

Just under half a century ago when my older brother was getting ready for Kindergarten, my mother sat him down at the kitchen table to teach him to read. Like any good toddler, I took it upon myself to poke around and complain that my playmate had been taken away.

To keep me quiet, I was allowed to sit on the other side of the table and watch quietly.

What happened was, I kind-of ... sort-of ... accidentally learned to read. Except that it was upside-down and backwards.

For months, I kept that secret to myself until my mom tried to teach me to read right-side up. At which point, to her shock ... I turned the book over, and read it to her.

I think she might have thought she broke her second son ... but in the end I turned out OK.

Today is the memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels ... which was the name of the parish I went to and the elementary school I went to as a young kid.

And, with great learning comes great responsibility.

Once I had learned to read, I had to learn to pray. And the first prayer I learned was the "Guardian Angel Prayer."

*Angel of God, my guardian dear
To whom God's love commits me here.*

*Ever this day be at my side
To light, to guard, to rule, to guide.*

In the Gospel Jesus admonishes us:

*See that you do not despise one of these little ones,
for I say to you that their angels in heaven
always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.*

That applies to all of us ... whether thinking about our own childhood, one of the 80 plus kids across the parking lot, or anyone who may not be as smart, or tall, or educated, or sophisticated as we are.

There is a lot to learn from kids ... and none of us is exempted. Innocence is a good teacher, and we all can afford a dose of innocence and simplicity.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray that we might humble ourselves and become like children so that we may inherit our place in the Kingdom of heaven.