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NEWS RELEASE

REAL-LIFE LYING, STEALING KICKS OFF BOOK PROJECT FOR TEEN AND DAD, PATRICK AND DENNIS DOYLE

DAYTON, Ohio — Twelve-year-old Patrick Doyle knew he was in trouble for lying and stealing. He knew he could be grounded and have his television privileges taken away. What he didn't expect was the project his father suggested to teach the lesson that lying and stealing is wrong.

The pair wrote a book called *Rumors at School: A Tale of Honesty* (Paulist Press, \$7.95).

"We intended to write a short story, but not with the idea that it was publishable," said Dennis Doyle, 48, Patrick's dad and associate professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton. "It was an exercise. As a parent, I like to give my kids situations where they can think about things for themselves.

"You guys hate that, don't you?" he said, turning to Patrick with a smile. He and his wife, pediatrician Patricia Dempsey, have four sons ages 11 to 18.

Dennis and Patrick will be signing copies of *Rumors at School: A Tale of Honesty* at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, at Books & Co., 350 E. Stroop Road in Kettering.

The book and Patrick's real-life tale start with the same incident — theft of a roll of quarters from the parish recreation center. "It was a spur-of-the-moment thing," said Patrick, now 15 years old, of his impulses that day. "They had me in the office for running in the lobby, and I was kind of mad so I took the roll of quarters. When she (the rec center supervisor) was counting the money, she noticed that \$10 was missing and she came up to me. She knew I was the only one in there."

The incident was a turning point for his parents. "Patrick was not telling the truth a lot at the time, and it was something we were very concerned about. Stealing the quarters was the straw that broke the camel's back," Dennis said.

And then the story idea took hold.

The main character's name is Patrick, he plays basketball for a Catholic grade school team and he steals a roll of quarters. Dad is a high school religion teacher — and that's about

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the extent of reality-based storytelling in *Rumors at School*.

The plot includes the first adolescent stirrings of romance and jealousy, the drama of a big basketball game, a mistaken accusation against Patrick when a classmate gets injured falling down a flight of stairs, and plenty of teen-age ruminations during Mass. Patrick gets caught up in the homily about Mary when she was suspected of adultery during her betrothal to Joseph:

Patrick thought of himself as like Mary, a person falsely accused. He thanked God that he had his friend, Sean Neal, who like Joseph believed that he didn't do it. In his mind, he crossed this gospel with another. He thought of the woman caught in adultery who was about to be stoned. He could see the look on her face. There was not just fear, but a look of innocence. Then he saw his own face in the middle of the crowd. He was the one who was about to be stoned. And then Jesus came up, and said, "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone."

By the time Patrick drifted out of his reverie the congregation was in the middle of the hymn during the offering. Patrick felt a deep sense of comfort, as though he were in the house of one who knew for sure that he was innocent. But then he thought of the many things of which he was not innocent, and he thought of how God knew these things, too.

The book is aimed at 11- to 14-year-olds. Dad Dennis contributed much of the plot and structure while Patrick was the expert at adolescent reactions and dialogue.

Patrick is proud of the book. "It's interesting and keeps your attention, and it also teaches you stuff about lying," he said. "I like it. My friends read a version of it, and they liked it. And when I'm old I can show my kids."

Dennis values the experience. "I learned another parenting trick," he said. "I learned how to communicate with kids without being overly confrontational. I learned something about how kids think.

"Writing the book was a way of keeping the lines of communication open with Patrick, and it was a way of working out interactively why honesty is important. Like planting seeds, I don't think they've all sprouted yet. It's my hope that it's had some impact and will have a deeper impact as time goes by."

Patrick hasn't turned into a saint. "He's a mischievous, lovable, high-spirited kid," said his dad.

For media interviews, contact **Dennis and Patrick Doyle** at home at (937) 278-0577. **Dennis Doyle** can also be reached on campus at (937) 229-4219 or via e-mail at Dennis.Doyle@notes.udayton.edu. For review copies of the book, contact **Pam Huber** at (937) 229-3256 or via e-mail at huber@udayton.edu.