

Church pushes A-B too far on OLP closing

Friday, June 3, 2005

We think the Archdiocese of Greater Boston made one huge mistake deciding to close Our Lady of Presentation School and a second, even bigger, mistake in spurning a well thought-out plan from the parents and neighbors to turn it into a private school.

The school has a long and glorious history in Boston, and it plays a vital part even today in keeping Oak Square from being overrun by students and student housing. So the stakes are big not just for the moms and dads who will have to find a new school for their kids this fall. The stakes are big for all of Allston and Brighton.

To their credit, the neighbors have tried smothering the archdiocese with kindness. But it is time for all of us to realize a different approach may be needed.

There are already signs the parents understand that. There are rumors some families will stage some sort of civil disobedience at the school. Another option might be to take a lesson of the parishes around the region which have chosen to stage a vigil, with a rotating crew of volunteers. Either way, a loud show of strength might be the only way to get the archdiocese's attention.

OLP supporters seem to have realized as much recently. They recently declared that they are ready to battle the church, vowing to block the zoning and planning permits needed for whoever buys church property in their neighborhood. That might not be enough, which is why more desperate measures are now being debated.

Meanwhile, the archdiocese seems determined bring in the tribunal office that decides divorces and other liturgical matters, rather than something that adds to the community. Some neighbors fear the church might ultimately be planning to sell the current tribunal to Boston College. No one is saying, but it seems the only way to explain the church's strange behavior in Oak Square.

The time for compromise is past. The only way to get the church's attention is to make it clear to them that the families of the OLP School will not be pushed around anymore.

We only hope that it is not too late.




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