Saint Margaret Mary Church
75th Diamond Anniversary

2011
No matter how smooth or how rough this day, 
GOD is with us each step of the way.
Saint Margaret Mary Church
75th Diamond Anniversary
1936 -2011

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October 16, 2011
Year for Mass

Saint Margaret Mary Parish
560 Lincoln Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10305

Dear Friends in the Lord:

It is a joy to extend to you and to the entire community of Saint Margaret Mary Parish sincere congratulations on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the dedication of your parish church.

A parish church is much more than a building; it is the very heart of any Catholic community. This is where we pray the greatest of all prayers -- the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This is where we come in moments of great joy as well as all times of deep sorrow, to celebrate a wedding or a baptism, or to pray for the repose of the soul of a loved one. It is central to our lives as Catholics, and it is central to the life of the parish.

Your church has undergone physical changes during these past 75 years, but its essential nature and mission have not changed. From its dedication in 1936 to your celebration today, Saint Margaret Mary's parish church has been a place of prayer, a place of welcome, and a place of consolation.

With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
Dear Parishioners,

When I came to Saint Margaret Mary’s Parish last year, I never imagined that I would be part a year later of a great milestone in the history of this beautiful church. As our church celebrates the diamond anniversary of its dedication, I truly feel privileged to celebrate with you this jubilee. I am very warmed by the thought that in a short time I have come to know a people whose passion for God is matched only by their passion for their parish.

Together with you, my dear parishioners, I want to raise my heart and mind to Almighty God and to thank Him for His goodness to us these past 75 years. What a great journey of faith it has been! I know I don’t have to tell you that the roads were paved with wonderful memories of a parish coming to life and growing into a cohesive faith-community and eventually blossoming into what it is today – a lovely spiritual oasis by the beach. No doubt, there were struggles, challenges and sacrifices but, through it all, God’s been good to us!

“My heart magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.” These words from the Magnificat of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I’m sure, describe the real feelings of each of us today. We are, indeed, grateful. We are, indeed, joyful. May we add: we are also a hopeful people. Hopeful for the future of Saint Margaret Mary’s Parish. Hopeful that the good Lord will continue to bless this lovely parish with ‘seventy five times seventy five times’ of spiritually-fruitful years.

May Saint Margaret Mary, our patroness, bless you and your loved ones!

Very sincerely yours,

Father Erno B. Diaz
Administrator
The Korean Catholic Apostolate of Staten Island and I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to St. Margaret Mary for her 75th anniversary. St. Margaret Mary wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the pastors and the parishioners who dedicated their time and effort perseveringly for the past 75 years of service, and God who looked upon it with love and grace. The Korean Catholic Apostolate of Staten Island is grateful to be a part of this joyous occasion.

Brothers and sisters of St. Margaret Mary, history is like footprints we leave behind. By looking back at those footprints, we can reexamine our past and plan the future that will lead us towards God's way. As St. Margaret Mary marks her 75 years of glory and pain, perhaps it is time for us to ask God to heal our pain and help us to march forward to another 75 years of maturity and growth. And for this, the Korean Catholic Apostolate of Staten Island will always be with you in prayers and love. Once again, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and congratulations to St. Margaret Mary and may peace and love of our Christ be with you always.

Father Hyungsang Sung
Korean Catholic Apostolate of Staten Island
Our History
The Early Years;
1914 - 1935

St. Margaret Mary’s Church history is rich with dedicated clergy, staff, and parishioners with wonderful stories.

Our journey began in 1914. Pope Pius X passed away in August and Pope Benedict XV became our pontiff in September. John Murphy Cardinal Farley led the Archdiocese of New York. Woodrow Wilson was our President. John “Boy Mayor” Mitchel was the Mayor of New York City. The Panama Canal just opened and World War I had broken out in Europe.

Midland Beach had become a favorite summer vacation and play resort. There were hotels on the boardwalk and more than two hundred bungalows for the vacationers. Trolleys and excursion boats, docking at the 2,000 foot long Midland Beach pier, brought 40,000 to 50,000 people a weekend.

Attending Sunday Mass was difficult since Midland Beach fell within the parish of St. Patrick’s Church in Richmond Town. The people from Midland Beach made the journey to St. Patrick’s by trolley car and some by horse and carriage. Having to endure this trip, the people organized and petitioned to have Mass celebrated somewhere in Midland Beach.

In June 1914, the first Mass was offered in Midland Beach at the boardwalk Casino Hotel. The Masses at the hotel were very popular. Over a thousand vacationers and local residents attended Mass. Many of these vacationers offended the residents with their Mass attire, bathing suits. “This is simply disgraceful”.

The permanent residents of Midland Beach were excited to participate in the preparation of the Mass. Local boys became altar servers and women cleaned the dance floor of soda and beer bottles from the night before, set up the chairs and prepared the...
altar table. From 1914 to 1916 the summer boardwalk Masses were held in the Casino Hotel, May’s Hotel, Dunlea’s Hotel and finally at the trolley “car barn”.

After Labor Day, Midland Beach became very quiet, as there were only about 30 year round residents. These residents needed to resume their travel back to St. Patrick’s during the “off season”.

1917 is an important year for both the United States and the future of St. Margaret Mary’s Church. The United States declares war on Germany and Midland Beach is transferred to St. Ann’s Parish in Dongan Hills as an out mission, with a new Pastor – Father Joseph Farrell.

A year later on January 29th, 1918, the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) became the law of the land. On November 11th the world celebrated the end of World War I and Midland Beach continued its popularity and growth.

In 1920 – 1921, under the guidance of Father Farrell, Sunday Masses were offered in Midland Beach during the winter months. Shaeffer’s Hardware Store and Cuff’s Pool Room, on Midland Avenue, were the sites for these Masses.

While attending Sunday Mass was easier, the growing population of Midland Beach wanted their own Church. Their prays were answered. Father Farrell selected the site for a new Church in Midland Beach. This site is where St. Margaret Mary’s Church now sits.
In September 1921, the cornerstone of the new church was laid by Rt. Reverend Monsignor Charles A. Cassidy, the Dean of the Clergy of Staten Island. The local residents of Midland Beach were excited and showed their support by purchasing brick donations.

The first Mass was celebrated in the basement of the new church on Palm Sunday, 1922. As yet, there was no name for this mission church. In June, 1922 the first Mass was said in the upper church, without pews. The pew delivery had been delayed, so planks were laid out across boxes for the congregation to sit. In July the pews finally arrived.

On Labor Day, 1922 our church was solemnly dedicated by Auxiliary Bishop of the archdiocese of New York, John J. Dunn, in the name of St. Margaret Mary in Rome. Our church became the first church in the United States to be named in her honor.

During the winters of 1922-23 one Mass was said each Sunday. Long before Mass time, volunteers started fires in the pot-belly stoves to warm up the Church. One stove in front of the Church and the other in the rear, with stove pipes stuck out the windows on the beach side which serves as a chimney. What a site! There were no daily Masses.

It was in 1922, residents became more and more active. There was also an influx of Catholics, mostly from lower Manhattan, into the Midland Beach area. To support the increased Catholic population, Father Farrell felt an elementary Catholic school was needed. Father Farrell invited the Sisters of the Presentation of Greenridge, Staten Island to explore the possibility of starting a school at St. Margaret Mary. The Sisters felt that a school could be started under the church and rooms could be partitioned off for classrooms. Furnishings and desks were procured, as well as rolling partitions to separate the classrooms. In September 1925, the school at St. Margaret Mary's Mission Church began with 40 pupils. Its first Principal was Mother M. Michael, who served as Principal until 1940. In June 1926, the first students graduated from the new school.

Parishioners became very creative in their fundraising events. In addition to bazaars, Broadway Shows were written by parishioners and performed under the church which was to be the new school. The first show was, "Wait and See". It was a comedy-drama and ran nightly for a month during the summer of 1924. There were
about 100 people in the cast. This, and other shows like it, brought in quite a sum of money to pay for the needs of the new church.

On September 26th, 1924 a three alarm fire broke out in the Midland Beach area that burned all the large hotels in Midland Beach. Fire apparatus was brought to the Island from New York City but they were delayed by not being familiar with the Staten Island roads. The delay allowed the fire to gain great headway. It was feared that the new church would catch fire because of the burning embers and ashes that were flying through the air, igniting fires on roofs and awnings as much as a half a mile away. Thank God it did not happen, and credit was given to the fire proofed shingles of the new church and maybe a few prayers.

On the 4th of July 1926, St. Margaret Mary Church became a parish; with the boundaries of the water of the Ocean, Miller Field, Boundary Avenue, then to Jefferson Avenue.

Father Martin F. Drury was appointed by Cardinal Hayes as the first pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church and School. Following his appointment, he boarded at 249 Poultney Street.

Only two months later, on Labor Day 1926, there was a terrific flash storm which resulted in about four feet of water in the new school. School desks actually floated down the aisles. While water proofing improvements were being made during September and October, classes were held in the upper church and in the vacant store across from the church.
In March of 1927, the new rectory was ready for occupancy.

