

# SCRANTON-AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL DRAWS BUSY-BODIES

On April 17, Auxiliary Bishop John Dougherty of the Diocese of Scranton spoke at Bishop O'Reilly High School. During his talk, Bishop Dougherty was greeted with disrespect by members of the junior class. School administrators and faculty overwhelmingly decided that all juniors would be barred from the May 15<sup>th</sup> junior/senior prom; the junior class has a record of misbehavior, stemming from its freshman year. Most seniors, including the senior class president, support the school's action against the juniors.

What makes this incident a news story is the reaction to it by outsiders. An area radio show, "Hot 97" (WBHT, 97.1), has announced that it will host a free prom for the juniors; a local businessman has promised to donate space for the prom; music and flowers have been extended by other businessmen; and a dentist has offered free check-ups for the juniors. The radio show has also welcomed on-air calls by those opposed to the school's decision.

There are signs that the radio show and some businessmen may be backing away from their commitment, but it is not certain that they will.

Catholic League president William Donohue issued the following remarks:

"If school officials at a Catholic high school were to publicly challenge the workplace decisions of local media and business operations, they would be summarily denounced in the press for sticking their nose in where they do not belong. Why there hasn't been an outcry of public sentiment against the Bishop O'Reilly busy-bodies is itself worthy of investigative reporting.

"The lesson that the busy-bodies are selling is that bad conduct ought to be rewarded and that Catholic schools should forfeit their autonomous status. If they actually had an opportunity to meet Bishop Dougherty, they would no doubt agree with the Catholic League that he is one of the finest bishops in the nation, as is his superior, Bishop Timlin. We will watch this closely and take whatever steps are necessary to defend Bishop O'Reilly."