

Far and near, events will honor beatification

Michael Ritucci has long admired Pope John Paul II as the man who “humanized the papacy.

“He came right down to the people,” Ritucci remembered.

To celebrate his spiritual hero, Ritucci plans to be in Rome May 1 for Pope John Paul II’s beatification. He will be joined by several others traveling as part of a Catholic Review pilgrimage to the Eternal City.

Ritucci said he will use the occasion to “pray intently for some kind of assistance” for two friends with Parkinson’s disease. Pope John Paul II suffered from the disease, and a French nun with Parkinson’s was miraculously cured through the late pope’s intercession.

Closer to home, there are several events scheduled to mark the beatification.

On May 1, a 10:45 a.m. Mass will be celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore, followed by an 11:45 a.m. eucharistic procession from the basilica to the Pope John Paul II Prayer Garden. The Divine Mercy Chaplet will be prayed at the garden.

At 4:30 p.m., a Mass for young adults will be celebrated at the basilica, followed by a 5:30 p.m. eucharistic procession to the prayer garden, where the Divine Mercy Chaplet will again be prayed.

Holy Rosary in Fells Point will celebrate the beatification and the Feast of Divine Mercy May 1, with a 10:30 a.m. Polish Mass dedicated to Pope John Paul II, followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Confessions in English, Polish and Spanish will be available from 12:30-3 p.m. Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski will celebrate a bilingual 1:30 p.m. Mass, followed by the Divine Mercy Chaplet in English at 3 p.m. The Divine Mercy Chaplet will be offered in Spanish at 5 p.m.

The National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg will dedicate a Pope John Paul II statue and memorial garden following the 3 p.m. Mass May 1.

On May 2, students in all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore will recite a special beatification prayer, and learn about the life of Pope John Paul II and the making of saints.