

# HITCHENS IS BACK FROM THE DEAD

Following the announcement that the pope was resigning, Christopher Hitchens was resurrected by Slate and Andrew Sullivan, but it didn't do them any good. They republished a hit piece by the atheist from 2010 that was vintage Hitchens: he was a great polemicist but a third-class scholar. Facts never mattered to him.

Hitchens said the scandal "has only just begun." Wrong. It began in the mid-60s and ended in the mid-80s. Current reports are almost all about old cases.

Hitchens also said Munich Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger (the pope) transferred an offending cleric to another parish. Wrong. Ratzinger's deputy placed the priest in a new parish after he received therapy (the zeitgeist of the time), and even the *New York Times* said there was no evidence that Ratzinger knew about it.

Hitchens said Ratzinger wrote a 2001 letter to the bishops telling them it was a crime to report sexual abuse. Wrong. The letter dealt with desecrating the Eucharist, and the sexual solicitation by a priest in the confessional (the letter cited a 1962 document detailing harsh sanctions).

Hitchens said Ratzinger was obstructing justice when he crafted new norms on sexual abuse in 2001. Wrong. He added new sanctions and extended the statute of limitations for such offenses.

Hitchens said Ratzinger ignored accusations against Father Marcial Maciel. Wrong. It was Benedict who got him removed from ministry and put his religious order in receivership.

Hitchens' hatred of the Church allowed him to swing wildly.

That Slate and Andrew Sullivan resurrected him makes them all look incompetent, as well as vicious.