

# John Karastamatis of Santa Cruz

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Father **John Karastamatis of Santa Cruz** (August 8, 1937 - May 19, 1985) was the first parish priest and one of the founders of the Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church ([http://propheteliassantacruz.org/?page\\_id=2](http://propheteliassantacruz.org/?page_id=2)) in Santa Cruz, California. Although there is some veneration of him as a hieromartyr, he has not yet been formally canonized.

He was a fervent preacher of the Orthodox Faith and "ministered to the unemployed, homeless and drug addicts of the city"<sup>[1][note 1]</sup> before he was brutally martyred by Satanists in 1985.<sup>[note 2]</sup>

He has been credited with numerous miracles of healing since his death.<sup>[1]</sup> His memory is celebrated on May 19 (N.S.), on the eve of the feast of the translation of the holy relics of Saint Nicholas the Wonder-worker, for whom Fr. John had a great reverence, because as a child he often visited the Monastery of St. Nicholas of Andros, Greece. This day corresponds to May 6 (O.S.), which is the birthday of Royal Passion-bearer Tsar Nicholas II, and the feast day St. Job the Much-suffering, pointing to the mystical significance of his death.



The New Hieromartyr John (Karastamatis) of Santa Cruz (1937-1985).

## Contents

- 1 In Greece
- 2 In America
  - 2.1 A Pastor at the Foot of the Holy Cross
  - 2.2 Founding of Prophet Elias Church, Santa Cruz
  - 2.3 Missionary Activity

- 2.4 Desecration of the Church
- 2.5 Miracle of the Blossoming White Lilies
- 2.6 Martyrdom
- 2.7 Assailants
- 3 Apparitions of Blessed Father John
- 4 Legacy
- 5 Canonization
- 6 Hymns
  - 6.1 In Greek
- 7 See also
- 8 Notes
- 9 References
- 10 Sources

## **In Greece**

Fr. John Karastamatis was born on August 8, 1937 in the Greek village of Apoikia, on the island of Andros. The atmosphere of this village was permeated with the age-old Orthodox way of life, which was followed according to the Church calendar and the cycle of feast days. Living from day to day amidst the simple and natural faith of the villagers, the young John was imparted a sense of holiness, which kindled in his idealistic heart the flame of love for God and all that is His. As a boy on the island of Andros, John witnessed many miracles with which God blessed the pious villagers, and thus he was made aware of the closeness of God to the lives of those who seek Him. The heavenly saints, especially the local ones, also manifested their closeness and the power of their intercessory prayer by appearing to and helping the people.

John nourished his young soul by learning about the lives of these saints and martyrs, whose unquenchable desire to be faithful to Christ in the face of deprivation, torment and physical death inspired him to also be a servant of God. Although he did not attend any theological school, he wanted to put his faith into practice by someday becoming a priest.

## **In America**

In 1957, at the age of twenty, John came to the United States. Five years later he married a young Greek woman, Athanasia Matsellis, and

soon became the father of two children, Maria and Photios. The cities of the United States were in sharp contrast to the village of his birth, but his acute awareness of the nearness of God and the other world, given to him in childhood, never left him. He now found himself in the midst of those who not only did not want to be close to God, but who actively fled from Him. Still he hoped in God, knowing that the freedom of Christ can be found even in the most stifling and evil surroundings.

With the support and encouragement of Fr. George Bogdanos, a Greek priest who recognized in him the integrity and zeal of a true pastor, Fr. John was ordained to the diaconate in 1971 with the blessing of Archbishop Iakovos, who supported him in this. Since both his love for the Church and the love of the churchgoers for him was so apparent, he was made a priest only a few weeks later by Bishop Meletios (Tripodakis) of Christianoupolis, San Francisco (1968-79).

He first served the Greek Orthodox community in Anchorage, Alaska, the land of newly-canonized St. Herman, who thus became his guardian angel for the rest of his life. He was later assigned to the St. George parish in Vancouver, Canada, and then to All Saints parish in Anaheim, Pennsylvania.

He then moved to Santa Cruz, California, which had been named by the Spanish missionaries after the Holy Cross of the Lord. There he labored with enthusiasm to provide a haven of Orthodox Christianity for the faithful in the area, who had long been without a nearby church.