As the summer ended, the crowds went home, the days grew shorter, and Midland Beach prepared for its annual hibernation. Only a few stores remained opened for the dark winter months. It was like a ghost town with no lights in the stores and with even the street lights dimmed. There was no sign of life in Midland Beach on the weekend except the activities of St. Margaret Mary's Church. Activities here were plentiful and varied and included all age groups. The rolling partitions of the school basement provided space for plays and movies, weekly dances, meetings, bazaars, card parties, boxing exhibitions, cake sales, and basketball games.

Teams of both boys and girls flourished and their many victories brought them championship after championship. The young priest assistants of those years were active in organizing these teams. Father William Corley's name stands out for his boy's club that was open to boys of all faiths. A drama society was formed that was quite accomplished in its productions, which utilized the talents of the older members of the community as well as the youth.

The Mother's Club members of the parish were very active. They were responsible for the creation of many activities, including a Sewing Circle, altar and church care, a choir and lunch preparation for the Sisters.

The Holy Name Society, which attracted both the men and boys of the parish, was also an active organization boasting a huge membership. They sponsored a scholarship to St. Peter's High School, held dances in the Lincoln Hotel and the Democratic Club and also organized Smokers and boxing exhibitions. The Society also helped the parish in the parish bazaars, ran Communion breakfasts, sponsored a free lunch program, took an active part in civic activities and acted as sponsors for the Junior Holy Name Society.

Father Drury, our first pastor, was certainly an industrious man, struggling as he did with the early expenditures and renovations of the new parish. He seemed to consider all the people his own; the vacationer as well as the year-round parishioner. In the summer, he was known to frequent the beach at night, sending home all youngsters by 10:00pm and the older ones by 11:00pm. No one seemed to resent this "curfew"; rather they saw it as his expression
of interest in them and their children's welfare. Regardless, he insisted even from the altar, on compliance with his "family discipline" and would mention names of those he knew had not heeded his warning. Vacationing families tended to become lax in family discipline, so they respected his fatherly ways. In spite of his outwardly gruff exterior, his parishioners knew him to be a warm, loving pastor whose interest and charity aided many a family to get back on its feet without losing its self-respect. To some, he may have seemed patronizing, but we must remember the times and circumstances of his ministry.

With the stark impact of the depression on the working man and his family, a new need for security arose. The fast whirl of the twenties came to an abrupt stop before the wall of reality. The need for each other's support politically, socially, and religiously demanded serious decision making. By the mid-1930's, the depression had the nation in its grip and the people cried for relief. Millions were without jobs and had no money for food or clothing. Misery had replaced the happy confidence of the now vanished "day of prosperity."

Prohibition, the depression, the prior excitement of the twenties, the general atmosphere of a vacation place, called for a strong effective church and leader. St. Margaret Mary’s and Father Drury were certainly up to these challenging tasks and were prepared to take the hands of its parishioners and lead them onto God’s path for a brighter future.

Silver Period;
1936-1961

The year was 1936. Pius XI was the pontiff; being succeeded by Pius XII in 1939 and Blessed John XXIII in 1958. Patrick Joseph Cardinal Hayes was the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York; Cardinal Hayes held this position for another two years and upon his passing Francis Joseph Cardinal Spellman
oversaw our Archdiocese. We were in the midst of the Great Depression. The world was in conflict; Germany occupied the Rhineland, Italy annexed Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War began and China and Japan were at war. Franklin D. Roosevelt was our President and Fiorello H. LaGuardia had been our mayor for two years. Midland Beach’s growing population, with winterized homes, looks to the Church as the center of their religious and social life.

The Great Depression did more than anything else to keep Midland Beach on the map. The vacationers of the 1920's who owned summer bungalows and homes moved from their city apartments to save money, and the money they saved on rent was spent on winterizing their summer places. So, in a way, the depression saved the merchants of Midland Beach from going bankrupt. With the increase in the all year population, the stores remained opened later than usual, and the beach changed from a middle class summer resort into a year round active community.

The growing population looked to their church as the center of their social and religious life. It was in 1936 that Father Drury began the remodeling of the church so that people could worship in comfort. From 1936 to 1937 extensive renovations were carried out. The wooden beams of the church roof, which had begun to spread, were replaced by steel. The church was given a new brick veneer finish to harmonize with the rectory. The present belfry tower and the stairs to the front door were remodeled and a new heating system was installed. The beloved Sacred Heart window, showing the Sacred Heart appearing to St. Margaret Mary, was removed from over the main altar to its present position: the first window as you come into the church. The present sacristy was built on the rear of the church in back of the new altar. A 1936 cornerstone slab installed in front of the Church’s original 1921 cornerstone. This marked a new beginning for St. Margaret Mary parish.

The new, year round, low rent cottages that were insulated against winter (and little else) were open to other forms of nature’s catastrophes. Floods were frequent, fire always a threat, and little money was available for repairs. Life was a struggle and seemed to be going downhill. As late as 1939, 60% of the men of Midland beach were unemployed, many of them hopelessly in debt and harassed by finance companies. Fire insurance, second mortgages, home improvement loans were denied or were prohibitively
expensive due to the Midland Beach location. Home appraisals were extremely low compared with the rest of Staten Island because many of the bungalows were built in what was considered swamp area. The wooden structures were highly susceptible to fire damage, and to make things worse, most were surrounded by dry marshes in summer. Summer storms which swelled the ocean and flooded the properties near the shore weakened structural supports. Banks and insurance companies seemed unanimous in writing off the area. It was a vicious circle. A cloud of discouragement hung over the heads of the residents, but underlying it all, there was always a spirit present in the people that would not be extinguished. A kind of hope in the future and a sense of comradeship not to be found in other more prosperous communities.

What emerged from that terrible period was a personal sense of self esteem, a community pride of place and a prayerful confidence in the future. The chief instrument of this growth seemed to be the parish: the mutual efforts of the priests, sisters and laypeople brought about the renaissance of St. Margaret Mary's parish in Midland Beach.

A saddened congregation learned on March 17th, 1939, that Father Drury was to be transferred to St. Mary's Church in Kingston, New York, where he was made a Right Reverend Monsignor and the Dean of Ulster and Sullivan Counties of New York. The transfer of Father Drury created a high level of anxiety for the parishioners. How was the parish to survive?

On April 1st, 1939, little did the parishioners know that St. Margaret Mary’s would not only survive but would flourish under the guidance of its new, second pastor: Father John Monaghan. Father Monaghan was well known in the Archdiocese of New York for his work in the fields of labor and education. He had been a professor of history at Cathedral College Seminary and after receiving his Doctorate from Fordham University, was appointed professor in Fordham's Graduate School. Father Monaghan was also Chaplain of the American Catholic Trade Unionists and was recognized as an outstanding Catholic authority on labor problems in the United States. He conducted several important meetings of laymen at which the rights and obligations of labor as outlined in the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI were implemented. In early 1939, he had taken part in the mediation of the United Automobile Workers dispute.
One of the first things he told the parishioners of St. Margaret Mary's was, "We are a poor parish and we are going to do great things as a poor people." What his people needed, he knew, in these troubled times was the restoration of their dignity and self esteem. "Approval, security, the desire to belong to something, the need to put down roots in the community achievement of these things makes a person a man, regardless of his wealth or education," he is quoted as having said. By coordinating their efforts, Father Monaghan helped the people of St. Margaret Mary accomplish together as much as and more than many wealthier parishes had done. In these efforts, he was greatly helped by his two able Assistants, Father Riordan and Father Kelleher.

When Father Monaghan arrived, the classrooms of St. Margaret Mary's School had an enrollment of over 200 students, separated from one another only by the portable partitions. Now, permanent walls were erected to divide the basement into regular classrooms. As the enrollment increased over the years the school grew with it, expanding into one and two family cottages nearby. The bungalow in back of the church was remodeled for the 7th and 8th Grades. The interior of these classrooms were remarkably peaceful and colorful. Ferns, plants and goldfish aquariums were placed on the wide window sills, giving the children not only a new outlook on education but on life itself. They took personal pride in keeping their school spotlessly clean. They washed the windows, waxed the floors and desks, watered the plants, fed the fish and kept the aquarium clean and fresh. Each class had its own singing canaries. Their joy and pride spread to their families and to the community.

The area in back of the rectory was landscaped, providing an attractive lawn with planted flowers, evergreens, shrubs and a shrine of St. Francis of Assisi overlooking a birdbath and surrounded by benches. Father Monaghan had the play areas to the left of the rectory covered with asphalt, planted new shade trees, erected benches and provided a drinking fountain for the children.
The school library was well stocked and was opened to the general public in the evenings. In addition to the general school library, albums of good classical music were made available for listening in each class, and inexpensive copies of great works of art, mostly classical, were hung on the walls. The children were made to feel the school was theirs, and they were given a good deal of responsibility for its operation. They managed the library, school store, and published their own school paper and yearbook.

