

SERVING MIDDLE VILLAGE AND MASPETH SINCE 1938.

# Juniper Park Civic Association

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## A Short History of St. Margaret's Parish

MATT R. CIANCIMINO



1907 incarnation of St. Margaret's Church. It still stands today, facing 79th Place.

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On October 30, 1853 Bishop John Loughlin was consecrated the first Bishop of New York, creating the Brooklyn Diocese. Shortly thereafter, he noticed that in the Middle Village area there were quite a few Catholics without a church of their own. The great influx of immigrants started in the 1840s. By 1865, of the 100,000 foreigners in the Brooklyn Diocese, 50,000 of them were Irish and 25,000 were Germans. The Irish settled in the Brooklyn Township area and the Germans settled east of Manhattan or infiltrated in the Newtown area of Queens and started farming. Accordingly, the Bishop requested the Rev. Ignatius Goetz to unite these people into a Catholic congregation, to build a church and to attend it as a mission. On March 18, 1860 Father Goetz broke ground for the first Catholic church in Middle Village, located on 79th Place near Juniper Valley Road. Please see the photo of this second church, built in 1907.

The original parishioners were farmers, much concerned about their animals and their crops. St. Margaret is the protector of farmers' animals against epidemics and, the harvests against "hailstones and lightning."

Many things happened in the ensuing years. The civil war came and the priests assigned to St. Margaret's made regular visits to the Rebel prisoners captured by Union soldiers. The largest tavern on Long Island stood on Metropolitan Avenue (the old site of Bohack supermarket for those of you old enough to remember). The walls of the tavern were so thick that captured rebel soldiers were imprisoned there, and Fathers Goetz, Peine and Decker administered to them.

As the church grew, parishioners realized the need for a school. A small frame school was built to house 20 pupils. It was built on a par with the Public School in Middle Village, known as District School No. 6. As the parish grew the need for a larger school became evident and in 1899 a new, three-storied frame schoolhouse was built at a cost of \$3,000,000. In 1932 there were more than 480 pupils being educated in the school and it soon became apparent that a larger and more modern building was needed. On March 17, 1935 ground was broken for the combination church and school building. On November 24, 1935 the late Most Rev. Thomas E. Molloy blessed the building. The new school was opened to more than 500 pupils. And so the years went by. Priests came and priests went. The ones I remember were Father Pfeifauf and Father Tschantz. The Pastor was Rt. Rev. Henry Kunig. He was such an outstanding man. His homilies were awe-inspiring, delivered with a deafening, deep-toned

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### THE JUNIPER BERRY

The Juniper Berry magazine, first published in 1938 is an all-volunteer effort containing articles on crime prevention, neighborhood issues, meeting reports and notices, neighborhood history and photographs, guest articles, editorials and more.

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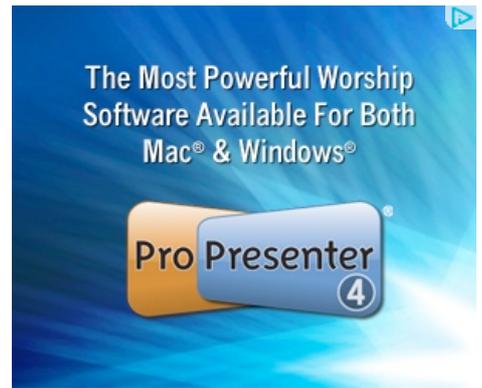
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Mayor Bloomberg Also Sends A Democrat Some Campaign Cash After Same-Sex Marriage Vote

German accent. I think his picture will give you an idea of what I mean. I look back over the years with deep pride. I witnessed a lot of those changes.

Photo from the private collection of New York City Police Captain John J. Lannig, Ret. 1953

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### Juniper Civic: Lack of NYPD response left Middle Village to fend for itself in aftermath of storm.

After the most violent storm ever to hit New York City, the NYPD decided that the 104th Precinct could handle the chaos of downed power lines, hundreds of trees blocking streets & homes, and thousands of cars spilling off of the clogged Long Island Expressway (LIE).

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### Mayor Should Practice What He Preaches on Snow Removal

"The Mayor should get his own house in order before threatening home and business owners," said Robert Holden, president of the Juniper Park Civic Association. Holden said that dozens of city owned property and pedestrian thoroughfares in Middle Village and are never shoveled. The Juniper Park Civic Association has been complaining for years about city owned sidewalks that are rarely shoveled. This includes pedestrian overpasses, bridges, and other city property.

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### VFW Post 551 Settles Dispute With Neighbors

Middle Village residents may have finally resolved their noise complaints with the Haspel-Staab Veterans of Foreign War Post 551.

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