## **A Pastor at the Foot of the Holy Cross**

Because the community in Santa Cruz was too small to immediately acquire its own Orthodox church from its founding in 1980, Fr. John began to serve the Divine Liturgy in the nearby town of Aptos, in the chapel of a Poor Clare convent. The nuns would have their services very early on Sunday morning, leaving the church free for Fr. John and his parishioners to use afterwards. The parishioners were at first hesitant: they would come to Liturgy late, and would all sit at the very back of the chapel, as if they were spectators and not participants. Fr. John knew that he had much work to do. He was sometimes disappointed at the lack of active interest among his flock. His was a burning faith, and lukewarmness had always been foreign to his soul. His task, he knew, was to ignite this fire within each of his parishioners, so that they themselves would struggle for the kingdom

of heaven, *the one thing needful*, and not sit in the background and expect their priest to do their work for them. He could not demand too much at once, but had to be a gentle and loving pastor, condescending to the weaknesses of his flock so as not to overwhelm them and cause them to abandon the Orthodox faith altogether. The gap between shepherd and sheep had to be bridged gradually and carefully, and Fr. John had to spark the kinder in the hearts of his flock without scorching them with the consuming fire within him.

Sometimes Fr. John would speak forceful words of rebuke to awaken his people from their spiritual sleep, but mostly he would inspire them by his quiet and unobtrusive example. They began to see how hard he struggled and were moved to help him fulfill his godly dreams. His fervency and zeal, his unequivocal belief in the other world, was something that they did not fully understand, and yet that they inwardly -- and in some cases unconsciously - longed for. Having come to love him deeply, they were grateful that God had sent a harvester to their field.

## **Founding of Prophet Elias Church, Santa Cruz**

By giving his parishioners new aspirations, Fr. John instilled in them the desire to start their own church. They collected and saved money and eventually found the perfect building for their church in 1982: a former funeral home in Santa Cruz, across from the public library and in the best part of town for missionary activity. Fr. John did much of the interior work himself, fashioning a beautiful white iconostasis and a large domed apse behind and above the altar. According to his son Photios, *"My father put his blood, sweat and tears in. You've got all of that there and more...With the help of some parishioners and myself, he literally built the whole inside of the that church."*<sup>[2]</sup>

When completed, the newly-consecrated church (<http://propheteliassantacruz.org/>) became a refuge from the noisy bustle of the world, an island of holiness in the middle of downtown Santa Cruz. The church was dedicated to the Prophet Elias.<sup>[note 3]</sup>

With their new and beautiful church, the parishioners, comprised of over 75 families, now had a sense of accomplishment. They felt that they had come a long way from the days when they had little choice but to use a chapel which was outside of town. Now they could branch out into other activities.

## **Missionary Activity**

Fr. John by no means wanted his Orthodox community to be a closed one, and he rejoiced to discover any fervent young souls which came to him in search of the fulness of Christianity. Santa Cruz has been a gathering place not only of the darker and meaner elements of society, but also of idealistic young people who have desired something more meaningful than the American values of materialism and competition. By the time Fr. John started his church in Santa Cruz, a small but significant "Orthodox Christian movement" had already begun at the university there. This was primarily the result of the missionary work of Hieromonk Anastassy (Newcomb). Through him, many Santa Cruz university students embraced the Orthodox faith and dedicated their lives to serving Christ.

In 1981, Fr. Seraphim Rose, at the request of the Orthodox students there, gave two lectures at the university and further inspired young souls to enter what he called "the saving enclosure of the Church." The fellowship of Orthodox students turned also to Fr. John and his church in order to receive spiritual nourishment and to participate in the divine services, which lifted them above the worldliness of university life. Fr. John always greeted them with a radiant smile and warm love, seeing in their young faces the freshness and enthusiasm that would keep Orthodoxy alive for future generations. After these students graduated, Fr. John brought other young people to the Orthodox faith, giving them all that they needed for their growth in the faith and being to them a loving father who was concerned for their spiritual welfare.

