“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15: 5

This familiar metaphor of the vine and the branches in the New Testament illustrates the intrinsic interconnectedness between Christ and his believers. Our Lord uses the illustration of the vine and the branches to show what it means to abide in Him and helps teach us the perfection of our union with the Lord.

The union between the vine and the branch is so close that each is nothing without the other. Each is entirely and only for the other. Without the vine the branch can do nothing. The vine is the source and sustenance of life for the branches, and the branches must abide in the vine to live and bear fruit. Just as the branch fulfills its purpose for being in union with the vine, so a Christian can only fulfill their responsibility in their eternal union with Christ by remaining in consistent fellowship with the Lord. Just as sap flows from the vine through its branches, so the Holy Spirit flows through the soul of the believer that remains in fellowship with Christ.

The metaphor of comparing people to vines and vineyards is not a new concept. The Old Testament frequently refers to Israel as being a vine that God planted. “You removed a vineyard from Egypt; you cast out the nations and planted it…” (Psalm 79 (80):9). This verse refers to how God brought Israel out of Egypt and planted it in the promised land. Many of the Prophets also likened Israel to a vine or vineyard. Hosea described Israel’s increased prosperity in the following manner: “Israel is a luxuriant vine; her fruit is abundant” (Hosea 10:1).

But the Prophets also warned the people of Israel that they had lost their way; that they were in danger of losing their connection to God. Hosea warned: “They have divided their hearts; now shall they be utterly destroyed…” (Hosea 10:1-2). A similar warning was also proclaimed by Isaiah: “There was a vineyard for My Beloved, a place of power and richness… He planted it with the choicest vine… so I waited for it to bring forth grapes, but it produced thorn-plants.” (Isaiah 5:1-2). Jeremiah echoed a parallel exhortation stating: “I planted a fruitful vine for you, one most healthy and sweet, yet you turned it into a vine unknown to Me, with a taste of bitterness” (Jeremiah 2:21).

In fact, often when the prophets made reference
to the vine or vineyard, they had in mind the imminent judgment that God would bring upon his disobedient people. “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Ezekiel 15:6). According to Saint Jerome, “having good shoots and fruit-bearing branches, she (Israel) produced many clusters, and the abundance of the grapes equaled the great number of the branches. But she, who before was of such a kind, offended God afterward, turning the abundance of the fruits into a great number of offenses.”

When Christ then tells the Parable of the Wicked Vineyard Tenants (Luke 20:9-16; Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12) he is referencing these unheeded warnings. Each servant sent by the owner of the vineyard (God) to the vinedressers (leaders of the Jews) so that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard’ represented the Old Testament Prophets who were sent to call the people back to God but were ignored; some were beaten, treated shamefully, wounded and others killed.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1-2).

In contrast to disobedient and unfruitful Israel, our Lord calls Himself the true (ἀληθινός) vine, which together with the branches constitute a new and fruitful people of God: the Church.

To abide in this vine is to abide in Christ and His Church. The figure of the vine and the branches show that our union with Christ is intimate and real; life flows from the vine to the branches. Abiding in Christ is both dynamic and vitalizing. The fruit that we bear as Christians describes the outward actions that result from the inward condition of a person’s heart through our connection to God: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control…” (Galatians 5:22). When we are connected and intentional about our relationship with God, we produce the fruit God cultivates within us.

The challenge in the Old Covenant (Old Testament) and the New is the same – people forsaking God. We too, are called to heed the warnings of the prophets – and steady ourselves firmly in faith. We must protect ourselves against the corruption that comes from greed, vanity, dishonesty, conceit and the love of pleasure. We must caution ourselves to not become indifferent to God; even mocking Him, by rejecting His law and commandments. We must be careful to not separate ourselves from God and thus wither away.

On the contrary, we must open our hearts to hear the invitation of Christ and become rooted in His Love. For one cannot love God and disobey His commandments (John 15:14). Only when we love Him can we be truly connected to God and present ourselves as a healthy vine producing sweet fruit.

