



This Sunday we have a wonderful event: the **Beatification of Pope John Paul II**. We can now address him as Blessed John Paul the Great and ask his intercession for our church, our world, our families and our parish. To appreciate the significance of Blessed John Paul, I encourage you to read “*Witness to Hope*” by George Weigel, a book about the pope’s life and accomplishments up to the end of the twentieth century. It’s like an intensive course in history, philosophy and theology, which greatly repays a close reading.

Weigel has written a second book about the pope’s final years titled, “*The End and the Beginning*.” In that book Weigel draws on secret archives that have been made public since the collapse of the Soviet empire. They reveal an obsession against the Catholic Church - and particularly against the Polish pope. As one reviewer observed:

Indeed, drawing on a trove of previously classified documents from the KGB, East Germany’s Stasi and Poland’s SB, Weigel reveals the extensive surveillance and intrigues that, for years, centered on John Paul, reaching from his native Poland into the Vatican itself. While always situated in important historical, political and theological contexts, Weigel’s account of Iron Curtain secret-police work against John Paul makes for a flat-out exciting story, and no doubt this is the first-ever papal biography that reads, for great stretches, like a spy thriller.

This coming week I will not be reading spy thrillers, but will be making a **retreat at Westminster Abbey** in Mission, B.C. I look forward to some days of quiet and prayer at the

Benedictine Monastery. One of the joys of being is the youth of the monks. About six or seven of them are under thirty – including Brother Joseph whose family was with me in Peru in the early nineties. He was a toddler then, but now has discerned that God has called him to this life of prayer and quiet service.

I will return Friday for **Confessions, Mass and Eucharistic Adoration** that evening. I look forward to Mother's Day weekend with the May Crowning of Mary and the Knights of Columbus breakfast in honor of our moms.

Since Easter was so late this year, **Annual Catholic Appeal** will begin two later than usual. This is "Announcement Sunday" and next week is "Education Sunday." The Annual Catholic Appeal makes possible some sixty ministries in Western Washington. They include training of seminarians, care for elderly and infirm priests, religious education and assistance to the homeless. The Archdiocese of Seattle directly supports our parish in many ways. For example, his past year our ministry to youth has benefited from the CYO Convention and from coordination regarding World Youth Day.

This year we will take advantage of the Annual Catholic Appeal to ask your help for the renovation of our parish buildings and grounds. Our **Building Commission**, working in coordination with the Finance and Parish Councils, has identified specific needs: **renovating the hall restrooms, replacing the carpet, expanding the kitchen and providing a playground area for children**. Next weekend **Steve Schilling** and **Oscar Rodriguez** will explain more about these projects, vital to our future. We will be asking your support using the Annual Catholic Appeal as a vehicle for collecting and tracking the needed financial resources. I have sent a letter to all registered parishioners explaining this effort. Your letter should arrive early this week.

I want to thank all those who worked so hard on our Easter celebrations. In spite of some glitches, the **Easter Vigil** was one of the most satisfying ceremonies I have experienced in my forty years of priest. Below are some pictures: The new fire with confirmation candidate, Gregor Murray, Samantha with the Pascal Candle and Gabriel with the incense. The picture of James Adams emerging the baptismal water captures some of the joy of the evening. You can find other pictures of Easter activities and parish events at:
<http://stmaryvalleybloom.org/stmaryalbum.html>

New fire: Gabriel, Samantha & Gregor



James Adams



Gregor, Sheila, Dennis, Debra, Bryan, Victoria, Fr B, James & Richard



Easter Egg Hunt prize winners