Since the Prophet Elias Church (<http://propheteliassantacruz.org/>) was in the middle of town, people would often come from off the streets to ask questions and attend the services. Fr. John kept an "open-door policy," making himself and his church available to anyone with a pastoral need. The people of Santa Cruz came to know him as being kind, trusting, full of love and open. He had great compassion for the poor, and was helpful to all who came to him, disregarding their religion or whether or not they were taking advantage of him. It was not uncommon for him to be awakened at odd hours of the night by needy people knocking at his back door. No one would be refused, but would always be given alms for a meal. In the most outcast and downtrodden of individuals, and perhaps especially in them, Fr. John saw the image of Christ. With deep-felt Christian love, he once wrote these words about the simple people who, although rejected by the world, are faithful to Christ and follow the voice of their hearts:

*"We see them lonely within the crowd, or following the life of a hermit as they become symbols of truth and beacon lights of Christianity, praying for peace and brotherly love on earth."*

Fr. John was not at all ethnocentric, and to him, Orthodox Christianity was not just something "for Greeks," but rather was universal. His love for God induced him to earnestly desire to bring forth fruits for Him, as a son strives to please his father, and this made him a zealous missionary to all peoples. He had services in public parks, where the townspeople would stop to attend something, which, although foreign to them, they found to be divinely beautiful. Hearing Fr. John, with his full and resonant voice, chanting the ancient Byzantine melodies along with his cantor, would unexpectedly catch a vague and half-remembered glimpse of that sacred realm which their souls knew but their minds had never been exposed to. In such a way was Fr. John able to introduce the riches of Orthodoxy to the spiritually impoverished American people. This was the only "ecumenism" he believed in, for he was too firmly grounded in the Orthodox faith to be caught up in the false ecumenical movements of his day.

While Fr. John's fervent pastoral work served to convert many non-Greek people, his first job was, of course, to "convert" many of his own people - those who were baptized Orthodox but whose commitment to Christ meant, at most, only an external commitment to church attendance and activities. By his own faith he demonstrated to them that Orthodoxy is not merely a ritual, a system of dogmas or a behavior pattern, but is instead a transforming power, which is tapped by conscious spiritual struggle. Through the struggle to conquer the passions which separate us from God, he wrote, "we allow the essence of His rejuvenating powers to flood our hearts with joy for the total freedom we can obtain." Fr. John spared nothing to make this living reality inwardly known to his flock. He preached to them the Loves of his beloved Saints, hoping thereby to make them more conscious of the degree of sanctity that man is able to attain on earth by acquiring the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. John was by nature an artist and a poet, and had a profound sense of beauty. Like his Master Christ, the source of all divine beauty and truth, he loved the simple, the humble, the quietly noble things of life. This love he expressed both in his sermons and in his Greek and English poems, which he transcribed with his own elegant calligraphy. His sense of beauty made him yet more cognizant of the ugliness and madness of our post-Christian era. He would speak of the confusion that is caused when men forget God and pursue their own selfish

interests.

## **Desecration of the Church**

The good works of Fr. John were too numerous and his outreach too extensive not to evoke malicious actions from the haters of God.<sup>[note 4]</sup> The visibility of Fr. John and his church in the middle of Santa Cruz made them more accessible not only to those in need of help, but also to those who wished to destroy all that is holy. A few months before Fr. John's death, the church was desecrated by unknown occultists, who painted "666" and the five-pointed satanic star on the front entrance.<sup>[note 5]</sup>

When the desecration was discovered, Fr. John reconsecrated the church. Later he received anonymous threats, but was undaunted by them. His preaching angered some who began to threaten him by phone and in letters to cease preaching. But Father John became even more passionate about his ministry saying:

*"As long as my eyes have tears, I will preach Christ and Orthodoxy."*

He advised the faithful to guard themselves against the pitfalls of the Antichrist and not to take the mark. Then the telephone threats on his life become even more intense, however Father John did not fear any of this. He proved himself to be a faithful shepherd of Christ, one who was willing to sacrifice all and even lay down his life for his flock because of his love for them.

## **Miracle of the Blossoming White Lilies**

It was through Fr. John that the Most Holy Mother of God bestowed a miraculous blessing on the Prophet Elias Church (<http://propheteliassantacruz.org/>) . This occurred after Fr. John brought some bulbs of the "lily of the Panagia" back from his native island of Andros, where he visited with his family. He went to the Monastery of St Nicholas on the island and asked Abbot Dorotheos (Themelis) for few dried lilies.

The lily of the Panagia ("Most Holy") is so named because of the tradition, often depicted in icons, concerning the Archangel Gabriel presenting the Mother of God with this species of lily at the time of the Annunciation. In the monastery on Andros which Fr. John visited,<sup>[note</sup>

6] stems from these lilies, being many years old, sometimes bud miraculously at the time of the Feast of the Dormition.