This is not an easy step – and it takes constant pruning of our own behaviors to make sure that our connection to God remains strong. The Church recognizes this and is often praying for God to bless the people of His vineyard. During the celebration of a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, the bishop prays that the Lord will visit and confirm the vineyard - the local body of the Church - as he blesses the faithful: “look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vineyard which Your right hand planted and perfect it” (Psalm 79 (80):15-16).

The Church in every generation participates in the life and glory of the Holy Trinity. Christians enjoy two kinds of unity: with God and with one another, the latter being rooted in the former.

The ultimate goal of Christ’s prayer, and indeed of life itself, is for the love of the Father to dwell in each of us (John 17:20-26). This is the perfection of our faith – Theosis. The Church seeks to provide us with opportunities to grow in the knowledge of God through its worship, fellowship, service and witness.

May our Lord continue to invigorate us and may we find the determination, courage and endurance to hear and follow His call to truly Abide in Him.

Father Peter
Mindfully Raising Responsible Children
An open forum discussion with:

Frank John Ninivaggi, MD
Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatry
Yale University School of Medicine

Join us for an informative, informal discussion with renown child psychiatrist and Saint Barbara parishioner Dr. Frank Ninivaggi.

ALL PARENTS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday February 8</td>
<td>Early Childhood (Birth - 5 years old)</td>
<td>10:30 am - 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Lightle Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday February 22</td>
<td>School Age (6 years old - 12 years old)</td>
<td>10:30 am - 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Saint Barbara Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday March 7</td>
<td>Adolescence (13 years old - 18 years old)</td>
<td>10:30 am - 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Lightle Center</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Dr. Frank John Ninivaggi is an associate attending physician at Yale–New Haven Hospital, an assistant clinical professor of child psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center in New Haven, and the psychiatric director of the Devereux-Glenholme School in Washington, Connecticut. He is board certified in psychiatry and neurology and a well known author of many books and articles available on amazon.com and psychologytoday.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Feast of the Presentation of our Lord</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 am Orthros</td>
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<td>9:45 am Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>9:45 am Sunday School</td>
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<td>11:15 am Fellowship</td>
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<td>6:00 pm Big Game Viewing Party</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Farm Team</td>
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<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Youth Team</td>
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<td>7:15 pm Volleyball - JV Team</td>
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<td>7:30 pm Volleyball - Varsity Team</td>
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<td>CT Sports Center, Woodbridge</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>D.A.D. Clergy Retreat - Washington DC</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee</strong></td>
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<td>8:00 am Orthros</td>
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<td>11:15 am Fellowship</td>
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<td>12:00 pm Philoptochos General Meeting</td>
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<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Farm Team</td>
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<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Youth Team</td>
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<td>7:00 Parish Council</td>
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<td>7:15 pm Volleyball - JV Team</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>7:00 pm GOYA Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>House Blessings in: Hamden, Cheshire, Southington, Kensington</td>
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<td>Call office to schedule</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Sunday of the Prodigal Son</strong></td>
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<td>8:00 am Orthros</td>
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<td>11:15 am Fellowship</td>
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<td>JOY/PATCHES Discovery Museum</td>
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<td>1:00 pm ASP Training #2</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Farm Team</td>
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<td>CT Sports Center, Woodbridge</td>
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<td>House Blessings in: Northford, North Branford, Branford</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Judgement Sunday/Meatfare Sunday</strong></td>
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<td>8:00 am Orthros</td>
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<td>11:15 am Fellowship</td>
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<td>12:00 pm Parish Oratorical Festival</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Farm Team</td>
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<td>6:30 pm Basketball - Youth Team</td>
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<td>CT Sports Center, Woodbridge</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>House Blessings in: Norwalk, Westport, Stamford</td>
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<td>Call office to schedule</td>
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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>7:30 am GOYA Ski Trip</td>
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<td>7:00 pm AHEPA</td>
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<td>4:30 pm Greek School</td>
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<td>7:30 pm GOYA Dance</td>
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<td>10:30 am - 1:00 pm</td>
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<td>Responsible Children</td>
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<td>4:30 pm Greek School</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>House Blessings in:</td>
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<td>Wallingford, North Haven</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>4:30 pm Greek School</td>
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<td>House Blessings in:</td>
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<td>Milford, Stratford</td>
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<td>House Blessings in:</td>
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<td>Bridgeport, Trumbull,</td>
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<td>Fairfield</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>4:30 pm Greek School</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>6:45 pm Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>Killingworth, Clinton,</td>
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<td>Saturday of Souls</td>
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<td>9 am Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>9 am Journey of Marriage</td>
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<td>Mindfully Raising</td>
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<td>9 am Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 pm Apokreatiko Glendi</td>
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</tbody>
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“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

