

Book helps to curb cussing

Michelle Martin/CNS

CHICAGO — Growing up in the Chicago neighborhood of West Rogers Park, James V. O'Connor swore. So did his brothers and his classmates at St. Timothy School and later Loyola Academy.

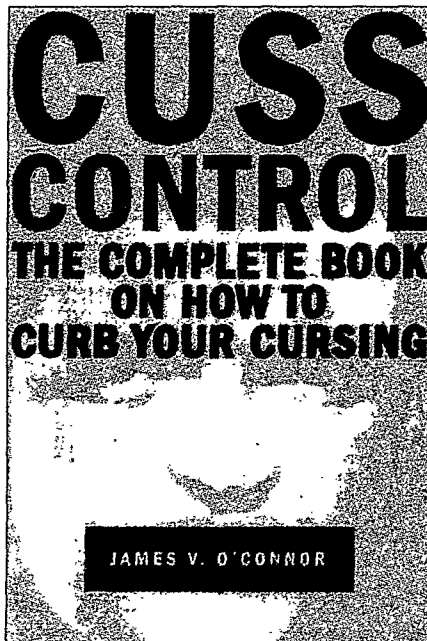
It was the first sin he ever confessed to a priest. "I went in and said 'Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I swore 99 times and lied five times,'" he recalled.

O'Connor, 58, runs the Lake Forest-based Cuss Control Academy as well as his own public relations firm and is author of "Cuss Control: The Complete Book on How to Curb Your Cursing" (Three Rivers Press, New York, \$12.95).

The book, and the talks he gives, grew out of his desire to stop swearing — a habit he decided to break in the mid-1990s, when he realized that words he once would have blushed to say in polite company were sliding out of his mouth sometimes before he was even aware of them.

"When I was a child, I was taught not to swear, but I did, and all my friends did, too," he told *The Catholic New World*, newspaper of the Chicago Archdiocese. "But we were very discreet. We knew where we could swear and where we couldn't."

Over the years, those lines got



blurred, especially as profanity and obscene language took over the movie screens, he said.

When it got to the point that he would hear children casually use what he calls "the F-word" on the street, he thought it had gone too far, and began to take a look at himself.

"It was really the decline of the English language," he said. "It was lazy language, and not very expressive. It was also a decline in civility, in showing respect for people."

But he didn't know how to stop and

there was nothing out there to help.

So O'Connor decided to fill the void. His book explores the history of swearing and why people swear, and why they should not.

While several people interviewed for the book said they swear but avoid using phrases like "Jesus Christ" or "God damn it," O'Connor purposely did not include religion as a reason not to swear because he thought some readers might be put off. Instead, he focused on his perception that many people find swearing in itself off-putting, even though most of them will never say so.

"People say, 'But nobody was offended,'" he said. "Well, were you ever offended by someone swearing? Did you say anything? You probably kept your mouth shut but thought they were a jerk."

To help curb cuss words, O'Connor suggests people make a habit of thinking before speaking — a practice that can avoid trouble in other ways as well — and then substituting a nonoffensive word for the expletives that should be deleted.

O'Connor agrees there are times that "fiddlesticks" just won't cut it. "People always ask me about when you stub your toe," he said. "People must stub their toes a lot."

But when toe meets wall, hammer meets thumb or hard drive meets meltdown, a few choice words could be perfectly appropriate.

"It all depends on the context," O'Connor said. "That's why it's called 'Cuss Control,' not 'Cuss Elimination.'"

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, readers may call: (815) 615-0950.

Best-sellers book list

Catholic News Service

Following is the Catholic Best-sellers List for April 2003, according to the Catholic Book Publishers Association.

HARDCOVER

1. *The Holy Longing*. Ronald Rolheiser (Doubleday)
2. *The Lamb's Supper*. Scott Hahn (Doubleday)
3. *Running From the Devil*. Steve Kissing (Crossroad)
4. *Rest Your Dreams on a Little Twig*. Rupp & Loomis (Ave Maria Press/Sorin Books)
5. *When the Trees Say Nothing*. Kathleen Deignan (Ave Maria/Sorin)

PAPERBACK

1. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Doubleday and Our Sunday Visitor)
2. *Living the Days of Lent 2003*. Anita M. Constance (Paulist)
3. *Lent Year B*. Mark Link (Thomas More)
4. *Everything Belongs*. Revised edition. Richard Rohr (Crossroad)
5. *Return of the Prodigal Son*. Henri J.M. Nouwen (Crossroad)

CHILDREN

AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. *The Stations of the Cross Coloring Book*. Virginia H. Richards (Pauline)
2. *Tear Soup*. Schwiebert & DeKlyen (ACTA/Grief Watch)
3. *Child's Guide to the Mass*. Sue Stanton (Paulist)
4. *Child's Guide to First Holy Communion*. Elizabeth Ficocelli (Paulist)
5. *Peter Can't Wait*. Carole Therese Plum (Our Sunday Visitor)

SPANISH LANGUAGE

1. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Catolica*. (Our Sunday Visitor and Doubleday)
2. *Mis 15 Años — My 15th Birthday*. Diocese of San Bernardino (Pauline)
3. *Manual Para el Catolico de Hoy*. A Redemptorist Pastoral Publication (Liguori)
4. *Juntos Para Toda la Vida*. Joseph M. Champlin (Liguori)
5. *Mis 15 Años — My 15th Birthday — Instructor's Manual*. Diocese of San Bernardino (Pauline)

Join Us at the
Hyatt Regency for
Easter Brunch.

Come see the Easter Bunny...
hear great music...& enjoy a fine meal!!

April 20, 2003
10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Reservations can be made directly at
585-546-1234 ext. 4430

Adults \$25.75
Senior Citizens \$20.00 • Children 6-12 years \$13.00
Children 5 and under are our guests for free
Price does not include Sales Tax, Gratuity optional

**HYATT
REGENCY
ROCHESTER**

DISCOVER THE PEOPLE WITH THE HYATT TOUCH™

IT'S TIME *toget*
COMFORTABLE
We deliver comfort

**Roth
Residential**
HEATING & COOLING
Division Leo J. Roth Corp.

841 Holt Road
Rochester NY **NEW YORK**
585-872-0220

Serving the Catholic Diocese
of Rochester for 55 Years

Mike

BF
Mary
and
and
staye

"I

Siste

Mc

ter R

on Ar

big p

Moth

from

the p

Sis

ing w

the D

been

hopes

the ti

main:

witty

cent i

For

early

abrup

physi

math.

had

physi

school

"My

book.

here,

dersta

er," Si

Sist

Count

high-s

Sister

ter sh

She

Bonav

In 19