

NEW YORK TIMES MARKS POPE'S ANNIVERSARY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the way today's *New York Times* marked the 5th anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI:

The news story is remarkable, even for the *New York Times*. Readers learn that the sexual abuse scandal is "growing" and is "quickly defining his papacy." Furthermore, the pope has "alienated Muslims, Jews, Anglicans and even many Roman Catholics."

In point of fact, the scandal ended about a quarter century ago: the timeline when most of the abuse took place was the mid-60s to the mid-80s. The only thing "growing" is coverage of abuse cases extending back a half-century, something the *Times* has contributed to mightily. To say his papacy is being defined by old cases may be the narrative that suits the *Times*, but it most certainly is not shared by fair-minded observers.

Yes, many Muslims were alienated by the pope's brutal honesty in calling out Islam for its subordination of reason, and indeed many proved his point by resorting to violence. The heroics of Pope Pius XII in saving as many as 860,000 Jews during the Holocaust is a stunning record, especially as compared to the editorial silence that the *Times* exhibited in addressing the Shoah at the time. It is not correct, as the *Times* says, that the pope attempted "to rehabilitate a Holocaust-denying bishop," rather he attempted to reconcile a break-away Catholic group which unfortunately had as one of its members a Holocaust-denying bishop. Anglicans unhappy with the pope's outreach to the disaffected in their ranks represent an embarrassing chapter for them, not Catholics. And it is hardly surprising that those Catholics who intensely

disliked Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger are, for the most part, the same ones who reject Pope Benedict XVI.

The pope can be justly criticized for missteps in governance and communications, but to paint him as a divider is a cruel caricature being promoted to hurt him, in particular, and the Church, in general.

Contact public editor Clark Hoyt: public@nytimes.com