*1 Corinthians 13:7-8*
Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church
Sponsored by: The Greek Language School

Apokreatiko Glendi
Pre-Lenten Dance

Saturday, February 29, 2020
Saint Barbara Grand Ballroom
6:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Live Music By:
Yiorgo Karatzas & Athenian Entertainment

All-You-Can-Eat

Appetizers
Lamb; Pork & Chicken Souvlaki, Potatoes, Rice, Greek String Beans, Horiatiki Salad
Beer, Wine, Fruit, Coffee & Dessert

Tickets:
Adults: $50
GOYAns: $30
Children (6-11): $20
Children up to 5 years old: free

RSVP by: Feb. 24 - Church Office: 203-795-1347
Orthodox Youth Mission Team 2020

Since 2012 members of the Saint Barbara GOYA have participated in the Appalachian Service Project with other Orthodox Churches under the leadership of Rev. Luke Mihaly from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Danbury. Participants train for six months in preparation for the trip by participating in scripture study, sensitivity instruction, and construction and safety skills, preparing for the opportunity to put their faith to work serving others.

Last summer, over 70 Orthodox youth and adult leaders from seven States representing the American Carpatho Russian Orthodox Diocese, the Orthodox Church in America and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, joined forces to assist families in Appalachia make their homes warmer, drier and safer.

This year’s group promises to be even bigger with 19 teenagers and 2 adult supervisors from Saint Barbara participating in the trip that will take place from July 11-19, 2020.

The group asks for our prayers and support.

Apple Pie Sale

Help support the Saint Barbara Orthodox Youth Mission Team participants as they travel to Appalachia to make people’s homes warmer, safer and drier.

Support the Appalachian Service Project (ASP) $14

Contact Shaun Berner for more details shaun.berner@gmail.com

Members of the 2020 Orthodox Youth Mission Team participate in one of their training sessions with Fr. Luke Mihaly in the Lightle Center at the Saint Barbara Parish.
FEBRUARY 2, 2020 AT 5:30PM

THE BIG GAME VIEWING PARTY

ST. BARBARA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
480 RACEBROOK RD, ORANGE, CT 06477

Watch the Big Game with family and friends on the large projection screen in our social hall w/ Food and Kid Games Provided

$35 per family - $15 per person - BYOB
Proceeds will be immediately applied to our mortgage
Please RSVP @ Vasilios.Diakogeorgiou@gmail.com or 860-655-4839
ZoiPete@aol.com or 203-606-7642
http://evite.me/vWPAuNrJuv

$
We thank all of our parishioners for participating in the 2019 Stewardship Campaign of our Church. Our Stewardship contributions are necessary to help maintain the ministries and programs of our parish.

In 2019, 743 Stewards pledged $389,209 towards our 2019 Stewardship goal of $390,000. To date $363,513 were paid towards those pledges. If you have not yet completed your pledge we ask that please do so as soon as possible.