In 1940, Mother M. Michael left St. Margaret Mary and Sister Mary Francis became our second Principal. Sister Mary Francis served in this post until 1944, when Sister Mary Bernadette was appointed Principal.

Most importantly, the children carried into their homes an appreciation of the beauty they saw around them in the school and some degree of the initiative and self reliance which were encouraged there by the Sisters of the Presentation Order. Father Mongahan encouraged the parents to work closely with the Sisters and the school. He said, "Parents will sacrifice to stand by a school in which their children learn well and are well beloved."

The newly awakened spirit of the people was evident in the Christmas and Holy Week Pageants so excellently performed and staged, that people came from all over the Island to see the children perform. The sports program also received its share of enthusiastic support; the basketball teams were included in the Island wide playoffs almost every year.

For the young men of the parish, Father Monaghan rebuilt and furnished the Old Colony Club, and with the help of his Assistant, Father Tim Carmody, formed a Boy's Club; boxing, one act plays, dances and parties, were among their varied activities.

Father Monaghan's expertise in working with labor problems and unions made his influence felt by the working men of the parish. He demanded that the men of the parish get involved in the leadership within their unions; passivity was out. He encouraged their attendance at long winded union meetings and their seeking office as union representatives. Many of these unions were hostile to new blood and many were run by a hoodlum element that the workers were reluctant to interfere with. One parishioner was sent by Father Monaghan to a union meeting, spoke up for his rights and the rights of his fellow workers, and following the long meeting, was badly beaten up. After leaving the hospital, he went to Father Monaghan to show the futility of
Father's approach. Father sent him back to the next union meeting, broken arm and all.

He subsequently was elected by the men as a union representative. A sense of personal pride and initiative was taking hold throughout Midland Beach, and the people felt it was Father Monaghan's leadership that showed the way.

In addition, Father Monaghan began the dialogue Mass which became the heart of the parish religious life. Using their leaflet missals, parishioners recited aloud, in English, most of the parts of the Mass. The priest at the altar adjusted his pace so that they could follow the Mass with him while the assisting priest lead the congregation in the English language from the aisle. Holidays, civil and religious, were meaningfully celebrated by the parish in processions, hymns and the laying of wreaths at the Wayside Cross.

Many homeowners have reason to be grateful to Father Monaghan, who instigated the organizations of the Midland Beach Federal Credit Union in December of 1946. It functioned as a bank where you could borrow money for your needs at the interest rate of 1% per month. "The idea of saving and loaning our own money to our neighbors is another instance of helping each other as one family," he said.

These were also the years of World War II and many families in the parish had to face the absence or death of their loved ones. Servicemen, living and dead were remembered in the prayers of the people throughout the year, and lists of military men from the Beach were posted in the church.

It seems that these same people of the past decades, the twenties and thirties, who had needed the firm hand and take over of a Father Drury, now, had new needs and the needs called for a new approach from their pastor. As the country had grown up, so had the people of Midland Beach.

As busy as he was, Father Monaghan did not neglect the parish
buildings. Under his direction, the church was redecorated in
the mid-40's. The inside of the Church was redecorated in
accordance with its Lombard type of architecture.

In June 1949, St. Brigit’s Hall on Olympia Boulevard was built
for the 8th Grade classroom. The bungalow classroom included
a full modern kitchen in the rear that was used for cooking
lessons. Again the windows were decorated with drapes,
plants, goldfish aquariums and decorative sets of books. Two
shiny brass cages housed singing canaries. There also was a
small upright piano and bench. The 8th Grade girls were proud
of making their own graduation dresses in those years.

It was at this time that Mrs. Irving McKee joined the teaching
staff of St. Margaret Mary’s School, a position she was to hold
for a quarter of a century. Three generations of families were
to benefit from her teaching, her leadership and her warm
smile. Upon her retirement, she carried the love of all who
knew her.

Because of its location, rainstorms and high tides, and
consequent flooding, have always been part and parcel of life
for the residents of Midland Beach. The worst in recent history
occurred on November 25th, 1950 at 7:00 a.m. Wind and rain
of hurricane proportions hit the eastern seashore and continued
without abatement throughout the day.

Midland Beach was particularly affected. Midland Avenue was
completely inundated and many homes were under up to five
feet of water. The wind velocity reached 105 miles per hour,
ripping off roof shingles and knocking out electric power and
telephone lines. The people rallied together to deal with the
sudden emergency. The church became the natural
headquarters for the rescue workers since the church properties
were the only ones in the area which had an emergency
gasoline generator to provide power. The first necessity was to
rescue the people stranded by the flood waters. A United
States amphibious "Duck" was sent from the Brooklyn Army
Base. But most of the stranded population was evacuated by
row boats from as far away as Hunter Avenue. Father
Kelleher and Father Riordan organized some of the
parishioners in operating row boats and directing people to the
church, where Sister Mary Bernadette and Father Monaghan
did much to organize and reassure the confused and frightened
people. An emergency canteen was set up and staffed by the
women of the parish. They also organized the distribution of clothing that arrived in constant streams from people from other sections of Staten Island. The Sisters of Presentation had organized their own rescue center in the school basement where they labored from early morning on that terrible day. When the worst was over, there was still much to be done. The New York Catholic Charities came to the aid of the beleaguered people. The members of the St. Margaret Mary Holy Name Society and the men of the Moravian Church on Greeley Avenue organized a relief group known as the Midland Beach Flood Relief Committee. On the Monday following the storm, Father Monaghan had even turned the rectory into a Red Cross Emergency Center. Lights in the neighborhood would not be on for another week yet. He and Father Riordan made a personal survey of homes in the vicinity to ascertain what was most urgently needed.

But the school children did not lose any school days while their homes were being rehabilitated. The Sisters of the Presentation were close to the needs of the families of Midland Beach; their presence, their reassurance to the children was always there. The "Our Parish" Bulletin of December 3rd, 1950 (eight days after the flood) read as follows and it said what most felt and wanted to say:

"Let's give thanks to the Lord our God
for all thy mercies,
so radiantly shown in the heroism of our people;
in neighborliness that opened wide every door to the homeless;
in love that poured itself out
in serving cleaning, waiting and caring for all ...

We give thee thanks
O Lord, This Day."

Aside from the flood in December 1950, the fifties were generally a time of quiet expansion. Pre-Cana Conferences for engaged couples were initiated and the Catholic Family Movement stressed the scriptures and teaching of the Church Magisterial. Service to one's Church and community was the spirit that brought many to the aid of the parishioners of the parish and the three priests who did so much for St. Margaret
Mary's Church. A Blood Bank was formed by Father Riordan for St. Margaret Mary parishioners and friends, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Summertime trips to Lake Hopatcong began in the late 50's and would continue through 1973.

The Catholic Information Center was formed by Father Kelleher in the early 1950's. It was open to all, Catholics and non-Catholics, and was held in St. John's Hall each Monday of the month. Books, pamphlets, a talk, and a question period made up the series which were well attended by people from all sections of Staten Island. In 1951, His Eminence Cardinal Francis Spellman appointed Father Kelleher to be a canonical judge in the Marriage Court of the Archdiocese. Not that he left St. Margaret Mary's, for he continued in residence here.

On August 12th, Father Monaghan announced his plan of building another school building along side St. Brigit's Hall to be named Presentation Hall in honor of the Presentation Sisters who had served our community in its school since 1925; in 1976, the Sisters of the Presentation celebrated their 200th Anniversary. At this time, a new colored slate sidewalk was laid around the entire Church which added an artistic surrounding to our Church.

The growth of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) brought vibrant religious instruction to the ever growing numbers of children attending the public schools. The zoning of school districts had placed Midland Beach children in the Public School 41 and Public School II districts. A volunteer staff arranged for car transport and teachers' aides, and the trained instructors made the religious education program of St. Margaret Mary's Parish a viable one. It is interesting to note that many of the same "old" names were again the volunteers in these years. Nor were the older children forgotten. A Newman Club was formed at New Dorp High School, and all teenagers were encouraged to participate in a high school religious program held in the evenings. In addition, teen dances were held every two weeks. It is interesting to note that boys were required to wear suits and ties to be admitted to the hall.

As financial costs rose, the summer bazaars became vital to the parish and again the volunteer workers came out annually. A great deal of work and preparation was needed to assure the success of the bazaars at which a new car was raffled off each
year. The summer vacationers to the beach made up a large part of those that attended, and the substantial income was helpful in meeting the yearly parish expenses.

As far back as the early 1940’s, the St. Margaret Mary Choir has received awards in citywide competition. Groups appeared on television and radio. The Staten Island Chorale received fame throughout the Archdiocese during the years of its existence.

