

'Toughest School' Features Religion

Boys Can't Date, Have Lengthy Homework and Lots of Latin

By **HERBERT G. STEIN**

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Crammed onto the top floor of Holy Rosary Elementary School in Homewood is the toughest high school in the Pittsburgh area.

By what standard?

Consider the curriculum: four years of Latin, three years of Greek, two years of German or French, for example.

Consider homework: at least three hours a night, and a theme a week, every week, for four years.

Consider the social life: no dating.

Consider the weekend: chances are it will be spent at a hospital or a mental institution carrying bedpans, mopping floors, or in some other activity specifically aimed at instilling the idea of service to mankind.

Youthful Spirits High

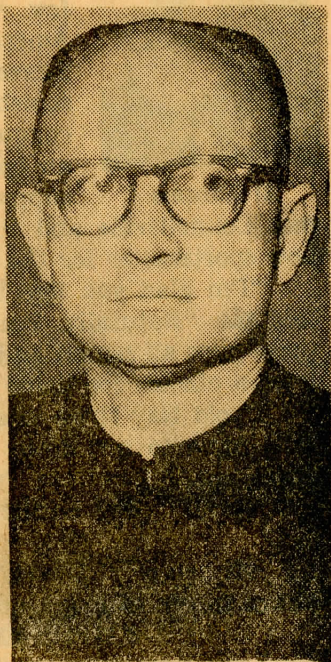
Yet in spite of these rigors, the 145 high school boys now enrolled there are distinguishable only in that they wear black blazers on which there is a little round emblem that says "The Bishop's Latin School."

"We don't put any dampers on them at recess time; and it gets pretty noisy," says the Rev. William J. Walsh, S. J., the headmaster and teacher of religion.

The Bishop's Latin School was opened in the fall of 1961 at 7120 Kelly St. as a pet project of Bishop John J. Wright of the Pittsburgh Roman Catholic Diocese, who felt there ought to be a mentally rigorous pre-seminary high school for this diocese. He attended such a school himself, the Boston Latin School, which while a public school, has a curriculum and a name so close to what was set up here that it appears more than coincidence.

The school here is operated by the Jesuits—or Society of Jesus—which has 51 high schools in various American cities. This is the order's first that is exclusively for boys headed for the priesthood.

"These boys are thinking seriously about becoming priests," says Father Walsh, "but the decision at their age is often doubtful. They are as sure about it, you might say, as any boy can be."



REV. WILLIAM J. WALSH

Heads a tough school.

everybody every month, and instead of a football team there is a debating team that goes out to tournaments, and there is a competition with other schools in writing one-act plays.

"We haven't won many matches yet," says Father Walsh. "We're building character."

Since the Bishop's Latin School has taken in one freshman class a year since it opened three years ago, it won't have a senior class until next year when the total enrollment will go up to 200 and will probably stay at that figure. (Of the original class of 51 boys, 41 are still there.) It is hoped that the Diocese eventually will go on to build its own seminary and college for the high school's graduates.

The faculty consists of ten Jesuits and four lay persons. Included among the lay faculty members are one Negro and one woman.

To help them make a decision the diocese sends them to a school where they can think about it in a religious atmosphere while studying the classics as well as science and mathematics, but they are still living at home.

"We feel it's important for the boys to be at home during this stage of their training," says Father Walsh, "so they can continue to associate with their brothers and sisters and friends of the family."

The only major restriction, he adds, is that they may not date.

Youths Kept Busy

They are kept busy. Aside from the languages, the sciences and the mathematics, there is a four-year program called "English and Elocution" which aims at what Father Walsh calls "perfecta eloquentia."

"That has been the goal of Jesuit teaching for 400 years," he says. It means literature, writing, speaking or what he refers to as "perfect control of the language."

Students take courses which include all the State Department of Public Instruction requirements for high school, and the religious requirements in addition—church music, for instance.

Competition is built into every part of the program: prizes given annually in each subject, grades posted for

To get the boys into what Father Walsh calls "an attitude of sacrifice" some of the freshmen and sophomores go off on weekends to a local hospital to wrap tongue depressors, wheel patients around, feed them, or mop the floors if that's needed.