We are grateful for your continuing love and support. If there are any omissions or errors in the list below, we ask that you please call the church office. Thank you for your generosity.
Mrs. Joanne Contopoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Corradino
Miss Marianthe Corradino
Mr. Joseph Corradino
Mr. Emanuel Cosmas
Mr. Edwin Cox
Mrs. Sharon Cox
Mrs. Debra Crane
Mrs. Pauline Crescenti
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Cristiano
Mrs. Cathy Dabakis
Mrs. Mary Dakis
Mrs. Nicki Dakis
Mr. A Dalakas
Dr. Estell Pappas
Miss Jeannine Daniel
Miss Dorothy Daniel
Ms. Evdoxia Daoutis
Mr. George Daoutis
Mrs. Pinelopi Daoutis
Mr. John Daoutis
Mrs. Mary Daoutis
Mr. Elias Daskalakis
Mrs. Bessie DeBassio
Mr. & Dr. Casimiro Degliuomini
Mr. William Delcos
Mr. Tony Delos
Mrs. Stacey Ferrence
Mr. & Mrs. Fred DelPercio
Mr. Vasili Diakogiorgiou
Mrs. Eleini Diakogiorgiou
Mr. Fotios Diamantes
Mrs. Antigoni Diamantes
Mr. Ilias Diamantis
Dr. Maria Diamantis
Mr. & Mrs. Marc DiCicco
Mr. Mark Dgioia &
Mrs. Krista Herc
Mr. & Mrs. Al DiGrazia
Mrs. Joanne DiMeola
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Dolan
Mrs. Barbara Downey
Mr. Dan Drago
Mrs. Monica Drago
Dr. Andreas Drakonakis
Mrs. Jane Drakonakis
Mr. & Mrs. Costis Drakonakis
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Dwyer
Mr. Haralambos Efthymiou
Mr. Pantelis Efthymiou
Mrs. Renee Efthymiou
Mr. Paul Efthymiou
Mr. & Mrs. Rachel Efthymiou
Mr. Mark Ehrhardt
Mrs Maria Ehrhardt
Dr. John Elefteriades
Mrs. Peggy Elefteriades
Mr. Paris Eliopoulos
Mrs. Virginia Eliopoulos
Mr. Costas Eliopoulos
Mr. James Eliopoulos
Mr. Stylianos Emmanouil
Mrs. Kaliope Emmanouil
Mr. Eugene Esares
Mrs. Sharon Esares
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Esposito
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Esposito
Mr. & Mrs. David Esposito
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Esquivel
Mr. & Mrs. Pedro Falci
Mr. George Fanolis
Ms. Anne Faracas
Mr. Paul Faracas
Mrs. Jacqueline Faracas
Ms. Sophia Ferraro
Mr. Augoustis Fifis
Mrs. Maria Fifis
Mrs. Despina Galanakis
Ms. Maria Galanakis
Miss Pamela Ganacoplos
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Ganim
Mr. Owen Gavagan
Mrs. Chrysanthi Gavagan
Mr. Peter Gekas
Mrs. Anna Gekas
Miss Clara Genetos
Mr. Gregory Gerakelis
Mrs. Efstratia Gerakelis
Mr. Haralambos Gerakelis
Mrs. Pandora Geremia
Mr. George Giambanis
Ms. Maria Giambanis
Mr. & Mrs. Ephthymia Giannopoulos
Ms. Angeliki Giannopoulos
Mr. Nikolaos Giannopoulos
Mrs. Denise Giannopoulos
Mr. Petros Giannopoulos
Mrs. Anna Giannopoulos
Mrs. Dorothea Giaretis
Ms. Deana Townsend
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Giaretis, III
Ms. Alexandra Ginieres
Mr. & Mrs. Eric Gocowski
Mr. Jorgo Goga
Mrs. Maria Goga
Dr. Stephanie Golub
Mr. Carlos Gonzalez &
Mrs. Joanna Kakaletis
Mr. James Goodrich
Mrs. Anastasia Goodrich
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Gorecki
Mr. Andreas Gotsis
Mrs. Dionisia Gotsis
Mr. Semere Gouga
Mrs. Nadia Yohannes
Miss Elaine Goumas
Mrs. Stacey Grimaldi
Mrs. Larisa Gromyko
Mr. Dimitrios Groumousas