The building of Presentation Hall was a milestone in the history of the parish. Ground was broken and blessed in 1953 on April 19th. The culmination of long months of planning, supplemented by the cooperation and financial backing of the people. The structure as it stands now provided classrooms for the 6th and 7th grade youngsters. What is now the Principal's office was even more functional originally, when it served as a dining area for the teaching staff.

On the afternoon of September 25th, 1954, the new annex to the school was dedicated by His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, the Archbishop of New York. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Richard Pigott gave the homily at the church and the ceremony concluded with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

With everything going so well, the parish was both shocked and saddened when on November 14th, 1954, they read the following letter in the “Our Parish Bulletin”:

My Very Dear Friends
These fifteen years we have worked together to the greater glory of God and the betterment of the Community. God Bless our work.
He blessed me with the affectionate knowledge of the best people I have ever known. I had hoped to stay always with
you; and the greater part of me still remains with love.
I am grateful to my Protestant and Jewish brethren for their cooperation and friendliness and to my own dear parishioners for their generosity and affection. To the Sisters of the Presentation I owe a debt beyond the measure of words. The priests who have worked with me have been brothers in Christ and each of them a faithful servant to you, the servants of God. All of you and our own dear children I shall keep prayerfully forever before God.
The priest passes, the Church remains. You will find Father Joseph Hyland, your new pastor, kind, good, and anxious to serve you in Christ. Welcome him, and work with him, as in the past you did with me.
As you love me, make me no gift at all, only the remembrance of your heart.

Gratefully and affectionately,
Father Monaghan

Father Joseph Hyland was warmly received by the parishioners of St. Margaret Mary's.

The school continued to flourish in the traditions that were now so much part of St. Margaret Mary. But soon the new rules and regulations and the new efficiency of the New York City Board of Education began to affect the uniqueness of this “campus” school. New rules for children’s safety, new health and fire regulations, resulted in the gradual disappearance of the "little things" that made these classrooms so distinctive. The window flower boxes had to be removed as did the decorative drapes and curtains. The singing of the canaries was now only a memory in the classroom. The children's maintenance of their own classrooms had to be discontinued as legal regulations prohibited such participation on the part of school children. Insurance coverage regulations became the rule of thumb. Society was becoming ever more sophisticated and legally restrictive. Although in the best interests of society in general, this had both beneficial and detrimental consequences to the self determined community such as the parish school had become.
The influx of a Spanish colony was met with the addition of: Father Gonzalez, Father Madrid, and later Father Barturen joined the existing staff for several months each year. Masses, confessions and baptisms were celebrated in Spanish as a benefit and as a welcome to these parish newcomers.

In 1956, the City Board of Education rezoned the area public school students so that the members of our parish now attended Public School 38 and St. Margaret Mary Parish began the weekly CCD instruction of the children.

During this time several young men were ordained to the priesthood. Among these were Father Vincent Clyne of Baden Place, Father Vincent Fox of Baden Place, (December 1954), Father Arthur Craig of Colony Avenue, (June, 1955), and Father Sylvester McGinn (June, 1956).

On September 22nd, 1960 the parish mourned the death of Father Joseph Hyland. It was Father Hyland who began the plans for the new convent for the Sisters who staffed our school.

Father Vincent A. Julian became the fourth pastor of St. Margaret Mary's parish on October 15th, 1960. On January 19th, 1961, Mr. Edward Dunne, who had served the church for so many years as its trustee, died in St. Vincent's Hospital. His death was a great loss to St. Margaret Mary parish.

Golden Period; 1961-1986

and the first Catholic President. “Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.”
became the aspiration of the nation. Tragically at 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time on Friday, November 22, 1963, Midland Beach and the nation mourned his assassination, in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas.

By October of 1961, the convent was readied for the Sisters. On May 12th, 1962, Cardinal Spellman dedicated the new convent at 555 Greeley Avenue. The ceremony was very impressive as once again the school children lined the streets near the convent. On that same day, Father Vincent Julian was elevated by the Cardinal to the rank of Rt. Rev. Monsignor, making the occasion all the more festive. On June 23rd, 1962, our beloved Pope John XXIII died, but not before the Second Vatican Council was in full sway and the new approach to the life of the church was upon us.

In the 1960s, Sister Mary Loyola O'Keeffe became the school’s 4th Principal. Sister Mary served our children and parish for almost 30 years, until 1990.

In January 1963, Monsignor Julian suffered a heart attack and was rushed to St. Vincent's Hospital. The parishioners were called upon to pray for his recovery. Their prayers answered, he returned to the parish in March of that year.

In October, 1963 Assistant Pastor Father John Devlin took seriously ill and was admitted to St. Vincent's Hospital. Again, the prayers and good wishes of the people were called on and Father was back performing his priestly duties by March, 1964. But by June, he was re-hospitalized, this time he did not recover. He died July 18th, 1964; Bishop John Maguire offered the Pontifical Mass before hundreds of priests, Sisters and laity, a proper tribute to the far reaching effects of this man's priestly gift of himself to the parishioners of St. Margaret Mary.

Father Duffy was the next assigned Assistant and was to remain until September of 1965, when he was assigned to the teaching staff of the new Cardinal Spellman High School. Father Duffy continued Father Devlin's tradition working for the teenagers of the parish. Many will remember the teen and pre-teen "Canteen" he had going in the Hall, Wednesdays and Fridays, winter and summer. A swimming program was begun
and the teens produced their own musical comedy plays. The enthusiasm spread throughout the area.

Drug abuse had become a real problem on Midland Beach and Father Duffy did much to relate to this problem of the teens and to make the adults of the community aware of its terrible effects. Public meetings were held, giving drug information to those concerned. Such knowledge did much to curb the growth of this disease in our community.

In September of 1965, Father Robert J. Navins, our future pastor, became an Assistant at St. Margaret Mary's where he remained for six years. He did much in our parish for the Head Start Program.

October 7th, 1966 was the date of the fire that nearly destroyed St. Brigit’s Hall (the 8th Grade classroom). Caused by a gas heating unit malfunction, the upper part of the bungalow dwelling was destroyed.

The impact of the new freedom of Vatican "opened avenues of career changes within the priesthood and sisterhood. The number of vocations to religious life was sharply decreasing. The number of sisters available to staff the many schools of Staten Island could not keep up with the demands. To be fair to all, an equitable distribution was called for. More and more lay teachers were added to the staff. St. Margaret Mary's continued in God's favor in the fine caliber of her lay staff. The spirit must have been contagious as really fine men and women were there to greet our youngsters in the fall of each year. We of this parish have much to thank God for.

In 1968 and 1969 we saw the school field days at the beachfront sponsored by the pastor, Monsignor Hanley, but he was to leave us by August, 1969.

September 7th, 1969, brought Monsignor Casper Wolf as our new pastor. It also brought a September storm that flooded the church and school areas. The hall had three feet of water and one had to use boots to cross Olympia Boulevard. A poor picture indeed for the new Monsignor. All was well again on the beautiful fall day, September 28th that was Monsignor Wolf's installation day.

The seventies were to be difficult times for this now veteran parish of Midland Beach. The rise of operating costs, the need
for constant building repair, and salary expenses rendered a bleak financial picture to Monsignor Wolf and to the Diocesan Board of Education. Well meaning suggestions included the possibility of merging our school with our neighboring parish, St. Christopher's, and even the closing of St. Margaret Mary's was brought before the people. How committed were the people to their school? How much were they willing to sacrifice for its survival? Was the school a vital part of the community of faith that worshipped there? The answers were loud and clear. Again a conflict brought us all together with a new awareness of our own identity. Meetings were held to explore the feelings of all parishioners, since all, the young and the old, would be involved with the continuance of our school. The shared effort brought about new areas of financing the parish, the now "700" Club had its beginning then. The beginnings of the parish council were there; the monthly school collection of the church began. With this came other signs of growth with organizations like the Mid-Grant Civic Association, and the new Golden Age Club for our senior citizens and the volunteers for our school reading program, the library staff, etc. The annual parish celebration for couples married 25 and 50 years began then also.

February 1st, 1972 brought the shocking news of the death of Monsignor Wolf, who had been hospitalized since December. The Solemn Requiem Masses that were concelebrated by over fifty priests with Cardinal Cooke was a fine expression of faith in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. As the entourage of cars brought Monsignor Wolf's body to the Church, the children lined the streets and the 8th Graders acted as an honor guard to the hearse. The solemn dignity of those few days touched the pride of every parishioner of St. Margaret Mary.

It would be a few months before a new pastor would be assigned but all the Sisters and the people banded together in a cooperative effort to help Father Thomas Mullin administer the parish.

April 1st, 1972 brought Father Frederick J. Miller, who had spent most of his priesthood here on Staten Island, as our new pastor. He was warmly welcomed and all were invited to his installation as pastor on April 23rd. With the combined efforts of the parish council and the varied clubs, the financial difficulties, the needed repairs, the restoration of the buildings
have began and were being met one by one. Once again there is a teen program, a swimming club, and a thriving Scout program.