Fr. John instructed his son Photios to plant the lily bulbs in pots and to water them only with holy water, which Photios did. After the lilies had grown from the bulbs in May of 1983, Fr. John cut one of the flowers and placed it by the icon of the Mother of God, which leaned against the iconostasis of his church. The flower did not wilt for three or four weeks, although it had been cut and removed from both water and earth. When it finally dropped its petals (the first one having fallen on a radiant day when one of Fr. John's converts from the university was baptized), Fr. John told his wife not to vacuum up any of them, but to save them and place them by the icon where the flower stem was still leaning. And then, within three weeks, some fresh sprouts appeared on the stem!

The stem continued to produce new stems for many months, until the winter of 1983-4. Fr. John interpreted the miracle as an image of life coming out of death through the Resurrection. This miracle strengthened the faith of many to have more reverence towards the Blessed Virgin.

## **Martyrdom**

Before his martyric death, three wonderful things had happened:

1. One week before his martyrdom the blossoming lilies of the Virgin wilted at once and they never blossomed again.
2. The Icon of the Blessed Virgin wept, and traces of her tears can still be seen on her image.
3. On three consecutive Sundays before his martyrdom, during the Divine Liturgy, the altar boy while giving him the warm water (to prepare the Holy Communion) saw a strange phenomenon - his father's face was shining and scattered rays of light - but father John told him strictly not to reveal anything.

On the evening of May 17, 1985 Fr. John telephoned Abbot Dorotheos (Themelis) and asked him about the miracles of the myrrh-streaming icon of the Blessed Virgin (Myrrhovylytissa), because he wanted to preach a sermon on her for the following Sunday. Then on the night of Saturday, May 18, 1985, the eve of the feast of the translation of the holy relics of Saint Nicholas the Wonder-worker, Fr. John was in the church building, preparing the sermon for the following morning. His wife was in Los Angeles at that time visiting her daughter, who had

just given birth to her first child.

Shortly before midnight,<sup>[note 7]</sup> one or more assailants entered the church. Evidently they had been watching Fr. John, for they came at a time when he was alone, when both his wife and 17 year-old son were gone. They attacked Fr. John in his church office, stabbing him with a knife. During the struggle Fr. John was severely beaten, and then was finally killed by a heavy blow on his head.

His son, who had dined with him earlier that evening, arrived at 1:30 a.m. at the church. Outside the office he discovered the body of his murdered father, and on the walls -- the blood of a martyr.

There, the boy was faced with a terrible sight: his father was found on the floor slaughtered and unrecognizable...he had been hit in the head with a hammer and his whole body was butchered with knives. As the police had later discovered, because father John didn't die right away, the criminals took the cross he was wearing around the neck and hanged him with its chain. The blood poured from his wounds and flooded the floor of the Holy Shrine. The Satanists used his blood to write their slogans and the mark 666 on the walls of the Church. The blessed father John suffered martyrdom in the very place where he was photographed with the cross in his hand, almost prophesizing of what would follow.<sup>[3]</sup>

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* article of May 21, 1985:

The spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox community here "put up a terrific struggle" before he was bludgeoned to death in the office of his church here, the police chief said yesterday. John Karastamatis, 47, of Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church, was "beaten badly, severely. . . . The method of death was very traumatic," Chief Jack Bassett said. "Blood was found on the walls." ...Bassett said he believes the priest was slain between 11 p.m. Saturday and 1:40 a.m. Sunday, when his



NEW MARTYR FATHER JOHN KARASTAMATIS  
standing at the entrance of the church, almost the  
very spot where he met his martyric death.

bloody body was found by his 17-year-old son, Foti.<sup>[4]</sup>

Chief Bassett also noted that "*Father John was very accessible to many people. He was a very humanistic person*".<sup>[4]</sup>

Because Fr. John's face and fingers were so disfigured and mutilated,<sup>[note 8]</sup> his relics could not be displayed at the funeral service, therefore his body was covered in the usual gold-vestments and the coffin was sealed. Several priests attended Fr. John's funeral, coming from the many and various Orthodox churches in the United States.