Mrs. Renei Groumousas
Mr. Nontas Groumousas
Mrs. Dinah Groumousas
Mr. Vasili Groumousas
Mrs. Julia Groumousas
Mr. & Mrs. C. Guatzaaza
Mr. George Giouliotis
Ms. Angelica Papastavros
Mr. Christopher Gust
Mrs. Maria Gust
Mr. Christos Hadjimichael
Mrs. Jane Hadjimichael
Dr. Evangelos Hadjimichael
Mrs. Olympia Hadjimichael
Miss Thespi Hadjimichael
Mr. & Mrs. Dana Hajdedemos
Dr. Harry Hajdedemos
Mrs. Jane Hajdedemos
Mr. Peter Halepas
Ms. Stephanie Halepas
Mr. Steve Haritos
Mrs. Helen Haskos
Mr. John Haskos
Mrs. Prapti Haskos
Mrs. Koula Haskos
Mr. Nicholas Haskos
Mrs. Lizabeth Haskos
Mr. Nicholas Haskos
Mrs. Angeliki Haskos
Mrs. Wendy Hathaway
Mr. Theodore Hatzigiannis
Mrs. Mary Hatzigiannis
Ms. Stavroula Hatzios
Mr. John Heerdt &
Mrs. Lisa Stamos Heedt
Mrs. Evelyn Heffernan
Ms. Anastasia Herbert
Ms. Robyn Hoffman
Mr. Mark Hojnowski
Mrs. Eleini Hojnowski
Mr. Stephen Hojnowski
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Mrs. Helen Ikonomou
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Ikonomou
Mr. Panagiotis Iosifidis
Mrs. Elisabeth Iosifidis
Mr. Zaher Jaser
Mrs. Rozina Jaser
Mr. & Mrs. Theophilus Jenetopulos
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Johnson
Mr. Stuart Johnson
Mrs. Elaine Johnson
Mr. George Jordanides
Miss Alexandra Kachouulas
Mr. John Kaiser
Mrs. Jamie Kaiser
Mr. James Kakalow
Mrs. Anna Kalafatis
Mr. Nikolas Kallapodhi
Mrs. Ellen Kavvouris
Mr. Spyro Kallivrousis
Miss Rousa Kallivouris
Mr. Michael Kalogeridis
Mrs. Jennifer Kalmanides
Mr. William Kambas
Mrs. Ariadne Drakonakis-Kambas
Mr. Tasos Kanakis
Ms. Eleni Kantis
Mr. Abraham Kaoud
Mrs. Aida Kaoud
Mr. Charlie Kaoud
Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Kaoud
Mr. George Kaouris
Mrs. Vasilia Kaouris
Mr. Stelios Kapernaros
Mrs. Kay Kapernaros
Ms. Constantina Karageorge
Mr. Angelo Karakolidis
Mrs. Maria Karakolidis
Mr. Dino Karatzas
Mrs. Robin Karatzas
Mr. Manos Katevatis
Miss Chrysoula Trimplalis
Miss Aphrodite Katramados
Mrs. Anastasia Kattis
Dr. Paula Kavathas
Mr. Nicholas Kefalas
Mrs. Beverly Kefalas
Mr. & Mrs. Joel Kelleher
Mr. Daniel Kerames
Mr. Dennis Kerames
Mrs. Karen Kerames
Mrs. Evangeline Kittos
Ms. Themis Klairides
Mr. Dimitrios Klonaras
Mr. John Kokenos
Mrs. Rodana Kokenos
Mr. Panagiotis Kolias
Mrs. Efthimia Kolias
Dr. Ignatius Komninakas
Mrs. Christina Komninakas
Mrs. Meni Komninakas
Mr. Vasiliios Konstantinidis
Mr. Kiraki Konstantinidis
Mr. & Mrs. Mario Kontomerkos
On Sunday, February 2, millions of Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl and enjoy celebrations with an abundance of food and fellowship. At the same time, too many people in our community will go to bed hungry or worry about how to make ends meet to care for their families. During the biggest weekend of football, let’s score a touchdown for the homeless and hungry in our community.

This year, the Saint Barbara Parish will once again take a special collection following the Divine Liturgy on February 2 to support the work of the Beth-El Center shelter and soup kitchen in Milford, CT.

So    per B    wl of Caring

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