In 1979, the Midland Beach community welcomed a long awaited installation of a large storm sewer system, down Greeley Avenue. With a long history of flooding, this new system has resolved the Greeley Avenue area floods.

In 1984, Father George Walsh became our 9th pastor. While Father Walsh, was with us for a short time, his strong advocacy for the education of our children is still remembered today. In 1988, the parish mourned the passing of Father Walsh.

In celebrating our Golden Anniversary, Father Mullin wrote: “The parishioners of St. Margaret Mary's can look forward with every hope of success to the future of their parish and their community. They have a past filled with life experiences that have made them a parish community, an open community, a group of people who are interested in the spiritual welfare of those around them, working and praying together, a parish family who believes that Christ lives and lives in their neighbors.” With these words, St. Margaret Mary’s moved onward with its ever constant challenges and blessings.

**Diamond Period; 1986-2011**

1986. John Paul II has been our Pontiff for eight years and will oversee the Papacy for another eighteen years; his reign is the second longest in our Church’s history. He was succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. John Joseph Cardinal O’Connor was our Archbishop, succeeding Terence James Cardinal Cooke in 1983 and being succeeded by Edward Michael Cardinal Egan in 2000 and Archbishop Timothy Michael Dolan in 2009. Ronald Reagan continued to be our President. Restoration of prosperity and a goal of “peace through strength” were felt throughout the land.
The Midland Beach community continues its pattern of changing demographics. While remaining mostly Irish American, with a significant Hispanic population, the 1990s began witnessing a large influx of Russian immigrants. Today, the bungalows built as summer homes have either been replaced with new houses or are owned or rented for permanent residence.

According to compiled data, St. Margaret Mary parish is the poorest parish on Staten Island based on per capita income. This is not new. As Father Monaghan told his congregation in 1939: "We are a poor parish and we are going to do great things as a poor people." This was the ongoing challenge Father Robert Navins faced upon his becoming our 10th pastor in December, 1988.

Father Navins was a strong supporter of our school and youth programs. With tight resources, our school and church programs continued its outstanding works in developing our children’s academic, spiritual and physical well being. This was no easy task. Father Navins was blessed with a supportive group of active parishioners and school staff.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Midland Beach community and St. Margaret Mary’s witnessed a rebirth of community activism. Through the leadership of local Community Board #2, social issues were vigorously brought to our local politicians. Parishioners and residents took to the streets in protest of the activities in and around the Midland Avenue Hotel & Lounge. The quality of life in our community was being addressed and improvements made.

On November 7th, 1992 the Midland Beach Veterans Memorial was dedicated to those Staten Island residents who served and died in World War I, World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Our thanks and prays are with:

World War I
♦ Charles C. Krider

World War II
♦ Joseph Aloj ♦ James J. Molloy ♦ Charles E. Steiniger
♦ John J. Kohm ♦ Andrew T. Ott

Korea
♦ John J. Craig ♦ Paul E. Pakides, Jr.
1995 saw the beginning of a redevelopment of Midland, Ocean Breeze, Graham and South Beaches. In a period of less than 10 years, the beaches and waters of the lower bay were restored and cleaner. The wooden boardwalk was replaced. Playgrounds, ball fields, and picnic areas were created and old facilities improved. An 835 foot fishing pier was opened in 2002. A senior park was also built, along with the Freedom Circle, Dolphin and Sea Turtle Fountains. As these massive improvements were being made, the nation’s and our neighborhood’s financial climate steadily improved. Real estate value was increasing and new homes were being built where run down bungalow stood. It was during this period, much needed improvements to St. Margaret Mary’s were made. New flooring was installed, the entire church was painted and the Bell Tower and roof were repaired.

September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001, a date that will live forever in our nation’s prayers and memory. On this beautiful September morning, 19 terrorists hijacked 4 airplanes killing nearly 3,000 innocent people. American Flight 11 was flown into the north Tower of the World Trade Center and United Airlines Flight 175 was flown into the south Tower. American Airlines Flight 77 was flown into the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. It was through the courage of the passengers on Flight 93 that even more innocents weren’t killed.

St. Margaret Mary shared in the nation’s grief. The Midland Beach community lost 7 of our own:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Capt. Marty Egan
  \item Lt. Harvey Harrell
  \item Lt. Stephen Harrell
  \item Vincent Laieta
  \item Lt. Phil Petti
  \item Firefighter Allan Tarasiewicz
  \item Patrick Woods
\end{itemize}

On October 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 2005 neighborhood residents, and invited guests celebrated the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Olympia Activity Center (OAC). This two story, $1.7 million building, is the home to a full length basketball court, 20 seat computer room and meeting room. The children of the neighbor now had their own state of the art facility. The adults now had a place to host
events and group meetings.

This day was 12 years in the making. It started with cheerleaders and Scouts "canning" for change on street corners, and fund-raising sausage and pepper stands at St. Margaret Mary's annual bazaar, and a handful of dollars from some parish car washes. Most importantly, it was the dedicated and hard work of:

♦ Bob Dennis ♦ James Martinos ♦ Larry Nelson
♦ Joe Funk ♦ John Navarro ♦ John Tiplady
♦ Dominic Leone ♦ Father Navins ♦ Rusty Thornton

that made this dream a reality. These men never accepted "it can't be done". They made it happen by obtaining government grants, corporate and private donations.

"There are wealthier parishes and communities in my district, but there aren't any richer in spirit than Midland Beach," said City Councilman James Oddo (R-Mid-Island). Staten Island Advance Editor Brian Laline said "This is a humble community, and they did this in such a humble way. They didn't look for a handout". [Staten Island Advance, October 24, 2005].

In recognition for all the good works and support to the youth of the parish, an annual Father Navins Basketball Tournament was organized in 2005. It has been held for the last six years with hundreds of children participating. Through the dedicated leadership of John Tiplady, St. Margaret Mary’s sports programs continued its tradition of success.

In July, 2006 Fr. Navins, after 18 years of pastoral and 6 years of prior assistant pastoral service, announced his retirement. St. Margaret Mary’s was blessed with his guidance and service. He retired to Sacred Heart on Castleton Avenue, Staten Island. Father Navins was replaced with Reverend Keith G. Fennessy.

It was also in 2006, that Sister Barbara Heclo retired as our school Principal after 6 years of unrelenting dedication to our children. Ms. Rita Vallebuona became our 7th school Principal.

As we saw a rebirth of our community in the 1990s and early 2000s, the later period of the 2000s saw a nation and community in financial distress. Life savings, pensions and homes were lost. Stores closed and unemployment became a horrific reality for many of our neighbors and parishioners. To this day, we are faced with the stresses of the financial collapse. But as we did in 1939,
were 60% of the men of Midland beach were unemployed, many of them hopelessly in debt and harassed by finance companies, we shall, through the grace of God, reprioritize our lives and survive this gray period.

It was with great joy that one of our parishioners was ordained into the holy sacrament of priesthood. On May 9th, 2009 Anthony Mizzi-Gili was ordained as a priest by Archbishop Timothy Dolan at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Father Mizzi-Gili had demonstrated his spiritual calling very early on, from his Boy Scouting years to his dedicated efforts as Choir Master.

In September, 2009 St. Margaret Mary’s went online with its very own web site; www.stmmso.org. The site, which was developed and is maintained by Jerry LePre, contains timely and informative Church, Youth Programs and OAC information.

**Church**
1. Location 10. Community News & Events  
2. Sacraments 11. Parish Office & Staff  
3. Readings & Prays 12. Contact Us  
4. Support & Volunteer 13. Parishioner Registration  
5. Ministries & Groups 14. CCD – Religious Education  
6. Altar Servers Schedule 15. Religious Links  
8. Our Story & Photo Tour 17. Neighboring Churches  

**Youth Programs**
1. Code Of Conduct 5. Sponsors  
2. Youth Program Prayers 6. Contact Us  
3. Bulldog Chronicle 7. Photo Album  
4. Awards 8. FYI - Sports Links

**OAC**
1. Location 3. Reservation Request  
2. Calendar 4. About Us

In the 2 years of its existence, the site has had over 4,100 visits.

May through July, 2010 was a tumultuous period for St. Margaret Mary’s. It came under nationwide debate when the sale of the convent to the Muslim American Society was stopped.
Father Fennessy faced many of the same challenges prior pastors faced, including declining school enrollment and financial demands.

With the desire to generate funds, Father Fennessy without the board of trustees approval signed off on the sale of the empty convent on Greely Avenue to the Muslim American Society. The convent would be converted to a mosque. The Midland Beach community became outraged when the potential sale was discovered. Protesters organized and began a campaign to stop the sale. Upon further research and consideration and with community and the board of trustees input, Father Fennessy formally withdrew his endorsement of the mosque. He requested Archbishop Timothy Dolan to cancel the sale. The proposed sale was canceled.

In June, 2010 St. Margaret Mary’s was blessed with the arrival of Father Erno Diaz. Father Diaz’s arrival coincided with the resignation of Father Fennessy.