## **Assailants**

The criminals responsible were Edward and Anna Bowman.<sup>[note 9]</sup> Edward Bowman, an ex-Marine, was eligible for the death penalty, but pled guilty to avoid execution.

According to a Greek Orthodox publication (*in translation*), "The police searched for the killers and found three people, a couple and the son of the man from another woman. They were priests and worshipers of Satan. They drank cobra venom while they were arrested and two of them died, and the third lost his mind and could not testify."<sup>[3]</sup><sup>[note 10]</sup>

According to the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* article of June 12, 2001:

Ron Truhitte was the Santa Cruz police detective who was on the case in 1985. Now an inspector for the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, Truhitte said the murder rises above most he's handled because of its brutality and many twists and turns. "*It was a real, real murder mystery and if you were to write a book, you could not include as many different dark alleys, leads that led nowhere and suspicions as this case had,*" Truhitte said. "*But all the time the ones who did it were right there in front of us.*" It took detectives seven months to arrest Bowman although he and his wife's names were brought up after the murder.<sup>[5]</sup>

Bowman was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison in 1988, but In 2001 he was up for parole. In response, Metropolitan Anthony (Gergiannakis) of San Francisco in a letter to clergy and other churches urged support for the Karastamatis family's efforts to

"ensure that this violent killer never again walks among us."<sup>[5]</sup> In addition, Detective Truhitte stated that he didn't believe that Bowman should be released: *"It has to do with the severity of the crime," Truhitte said. "They didn't just murder this man, they butchered him."*<sup>[5]</sup>

In 2010 Bowman was once again eligible for parole. In February 2010 the Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office reported that he was denied parole, with the Parole Board ruling that he will not be eligible again until 2015.<sup>[6]</sup>

This brutal crime was pre-meditated. Detectives involved in this case believe these criminals were responsible for other crimes, and committed other murders. One theory is they told Father John, in counseling, of their crimes. They became nervous then planned his murder to ensure Father John remained silent. As he lay dying they rifled through Father John's pockets, searched his office and stole items from the Church. The criminal's son was in fear for his life as Edward Bowman, while bragging of the brutal murder, threatened to kill him as well if he said anything about the murder. Psychiatrists who examine Bowman agree, he has sociopath tendencies, is a pathological liar and to this day expresses no remorse.<sup>[7]</sup>

In the absence of a more plausible reason for the crime, it is most likely that the killing, like the church desecration a few months prior to it, was done at the hands of those who hated Fr. John for his holy work, of those who are the enemies of God and rebel against Him because they serve the first rebel, Satan. But whether Fr. John was killed for overtly satanic purposes or for other, irrational reasons, he had without doubt a martyric death, giving his life for Christ and dying in the very church in which he had diligently served Him.

## **Apparitions of Blessed Father John**

The apparitions of blessed father John after his martyric death are many.

- When Abbot Dorotheos (Themelis) learned about the martyrdom of Father John, he wrote to the Presbytera asking her to send his priestly vestments from when they had celebrated together the feast of Saint Dorotheos at the Monastery in 1981. Some time passed but he received no response from father John's family. On

the eve July 4, at the Monastery of St. Nicholas, an Athonite vigil was celebrated in honor of St. Athanasius of Mt. Athos, with many pilgrims in attendance who had come from Athens. As the vigil was about to end, the monastery bells began to beat themselves as for a solemn feast. They stopped for awhile, but the bells started ringing again so harmoniously that everyone was astonished. Seized with fear and awe, the faithful started to pray the paracletic of St. Nicholas, waiting for a miracle to happen. That afternoon, elder Dorotheos got a call from Mary, the daughter of Father John, who had come specifically to the monastery bearing the vestments of her father. She brought them into the monastery and they were received with joy by all the pilgrims there. The bells had been ringing in the monastery that morning exactly at the time when the ship entered the harbor carrying the Martyr's vestments.<sup>[8]</sup>

- On the eve of the feast of St. Nicholas, in 1986, abbot Dorotheos, together with several women, was preparing for the monastery's patronal feast. At one point, they saw blessed father John walking through the monastery gardens and heading towards them. They all were frightened and began to shout: "*Papa Iani!*" Then he disappeared from their sight. Immediately after this to their surprise, came the postman with a package from Switzerland containing a wooden carved image (icon) of Father John, from some Russian believers that honored him as a saint. Father John had asked that his icon may be spread to all Christians so they may learn about his martyrdom and missionary work.
- In addition, in February 1987 while abbot Dorotheos went to Switzerland for surgery, while he was talking to the faithful there about Fr. John and his martyrdom, Fr. John appeared to them, blessed them, and then disappeared from their sight.

