven need for acceptance by the secular elites so debased that it drives them to resist any good news about Catholic education?