On the 1st Sunday in June, 2011 we welcomed the Korean Apostolate to the St. Margaret Mary’s family. Father Sung, the Korean Apostolate chaplain, celebrated the inaugural Mass.

In June, 2011, we were saddened with the closing of our School. As the demographics and economics have so significantly changed in Midland Beach over the years, St. Margaret Mary’s elementary school had experienced many years of declining enrollment. In June, 2011 our school of 86 years was forced to close.

The school had been experienced enrollment problems and had fought off closure since the 1970s. Through the creativity, initiatives and dedication of our pastors, principals, teachers, administrators, parents and children the school managed to continue operation at the highest academic and religious levels. But the trend could no long be fought.

St. Margaret Mary elementary school had served Staten Island, since 1925. Their mission, “to strengthen students in their studies and in their faith, and to give their students a strong foundation for a successful future”, was embedded within each teacher and child. Our school will be missed.

On August 27th - 28th, 2011 Staten Island experienced a fierce hurricane that generated 75 mile per hour winds and torrential rain falls. Prior to its arrival, Midland Beach residents were instructed
by New York City officials to evacuate the area. Hurricane Irene slammed into the city downing power lines, toppling trees and flooding entire neighborhoods. St. Margaret Mary’s suffered $100,000 in damage. The basements of the church, rectory and Presentation Hall were flooded with water up to 5 feet. Through the grace of God, only property damage occurred. No casualties were suffered.

On September 18th, 2011, in memory of the 10 year anniversary of the September 11th, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, several hundred people gathered, at St. Margaret Mary for a Remembrance Mass, and the unveiling and blessing of a 9/11 Memorial. The black granite memorial was installed in the front yard of the rectory. This stone commemorates the loss of the seven neighborhood residents who died and are forever remembered in our prays and in our hearts. Family of the fallen, as well as firefighters from Ladder Company 81, Engine Company 161, and Rescue 5, and members of Staten Island Pipe and Drums attended. Father Diaz blessed the memorial.

We are grateful to Gerri and Bill Owens and their committee for spearheading the fundraising drive and memorial dedication.

And on October 16th, 2011, St. Margaret Mary’s Parish will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the dedication of the church with a Mass of Thanksgiving. Father Diaz will be concelebrating the Mass with priests from the neighboring parishes, and
Monsignor James Dorney, Vicar for Staten Island, who will be the principal celebrant. October 16th aligns with the actual feast day of St. Margaret Mary.

A grand International Food Tasting luncheon follows the Mass at the Olympia Activity Center.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

In 1939, Father Monaghan took to the pulpit of St. Margaret Mary Church and delivered a stirring message: "We are a poor parish and we are going to do great things as a poor people".

With the grace of God, St. Margaret Mary will continue its mission of providing spiritual guidance and social outreach to the wonderful people of Midland Beach.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

The source for much of the above history was from:
♦ The History of Saint Margaret Mary Parish and Midland Beach by Tom McAndrew, Sr.
♦ St. Margaret Mary Jubilee Journal by Father Thomas J. Mullin, 1976
Firsts

♦ June 1914: the first Mass was offered in Midland Beach at the boardwalk Casino Hotel. Father Joseph A. Farrell celebrated the Mass and Christopher Daly was the altar boy.

♦ Palm Sunday, 1922: the first Mass is celebrated in the basement of the new church.

♦ The first altar boy was Arthur Sherman. He was followed by Joe "Pop" Mantovi.

♦ June, 1922: the first Mass is said in the upper church, without pews.

♦ Labor Day, 1922: our church is solemnly dedicated in the name of St. Margaret Mary. Our church becomes the first church in the United States to be named in her honor.

♦ September 14th, 1925: the school at St. Margaret Mary's Mission Church opens with 40 pupils. Tommy Kneeshaw was the first child registered. Genevieve Sullivan was the first girl.

♦ June, 1926: First graduating class of St. Margaret Mary (mission-church) school. The graduates were: Louis Black, Helen Lawler, Florence Aspinall, James McDonald, James Flood, and Andrew Mistler.

♦ July 4th, 1926: St. Margaret Mary Church becomes a parish and Father Martin F. Drury was appointed by Cardinal Hayes as the first pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church and School.

♦ July 6th, 1926: First recorded marriage; between Michael Brannon and Margaret Schedel of Barnes Avenue, now called Greeley Avenue. There were seven marriages altogether that first summer.

♦ July 9th, 1926: The first Funeral Mass was said for Nora Hines.

♦ July 18th, 1926: First recorded sacrament of baptism; the young girl's name was Josephine Reynolds. Twenty-Six years later, Josephine was married to John Stoy by Father Riordan at St. Margaret Mary.

♦ The first boy baptized was John Bader on July 25th, 1926.

♦ There were 13 baptisms that first year and 32 the next.
March of 1927: the new rectory is occupied.

May 7th, 1927: First Holy Communions. The 38 children ranged in age from six to fifteen years.

May, 1927: First Confirmation was celebrated. 75 youngsters were conferred by the Auxiliary Bishop of New York, John J. Dunn. This would be the smallest number of confirmations until the 1960's. During the intervening years, confirmation was conferred every three years, each averaging over 100 children, whose average age was twelve years.

1936: Extensive remodeling and reconstruction to the church. The 1936 cornerstone is installed over the original 1921 stone. This marks a new beginning for the church.

September 25th, 1954: the new annex to the school (Presentation Hall) was dedicated by His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, the Archbishop of New York.

June 2nd, 1959: The first Bingo sponsored by the Church was held at the Lincoln Hotel. As time went on the attendance at Bingo would slacken until it was finally dropped as a parish activity and source of revenue.

October, 1961: the new convent at 555 Greeley Avenue was readied for the Sisters. On May 12th, 1962, Cardinal Spellman dedicated the new convent.

October 23rd, 2005; the Olympia Activity Center opened for St. Margaret Mary and the Midland Beach community. The OAC Officers were: Dominic Leone, Chairman, Joe Funk, Vice Chairman and Bob Dennis, Treasurer.
Our Pastors and Administrators

♦ Mission Church Pastor –
  Right Reverend Monsignor
  Joseph Farrell; 1917 – 1926.
♦ 1st - Reverend Martin F. Drury;
  June, 1926 – March, 1939.
♦ 2nd - Reverend John Monaghan, PhD;
  April, 1939 – 1954.
♦ 3rd - Reverend Joseph Hyland;
♦ 4th - Monsignor Vincent A. Julian;
  1960 – ….
♦ 5th - Monsignor John Hanley;
  … - August, 1969.
♦ 6th - Monsignor Casper Wolf;
♦ 7th - Thomas J. Mullin, Administrator;
  February, 1972 – April, 1972
♦ 8th - Reverend Frederick J. Miller; April, 1972 – 1984.
♦ 10th - Reverend Robert J. Navins;
  December, 1988 – July, 2006. Father Navins also served as
  an assistant from 1965 to 1971.
♦ 12th - Reverend Erno Diaz, Administrator;
  June, 2010 – Current.

Our School Principals

♦ 1st - Mother M. Michael; 1925 - 1940.
♦ 2nd - Sister Mary Francis; 1940 - 1944.
♦ 3rd - Sister Mary Bernadette; 1944 – 1960’s.
♦ 7th - Ms. Rita Vallebuona; 2006 – 2011.
Saint Margaret Mary (Marguerite Marie Alacoque) was born on July 22nd, 1647 at Lhautecour, France. From early childhood, Margaret was described as showing intense love for the Blessed Sacrament (the Eucharist), and preferring silence and prayer to childhood play. After her First Communion, at the age of nine, she practiced in secret severe corporal mortification until paralysis confined her to bed for four years. At the end of this period, having made a vow to the Blessed Virgin to consecrate herself to religious life, she was instantly restored to perfect health. [1]

**Visions**
Marguerite had visions of Jesus Christ, which she thought were a normal part of the human experience and continued to practice austerity. In one vision, she saw Jesus crucified but alive. Jesus reproached her for forgetfulness of Him, claiming His Heart was filled with love for her due to her promise. On May 25th, 1671, in response to this vision, Marguerite entered the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial intending to become a nun. [1] She was almost 24 years old.

Marguerite was admitted to wearing the religious habit on August
25th, 1671. During the first year at the convent, she was subjected to many trials to prove the genuineness of her vocation [2]. Finally, she pronounced her final vows on November 6th, 1672. She changed her baptismal name of Marguerite (Margaret) to her religious name of Marguerite-Marie (Margaret Mary).

In the convent she received several revelations of the Sacred Heart, the first on December 27th, 1673, and the final one 18 months later. The visions revealed to her the form of the devotion, the chief features being Holy Communion on the First Friday of each month, the Holy Hour on Thursdays, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart.[3]

Initially, Margaret was rebuffed by her superior, Mother de Saumaise, in her efforts to follow the instructions she had received in the visions. She eventually won her over but was unable to convince a group of theologians of the validity of her apparitions, nor was she any more successful with many of the members of her community. She received the support of Saint Claude de la Colombiere, the community's confessor for a time, who declared that the visions were genuine.