## Legacy

Father John was an exceptional priest and a righteous man, a labourer in Christ's American vineyard who was found worthy of being glorified with a martyr's crown. God raised up an American martyr whose faith was real and burning, as an example of one who was ready to lose his life for Christ in order to gain it eternally.

"His life inspired and enlightened and cheered us!" wrote one of his spiritual children. "His death has served to confirm in a most

direct way the realities of not only our Orthodox faith, but of the bizarre and truly anti-Christian ways of our times."

Simple, unpolished, and at the same time burning with passionate, self-sacrificing pastoral zeal, Fr. John stood amidst the great "peasant priests" who have kept the spirit of Holy Orthodoxy alive throughout the centuries. While others have at times reduced Orthodoxy to an intellectual or formal exercise, such priests have demonstrated that Orthodoxy is in fact *life* - a balm to the wounds of the poor, the suffering, the sinful. To use an old Russian expression, Fr. John was truly a "priest of the people."<sup>[9]</sup><sup>[note 11]</sup>

*Holy New Martyr Priest John of Santa Cruz, pray to God for us!*

## **Canonization**

His glorification has not yet won universal support however, and illustrates the controversy that can arise over the precise boundaries of categories of sanctity.<sup>[1]</sup> Nevertheless:

"the Church has always been purified by the blood of its martyrs. The wheat is thus separated from the chaff, the sheep from the goats. This is a sobering thought,...for many, however, it is also a distressing thought, so threatening that they do not want to consider its implications. It is probably for this reason that many Orthodox Christians reacted to Fr. John's martyrdom with almost total indifference, as if it had not occurred amidst us but was a matter as far removed as the moon. It is more comfortable to view his death as some "freak" crime, a tragedy without purpose or meaning. This makes it somehow "neutral," unrelated to our lives as Orthodox Christians. But nothing in God's world is without meaning and purpose. God has glorified a martyr on our soil, and it is our responsibility as children of our heavenly Father not to leave this unnoticed and ignored."<sup>[10]</sup>

## **Hymns**

### **Troparion - Tone 1**

Having cultivated the fruit of God's knowledge by thy labors, thou hast plucked out the root of godlessness and proclaimed in our land the true faith.

Anointed with grace thou hast tended the flock entrusted thee,  
and in shedding thy blood thou waterest the seeds of Christ's true  
faith in our land,

O New Martyr John of Santa Cruz.

Glory to Him Who hath granted thee strength;

Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee;

Glory to Him Who granteth healing for all through thee.

### **Hymn to Passion-Bearer John of Santa Cruz**<sup>[11]</sup>

Thou melodic chanter with the chorus of angels!

Thou cheerful comforter of the aged!

Thou compassionate healer of the infirm!

Thou fearless expounder of the true faith!

Thou untiring intercessor for the young!

Thou zealous restorer of family unity!

Thou Lamp shining in the darkness of our times!

Thou, Righteous New Martyr John, we beseech, pray to Christ our  
God, that we may obtain Eternal Life!

### **In Greek**

#### **Ἀπολυτίκιον**<sup>[12]</sup>

**Ἦχος α΄. Τῆς ἐρήμου πολίτης.**

Νέου Κόσμου τό φέγγος καί τῆς Ἄνδρου τό βλάστημα,

Ἱερομαρτύρων τήν δόξαν, Ἰωάννην τιμήσωμεν.

Σφαγεῖς γάρ τῷ Ναῶ ὑπέρ Χριστοῦ, ἀρτίως καταυγάζει Σάντα Κρούζ,  
καί συνάγει Ὀρθοδόξους, ἀπανταχόθεν ἀνακράζοντας:

δόξα τῷ σέ δοξάσαντι Χριστῷ,

δόξα τῷ σέ στεφανώσαντι,

δόξα τῷ σέ προστάτην θαυμαστόν, τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δείξαντι.

