By Pat Haggerty

As a child growing up in a fairly devout Catholic family, I remember the picture of the guardian angel that hung in the nursery of our two-story tenement. The angel was lovely with a soft face, expansive and delicate wings, and an expression of kindness and concern on her face. She was standing over two little children, a boy and a girl, as they walked across a little bridge that appeared to emerge out of nowhere. No doubt you've seen a similar picture, or you have fond memories of your own guardian angel picture.

In addition to this picture, my mother would lead us children in the "Guardian Angel Prayer" each night: 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, to rule and guide. Amen."

I thought this prayer was a thing of the past until I heard it on the Catholic Channel this morning. It's still around! When I am tucking my grandchildren in bed, which doesn't happen often but sometimes, I always recite this prayer for them.

Why am I so obsessed with guardian angels this week? It so happens that October 2nd is the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. There is a societal obsession with angels these days, and perhaps that has actually minimized the Biblical validity of the presence of angels in our lives. Every time you turn around there is a new Willow Tree Angel. There are angel knick-knacks that resemble fairies more than angels, and there are more angel ornaments for Christmas trees than one can imagine. I know this for a fact, as my husband has a collection of angel ornaments for our Christmas tree. One of these days we will be able to decorate the tree solely with angels!

In the psalm for October 2nd, the refrain intones: "The Lord has put angels in charge of you, to guard you in all your ways." (Psalm 91) The psalm goes on to say: "No evil shall befall you, nor shall affliction come near our tent, For to his angels he has given command about you, that they guard you in all your ways."

These are strong words that certainly provide us with comfort and solace. We cannot doubt the

presence of our guardian angels and their role after reading this psalm. We should, therefore, turn to our guardian angels for support and as conduits to our heavenly home.