

## Obey the almighty

**B**ravo to the Catholic faithful in Adams who keep fighting, against all odds, to save St. Stanislaus Church. They must be doing something right — they got the bishop to come out here once and Monsignor John Bonzagni — director of pastoral planning — to come out twice.

But all these Catholic leaders from the Springfield Diocese do is give lip service to the parishioners, never really listening and always preaching — sermons that forever say “Do it our way because that’s the only way.”

It’s fine to have differences about the future of Catholic churches in Adams, and throughout the county and well beyond, for that matter. What’s disturbing about the Springfield Diocese is the arrogance displayed in its decisions.

Monsignor Bonzagni showed this attitude at least twice in his meeting with parishioners last week — first in his continuing insistence that lay representatives from each parish actually had a say in what churches would be closed and would not be closed. Speaking about their alleged input during so-called “listening sessions,” he said, “If they didn’t use that time well, that’s not the fault of the process.”

Oh, we get it. The people making the pitch to save churches must have been stupid — or inadequate — if they couldn’t sway the all-powerful leaders who (let’s face it) already had their minds made up. (Just ask the good folks at St. Francis in North Adams).

Second, the good monsignor had the nerve to say that those who dared criticize a local priest were committing a sin and that their actions should not be tolerated. Wow. Maybe everyone should have shut their mouths and their eyes when priests throughout the country were molesting young boys (and girls). Was daring to criticize *them* a sin?

Alas, the good folks of Adams are fighting an establishment even more undefeatable than City Hall. They can appeal all they want, but even if they win, the deaf diocese will have long-since stripped St. Stanislaus bare of the beauty the local parishioners so prize. And that’s the sin, Monsignor — the sin that might drive all too many of the faithful from the flock.