

NEW YORK TIMES MARKS POPE'S ANNIVERSARY

On the 5th anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's election, the *New York Times* ran an article, which was remarkable even by the *Times*' standards. Readers of the article learned that the sexual abuse scandal is "growing" and is "quickly defining his papacy." Furthermore, the article contends that the pope has "alienated Muslims, Jews, Anglicans and even many Roman Catholics."

In fact, the scandal ended about 25 years 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 decades, something the *Times* has contributed to mightily. To say his papacy has been defined by old cases may be the narrative that suits the *Times*, but it 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 the same

ones who reject Pope Benedict XVI.

The pope could have been justly criticized for missteps in governance and communications, but to paint him as a divider was designed to hurt him, in particular, and the Roman Catholic Church, in general.