

*St. Christopher and St. Margaret Mary*  
*Staten Island, New York*  
**SACRAMENTAL UPDATE, JULY 2020**

Masses

As you know we are back to Mass and have been at about 50% our normal attendance for this time of year. In the Summer we usually have about 550-650 people in church. Our weekend attendance since we reopened has been:

June 27-28:	252
July 4-5:	277
July 11-12:	329
July 18-19:	349
July 25-26:	327

Our usual year-round attendance is between 750-850.

As for weekday Masses, I decided to suspend the 8:00am Mass for now. I wanted to move back to the schedule slowly, and because of the low attendance at the 8am during the week, I thought we could manage with only the 9:00am. A number of parishes have cut back on their Mass schedule (both weekdays and Sundays) because of the low attendance. I did not want to cut the Sunday schedule because I wanted to give people every opportunity to return. We'll see if they do. For those who wish, we also are recording the Sunday readings and a reflection which can be found on the website. We are allowed 50% capacity of our churches, but for most time we are not able to accommodate that many people AND keep the social distancing. It helps when families, or people who live together, come to Mass as they can sit together, and then we can get more people in the pews. I am grateful to those ushers and volunteers who help usher people to their seats and who wipe down / sanitize the pews and church after each Mass.

Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings, Confessions

We have resumed baptism and funerals. We have been catching up on the baptisms that were scheduled from March – June. Most weekends for July and August we are doing baptisms. One of the hard things about March – June was not being able to have funerals. That has now changed, and we are also able to have memorial Masses for those who have died and are already buried. Not too many of these have been scheduled so far, as families are still trying to decide when to celebrate the Holy Mass for their loved ones. In looking at the death register for the time period March – June **2019**, we had about the same amount of funeral Masses in 2019 as we did burials in 2020. In 2019 we had 16 funerals from mid-March to late June; in 2020 we had 17 burials from mid-March to late June. To date we have only had 3 Memorial Masses. I don't think all of those people who were buried will have memorial Masses, but some will when convenient for the family. Either way Fr. DeSimone and I have been remembering them in our Masses.

We had very few weddings this year, but the few we had have been postponed to next year, at the decision of the couples.

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Confessions are still being heard on Saturday at St. Christopher (we never stopped hearing them), but because of the small space in the confession rooms, we are hearing confessions near the open spaces in the little transepts near the baptism font and the organ. There is no real opportunity for anonymous confessions, and it has to be done wearing masks, but we are still getting a good amount of people. Usually confessions go beyond the hour we allot for them.

Confirmation and First Holy Communion

Some parishes are rescheduling their confirmation and first Holy Communion Masses. We only have to reschedule our first Holy Communion Masses as we had the celebration of confirmation back in February, before Lent began. We have scheduled First Holy Communion for Saturday, October 3, 2020, with all the current restrictions we have for Sunday Mass. We have under 40 students, which we will split up over two Masses that day.

Our Priests

Finally, just a word about our priests. Fr. DeSimone and I are here as usual, but Fr. John DeLora is in Florida. Many of you know he is no longer ministering at Staten Island University Hospital but continues to have a residence here. He went to Florida for vacation for the month of March, and with all that has happened, has not yet returned. He is doing well, despite losing a close friend in Msgr. Richard Guastella, who died in April. Fr. John Boehning, who lives in the priests' retirement home in the Bronx, is doing well too, although his living arrangements have more restrictions. The priests who live there are not eating together in the dining room (meals are brought to their rooms), nor are they able to concelebrate Mass in groups in the chapel. They offer their Masses and prayers privately. Fr. Boehning is in good spirits and gets out for a drive now and again. Fr. Ed Devina is still living at the St. Margaret Mary Rectory, and all along has been continuing his ministry at Sea View Home on Brielle Avenue. He has been helping with the reopening by celebrating the 8:00am Mass on Sundays. Obviously, we did not have Fr. George Perera, OMI come from Sri Lanka this Summer to help as he usually does.

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Please visit our website at [www.stcstmmsi.org](http://www.stcstmmsi.org) for all the latest Parish information and to register for our emails and text via Flocknote (Get Connected). Visit our YouTube Channel, "St. Christopher and St. Margaret Mary, SI" for the Weekly Readings and Reflection and audio prayers.

Thank you for all your prayers and sacrifices for the parish!

God Bless You.  
*Father Joe*