

# TIME'S RAP ON POPE IS LOUSY JOURNALISM

In June, *Time* magazine ran a cover story on Pope Benedict XVI titled "Why Being Pope Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry: The Sex Abuse Scandal and the Limits of Atonement." Not only was the piece an unfair attack on the pope, but it was strewn with misinformation and falsehoods.

Article writers Jeff Israely and Howard Chua-Eoan demonstrated that they could have not only benefited by having a competent editor, but that they could have used a Catholic education growing up.

The story began by speculating whether Pope Benedict XVI would apologize for the behavior of abusive priests, yet in no time the authors quoted the pope apologizing for such priests. But that just wasn't enough. It never is.

The reporters then got melodramatic: the pope can't apologize for fear of damaging the magisterium and papal power. Begging the question: Why has he already done so?

The authors wondered why the pope hasn't mentioned his own role in the scandal. There is a reason for that: no one, including those at the *New York Times*, has been able to nail him. But that didn't stop *Time* from laying its seed.

Citing the pope's apology regarding wrongdoing by some Irish priests—decades ago—*Time* posited that he didn't apologize "for anything he or, indeed, the Holy See may have done, much less the mystical entity called the Church, the bride of Christ." Why anyone would apologize for offenses he never committed was never explained: it's just assumed the pope is guilty and, worse, refuses to admit it. This isn't objective journalism—it's an indictment.

The piece also asked, "Why didn't the church simply report to the civil authorities the crimes its priests were suspected of committing?" For the same reason every other religious, as well as secular, institution did not: following the lordly liberal wisdom of the day, the accused was sent to therapy and then returned to his post. Similarly, the decision not to immediately laicize an offending priest in 1985 was not done for sinister reasons, as the article implied, but because of an age-sensitive policy (the priest was dumped two years later).

On the subject of papal infallibility, the authors appeared as clueless as their managing editor, Richard Stengel, who flubbed terribly during his interview on MSNBC promoting the story.

Those at *Time* need to get a clue and to quit with the lousy reporting.