In 1683, opposition in the community ended when Mother Melin was elected Superior and named Margaret Mary her assistant. Margaret later became Novice Mistress, and beginning in 1686 saw the convent observe the feast of the Sacred Heart privately. Two years later, a chapel was built at the Paray-le-Monial to honor the Sacred Heart. [4]

Beatification
After Margaret Mary's death, on October 17th, 1690, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was fostered by the Jesuits. It continued to be the subject of controversy within the Church. The Sacred Heart was not officially recognized for another 75 years. [3]

The discussion of Margaret’s mission continued for years. All her actions, revelations, spiritual maxims, teachings regarding the
devotion to the Sacred Heart, of which she was the chief exponent as well as the apostle, were subjected to the most severe and minute examination. Finally the Sacred Congregation of Rites passed a favorable vote on the heroic virtues of this "servant of God". In March 1824 Pope Leo XII pronounced Margaret Venerable (the first step on the path to canonized sainthood). When her tomb was canonically penned in July 1830, two instantaneous cures were recorded to have taken place.

On September 18th, 1864 Pope Pius IX declared her Blessed.

She was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920, and in 1929 her liturgical commemoration was included in the Roman Catholic calendar of saints for celebration on October 17th, the day of her death. In 1969 this date was assigned to a saint of the Apostolic Age, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, and the memorial of Saint Margaret Mary was moved to the previous day of October 16th.
In 1928, Pope Pius XI issued the Papal encyclical Miserentissimus Redemptor affirming the Church's position regarding the credibility of Saint Margaret Mary’s visions of Jesus Christ by speaking of Jesus as having "manifested Himself" to Saint Margaret Mary and having promised her that all those who rendered this honor to His Heart would be endowed with an abundance of heavenly graces. [5]

Her short devotional writing, *La Devotion au Sacré-Coeur de Jesus* (*Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*), was published posthumously by J. Croiset in 1698.

Her body rests under the altar in the chapel at Paray, France, and many striking blessings have been claimed by pilgrims attracted there from all parts of the world. [1]

**Patronage**
- Devotees of the Sacred Heart,
- those suffering with polio, and
- loss of parents.

**The Twelve Promises of Jesus to Saint Margaret Mary** [6]

For those devoted to His Sacred Heart:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their families.
3. I will console them in all their troubles.
4. They shall find in My Heart an assured refuge during life and especially at the hour of their death.
5. I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source of an infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall speedily rise to great perfection.
9. I will bless the homes where an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the power of touching the most hardened hearts.
(11) Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.
(12) The all powerful love of My Heart will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months the race of final repentance; they shall not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments; My heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.

From a letter by Saint Margaret Mary [6]
The sacred heart of Christ is an inexhaustible fountain and its sole desire is to pour itself out into the hearts of the humble so as to free them and prepare them to lead lives according to his good pleasure.

From this divine heart three streams flow endlessly. The first is the stream of mercy for sinners; it pours into their hearts sentiments of contrition and repentance. The second is the stream of charity which helps all in need and especially aids those seeking perfection in order to find the means of surmounting their difficulties. From the third stream flow love and light for the benefit of his friends who have attained perfection; these he wishes to unit to himself so that they may share his knowledge and commandments and, in their individual ways, devote themselves wholly to advancing his glory.

This divine heart is an abyss filled with all blessings, and into the poor should submerge all their needs. It is an abyss of joy in which all of us can immerse our sorrows. It is an abyss of lowliness to counteract our foolishness, an abyss of mercy for the wretched, an abyss of love to meet our every need.

Are you making no progress in prayer? Then you need only offer God the prayers which the Savior has poured out for us in the sacrament of the altar. Offer God his fervent love in reparation for your sluggishness. In the course of every activity pray as follows: “My God, I do this or I endure that in the heart of your Son and according to his holy counsels. I offer it to you in
reparation for anything blame worthy or imperfect in my actions.”;
Continue to do this in every circumstance of life.

But above all preserve peace of heart. This is more valuable than any treasure. In order to preserve it there is nothing more useful than enouncing your own will and substituting for it the will of the divine heart. In this way his will can carry out for us whatever contributes to his glory, and we will be happy to be his subjects and to trust entirely in him.

Quote
"And He [Christ] showed me that it was His great desire of being loved by men and of withdrawing them from the path of ruin that made Him form the design of manifesting His Heart to men, with all the treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification and salvation which it contains, in order that those who desire to render Him and procure Him all the honor and love possible, might themselves be abundantly enriched with those divine treasures of which His heart is the source." — from Revelations of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

References
[1] St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, Catholic Encyclopedia.
[2] The Life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque by Émile Bougaud
[3] Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, article Margaret
   Mary Alacoque, St (Oxford University Press 2005.
[4] Catholic Online: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque
Wikipedia online encyclopedia was used as a general reference.
Prayer to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque
For the Graces of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saint Margaret Mary, thou who wast made a partaker of the divine treasures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, obtain for us, we beseech thee, from this adorable Heart, the graces we need so sorely. We ask these favors of thee with unbounded confidence. May the divine Heart of Jesus be pleased to bestow them upon us through thy intercession, so that once again He may be loved and glorified through thee. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O blessed Margaret;
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst wondrously open the unsearchable riches of Thy Heart to blessed Margaret Mary, the virgin: grant unto us, by her merits and our imitation of her, that we may love Thee in all things and above all things, and may be worthy to have our everlasting dwelling in the same Sacred Heart: who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.
Our Parish Family

Administrator: Reverend Erno Diaz

Deacons: Deacon Patrick Graham

Trustees: Joseph Funk
Frank Sajdak

CCD: Sister Amelia Cueva, CSJB
(718) 351-2612
Email: mmaryreled1@si.rr.com

Accounting: Bob Dennis

Rectory Staff: Jeanne deBerendey, Volunteer
Peggy Rybarczyk, Volunteer

Choir: Barbara Regan, Music Minister

Golden Age: Darlene Palazzo

Web Administrator: Jerry LePre
(www.stmmsi.org)

Scripture Study
Contact: Rectory; Mondays after the 9:00am Mass & 7:30pm There are 2 Scripture Study Group sessions. Both are always open for new members. We read the appropriate reading from the missalette, then read a small commentary on the reading and answer a question. If you want to offer an answer or not it is up to you. It is done very informally.

Youth Programs
The parish of St Margaret Mary’s has an abundance of programs both athletic and non-athletic. All programs strive to create an atmosphere where children are provided a safe and wholesome
arena to express their own personalities and skills suited for that activity.

♦ Sports Programs: ER Reems
St. Margaret Mary’s extends a heart felt and warmest of THANK YOU to John Tiplady for his unending contributions to the youth of the parish and the community. John had directed the Youth Program for many years and through his dedication and devotion has made St. Margaret Mary’s a better place.

OAC: ER Reems

75th Anniversary Committee:
♦ Reverend Erno Diaz ♦ Jerry LePre
♦ Bob Dennis ♦ Staci Memmesheimer
♦ Linda Clemenza ♦ Stephan Park
♦ Joe Funk ♦ Peggy Rybarczyk
♦ Debbie Leone

**********

There are scores of people who have devoted themselves to the works at St. Margaret Mary that aren’t mentioned in this Journal; including Altar Servers, Administration, Choir Members, Coaches, Eucharistic Ministers, Event Workers, Fundraisers, Church and School Maintenance and Renovation Staff and Volunteers, Rectory and School Staff and Volunteers, Scout Leaders, and of course the wonderful Sisters, Deacons and Priests that have devoted their lives to our parish.

These people made St. Margaret Mary the spiritual, cultural and social beacon to the Midland Beach community. An eternal pray of gratitude is offered to all who have served and participated at St. Margaret Mary.

Thank you!
The Dennis Family

Bob, Chris, Yadira, Jade, Ken, Jenn & Mia
Congratulations
St. Margaret Mary’s
Parish

Funk Family
Keller Family

McManamon Family
Smith Family
Congratulations on 75 remarkable years.

Lorraine & Jerry LePre

God Grant us
the serenity to accept the things we can not change,
the courage to change the things that we can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love of our Christ be with always St. Margaret Mary

Father Hyunsang Sung
Korean Catholic Apostolate of Staten Island
The Sabbatino Family has been a part of St. Margaret Mary since 1974. The parish has been a source of comfort, education and joy over the years. Jennifer, Philip & Anthony all attended SMM School and flourished while there. From the earliest years when Father Miller was pastor to the present Phil & I have always looked forward to our participation in church and the words above the altar “the kingdom of God is within you” will always hold a special place in my heart. It is with pleasure that we participate in this Parish History Journal and give thanks that we were blessed with a wonderful parish.

