

Angel of God, my guardian dear
to whom God's love commits me here.
Ever this day be at my side
to light and guard and rule and guide.
Amen.

In the summer of 1967, I memorized that prayer. I had just turned five, and was going to go to Kindergarten the next fall. The prayer was printed on the back of the bulletin ... between a Real Estate advertisement and a McDonald's coupon.

My mother cut out the little square with the words on it, and had me read it before I went to bed.

That little square of paper meant a lot to a five year old.

Today is the Memorial of the Guardian Angels, which was made a feast on the Church's universal calendar in the early 17th century. The idea that each human soul is entrusted to the care of a single angel from the moment of conception is of ancient origin.

In the Gospel, Jesus says, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."

The word that is rendered as "despise" in English, is a Greek word that literally means to "think down." In English, we would say "look down." Despise to me sounds a bit extreme.

Forty one years ago, my mother took the time to trust me enough to let me pray ... dare I say, "empower" me to pray. Not only that, but she trusted me enough to give me words on a tiny little page that would let me pray without any assistance ... if I took the time to do so ... which I can tell you – I did.

Prayer is often neglected in our daily lives. We are taught to be people of action in our society. But action without prayer can often be action without direction.

And when we act without prayer, that begs the question – do we really trust God? Do we really trust that our prayers have effect? Or is it easier to trust our skills and knowledge, than it is to trust grace. What it means is that we have to take a chance on God. That is we have to give God space in our lives to operate, and not crowd him out with busy-ness.

So let us pray that we will trust in the action of grace, in the big and small things of our lives ... and trust ourselves to pray when our habit may be to act first ... and through this enhance our life of faith by a reliance on God who desires to be an active part of every detail of our daily lives.