

NEWSPAPERS SELF-CENSOR MUSLIM CARTOONS

At least two dozen newspapers refused to run a cartoon last Sunday (the first of a two-part series) because it might offend Muslims; more newspapers are expected to censor the September 2 installment. The cartoon strip that was slated to run on August 26, Berkeley Breathed's "Opus," contained a sexually suggestive panel and poked fun at radical Islam. "Opus" is syndicated by the Washington Post Writers Group, which is led by Alan Shearer

Shearer explained that "Whenever something lands close to the edge, we give editors enough notice" in case they choose to run something else. He checked with Islamic experts to see if the "Opus" strips might be a problem, and even though they said they weren't, they were nixed anyway. Muslim staffers at the *Washington Post* were also asked for their input.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

"The *Washington Post*, and all the other newspapers which refuse to print these cartoons, are simultaneously sporting their cowardice and bigotry. In 2006, this same newspaper portrayed the [Sacred Heart of Jesus with the symbol of the Democratic Party](#), and it depicted the disgraced Congressman Mark Foley as a [candidate for the priesthood](#) at 'Saint Paedophilia's.' In 2004, it displayed a [bishop monitoring Catholics](#) in a voting booth, and it showed a [habit-wearing nun brandishing a ruler](#) while 'little Mel Gibson gets beaten to a bloody pulp by Sister Dolores Excruciata of the Little Sisters of the Holy Agony.' In 2002, it depicted a bishop and two priests as the '[Axis of Evil](#),' and in 2001 it twice mocked the Eucharist.

"Did the Washington Post Writers Group ever give editors notice about the inflammatory nature of these cartoons so that they might run a substitute? Did

they access Catholic experts to advise them about the propriety of running such cartoons? Did they ask Catholics on staff what they thought? No, and that's because angry Catholics—like Jews—never decide to man the planes. This is what the cultural elites mean by diversity."

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