“A house is more than paint & walls & ceilings and floors
A house is a history of all those people it has sheltered
And when we move away, we leave behind us the persons we were then
The prints of our fingers on the door frame, the marks on the floor we walked
The whisper of our voices and all of those things that were done and said”
From The McKay and Piraino Families

In Memory of the McAndrew Family
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love of our Christ be with always St. Margaret Mary

Stephan and Monica Park
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love
of our Christ be with always
St. Margaret Mary

Korean Catholic Apostolate
of Staten Island
Congratulations
St. Margaret Mary

The Owens Family
Kathleen
Gerri & Bill
Kerri, Chris, James & Anthony
Jenn & Bill
Colleen
Katie, Peter & Connor James
Congratulations on your 75th Anniversary.

The Tuzzolo Family
Congratulations on 75 Beautiful Years!

Our family is so grateful to have been part of it!

The Memmesheimer Family
Staci, Pete, Erin & Abby
Best Regards -

Jerry & Lou
Congratulations
On 75 years

The Clemenza
Family
Congratulations To
Frances and Tommy
On Their Wedding.

God Bless You.
Mom and Dad
Joseph and Mary Nucci
St. Christopher Church  
Grant City  
Staten Island  

Congratulations  

St. Margaret Mary Church  
for its  
75 years of worship and service.  

“Enter the temple gates with praise,  
its courts with thanksgiving. Give  
thanks to God, bless his name”  
(Psalm 100:4)
Fond Memories
and
Best Wishes

The Connelly Family
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

ST. MARGARET MARY CHURCH

WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SO PROUD OF THIS PARISH

AS WAS OUR SON AND BROTHER MARTY

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARTIN J. EGAN, JR.

CAPTAIN ~ FIRE DEPT. NEW YORK ~ DIED SEPT. 11, 2001

A TRUE ST. MARGARET MARY BOY

Baptism – December 27, 1964
Penance – May 19, 1972
First Holy Communion – May 20, 1972
Confirmation – October 11, 1976
Graduation – June 16, 1978

ALWAYS IN OUR THOUGHTS ~
FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS
TO THE WORLD YOU WERE A HERO ~
TO US YOU WERE THE WORLD
‘TIL WE MEET AGAIN ~
FIND PEACE IN HEAVENS HANDS
Happy 75th Anniversary to
St. Margaret Mary Church!

The Federation of Catholic Teachers congratulates you for being the heart and soul of your community since 1926. May you continue to serve Midland Beach for many years to come!
Congratulations

The Dempsey Family

The Zoda Family
The Choir of
St. Margaret Mary Parish
ask God’s Blessing
on this occasion of its
75th Anniversary

Margaret Ellengold
Peter Leone
Marie Marra
Leanora Rivera
Rosa Romera
Frank Saulle
Barbara Regan, Music Minister
Happy 75th Anniversary
St. Margaret Mary

NISSAN

INFINTI

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Congratulations
St. Margaret Mary

The Rybarczyk Family

Walter & Peggy
Steven
Suzanne & Brad
Matthew, Indiana, Miami & Tennessee
Erik & Lauren
“EJ” & Logan
In Memory of Our Bull Dog
“Tommy A. Libonati”

“Once a Bull Dog – Always a Bull Dog”

Always in our Hearts and Prayers

Love
Dad: Tommy, Grandma Maureen Grandpa Tommy B.
Happy 75th Anniversary
St. Margaret Mary’s Church

In Loving Memory of
Philip Reddy
Pearl & John Reddy
Helen & Walter Matthies

The Reddy Family

Doris
Debbie ’76       Doreen ‘81
Dennise ’77      DiAnne ‘83
Dennis ’79       Danielle ‘89
Daniel ’79       Darleen ‘92
“Our hearts should be like a lamp which gives forth two small flames: one that reaches up to heaven and the other that reaches out to our brothers and sisters”
(Bl. Alfonso M Fusco: Founder, Srs. Of St. John the Baptist)

~~~~~~~~

Congratulations to St. Margaret Mary Parish on the occasion of your 75th Anniversary!

~~~~~~~~

We are proud to have Sr. Amelia Cueva, Sr. Norirta Yusi and Sr. Bernadette Baldassano serving the parish family.

God’s Blessings,
The Sisters of St. John the Baptist at St. John Villa Academy
(Catholic Education Pre-K through Gr. 12)
www.sfva.org
Congratulations to
St. Margaret Mary

Norma & Narciso
Villafuerte

Congratulations!

May Peace and Love
of our Christ be with
St. Margaret Mary always

Joseph & María Chung
“FOR THE GOOD TIMES”

deBerendey & Schulman Families

Dorothy Schulman Rhodes - Class of ‘56
Barbara Schulman Trubia - Class of ‘60
Michael Schulman - Class of ‘68
Congratulations To
St. Margaret Mary Church
75th Anniversary Celebration

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(718) 979-9700

The
Dunne
Family
In Loving Memory,
You are always in
Our hearts and prayers.

Eugene Gallagher,
My Husband

Louise Fishel,
My Mom

Sharon Gallagher & Family

In Loving Memory of

Bernardino Fernandez
Mary Fernandez
Judith Vasquenz
God Bless
St. Margaret Mary’s
Church, Staff and Parishioners

Christine Marra
and the 4th Grade CCD Class

May God continue to
bless our special parish.
Home of St. Margaret Mary!

75 Years Strong!

Congratulations,
Love,
Willie and Noreen Meagher
We are blessed to have grown up in St. Margaret Mary Church. We received our Sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and some of us were married here.

We all served as altar boys here and have wonderful memories of this beautiful Church.

Congratulations and God Bless our Parish!
The 7 Meagher Brothers

In Memory of
The Nucciarone and
Caldwell Families
God Bless
St. Margaret Mary’s Parish

JULIE CARDINALE
Mortgage Consultant
Residential & Commercial
Cell: (917) 903-9125
Office: (718) 979-5528

Happy Anniversary to
St. Margaret Mary’s Church

Page 76
In Memory of
Nicholas M. DiBenedetto, Jr.

Congratulations to Father Díaz and all the parishioners and staff of St. Margaret Mary’s on the 75th Anniversary of your wonderful Church!

Manresa Council 2147
Knights of Columbus
185 Cedar Grove Avenue
Staten Island, N.Y. 10306
718-987-4433
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love of our Christ be with St. Margaret Mary always

Francisco & Clara Park

Congratulations!

May Peace and Love of our Christ be with St. Margaret Mary always

Stephano & Elizabeth Kim
Long Live St. Margaret Mary’s Church.  
A place for all the people to worship everyday.

The Loresto Family  
Sophie  
Emil  
Basil, Grace & their Children  
Matthew  
Nicole  
Brandon

________________________

Congratulations!

May Peace and Love  
of our Christ be with  
St. Margaret Mary always

Thomas, Rita and Marci Park
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love
of our Christ be with
St. Margaret Mary always

Jin Ho & Silvia Kim

Congratulations!

May Peace and Love
of our Christ be with
St. Margaret Mary

Dr. Sunah Oh
Board Certified Internist

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S.I., N.Y. 10312
(718) 605-4700
Congratulations!

May Peace and Love of our Christ be with always St. Margaret Mary

Corniche Dry Cleaners

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Hylan Plaza (Pathmark /Kmart) Shopping Center

Congratulations on the 75th Anniversary of St. Margaret Mary Church!
Congratulations
St. Margaret Mary’s Parish

The Arcamone & Fruscìante Families

In memory of
Deceased members of
The Remuzzi Family
Congratulations!
God Bless St. Margaret Mary!

Mr. & Mrs. Medardo Sigua
and Children James & Josephine

Congratulations and Best Wishes
on your Diamond Jubilee.

The Gulino Family

Congratulations on
75 years
Digna & James Dowd
In Memory of John & Mary Powers
&
Joseph & Frances Holt

Congratulations!
and Thank You!

Josephine & Tony Sultarelli
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Congratulations

Judith Mulgrew/Paul Families

Congratulations!

The Reems Family
Mary, Eugene, ER, Erín, Kasey, Alex, Drew, Mike & Deena
Boosters

♦ The Duffy / Daretany Family

♦ Josephine Sandano

♦ Phil & Ann Scampas

♦ Molly Funk

♦ Mike Fitzpatrick
Saint Margaret Mary Church
560 Lincoln Avenue
Staten Island, New York
10306-5849
--- Midland Beach ---
(between Olympia Blvd. & Freeborn St.)

Telephone: (718) 351-2612

Rectory Office Hours
Monday – Friday
9:00am to 3:00pm

Mass Schedule
Saturday: 5:00pm
Sunday: 8:00am, 10:00am,
& 12:00noon
(Korean) 5:30pm
Holy Day: 9:00am & 7:30pm
Week Day: 9:00am

Confession Schedule
Saturday: 4:00pm to 4:30pm

Visit our web site at: www.stmmsi.org

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Congratulations
St. Margaret Mary’s Church
on your 75th Anniversary

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