**Ἔτερον. Ἦχος πλ. α΄**<sup>[12]</sup>

**Τόν συνάναρχον Λόγον.**

Ἀποστόλων τήν φλόγα ψυχῇ δεξάμενος,

τόν Νέον Κόσμον φωτίζεις ἐν ἡμετέροις καιροῖς,

ἀφανίζεις τε σατᾶν τά μηχανήματα,

ὅτι σ' αὐτόν ὑπέρ Χριστοῦ ἱερούργησας πιστῶς, τῆς Σάντα Κρούζ,  
Ἰωάννη.

Τῆς νήσου Ἄνδρου ὁ γόνος, ἡμῶν δέ σκέπη καί καταφύγιον.

### **See also**

- List of American saints

## Notes

1. ↑ "He was the kind who wanted to help everybody," Anastasia Karastamatis said. "They'd come to the door at 2 o'clock in the morning and I'd worry -- saying we didn't know what they'd been drinking, what drugs they were on. It was hard for me. But he'd say, 'They need me; that's what I'm here for.' "
  - {Joan Connell. SHATTERED PARISH REBUILDS CHURCH TRIES TO PUT SLAYING BEHIND IT. *San Jose Mercury News*. August 23, 1986.}
2. ↑ According to *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, the couple that murdered Fr. John had a history of mental illness. And in the words of District Attorney Art Danner, Anna Bowman was "clearly psychotic."
3. ↑ Archimandrite Meletios (Webber) later served as full-time parish priest in this Santa Cruz parish, for nine years. Of Fr. John, Archimandrite Meletios says: "He was not my immediate predecessor; there had been three other priests in between. I knew his presbytera quite well, and his children. He was murdered on the premises of the church, in very unpleasant circumstances, some years before I arrived, but it was still a very dominant factor in the life of parish while I was there—something they couldn't forget."
  - {Nun Cornelia (Rees). Interview with Archimandrite Meletios (Webber) (<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/080205103442.htm>) . *PRAVOSLAVIE.RU*. 05/02/2008.}
4. ↑ For, as our Lord has told us, "*If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*" (St. John, 15:20).
5. ↑ "The church was desecrated several months ago by vandals who painted a five-pointed star and the number 666 - symbols of Satanic worship - on the front entrance. Investigators will try to determine whether the symbols are linked to the priest's death, the chief said."
  - {*Our Correspondent*. Santa Cruz - Slain Priest Was 'Severely Beaten'. *The San Francisco Chronicle*. May 21, 1985.}
6. ↑ Monastery of St. Nicholas of Andros, Greece.
7. ↑ The midnight hour is the supposed time of the satanic Black Mass, Witching hour, and Witches' Sabbath. Some authors have hypothesized that the Witches' Sabbath would take place during the night of the Sunday before the time the Christian mass was

celebrated.

8. ↑ The brutality of this murder recalls the martyrdom of Elder Philoumenos (Hasapis) of Jacob's Well only a few years earlier in 1979, who was tortured and whose fingers were cut into pieces and his thumb hacked off, which were the fingers with which he made the sign of the Cross.
9. ↑ Court Hearing - the State ([http://articles.latimes.com/1986-01-09/news/mn-14136\\_1\\_greek-orthodox-priest](http://articles.latimes.com/1986-01-09/news/mn-14136_1_greek-orthodox-priest)) . *Los Angeles Times*. January 09, 1986:

"The husband of the secretary to a priest who was beaten to death was booked for investigation of the priest's murder, Santa Cruz authorities said. Cab driver Edward Bowman, 39, was arrested at his home in the death of Father John Karastamatis, a Greek Orthodox priest, Police Chief Jack Bassett said. A local judge ordered the arrest warrant sealed until a court hearing. Karastamatis, 47, was killed last May 19 by repeated blows from a blunt object. He also was stabbed, and his wallet and keys were taken, detectives said. Bowman's wife, Anna, 43, shot and killed herself Dec. 19 after firing at a detective who wanted to question her about the slaying. Bassett said Anna Bowman also would have been arrested if she had not committed suicide. Anna Bowman had worked for Karastamatis as a volunteer secretary. The priest had "taken the Bowmans under his wing," Lt. Mike Dunbaugh said."
10. ↑ "Η αστυνομία ερεύνησε για τους φονείς του Αγίου και βρήκαν τρία άτομα ένα ανδρόγυνο και τον γιο του άνδρα από άλλη γυναίκα. Ήταν ιερείς του σατανά και πήραν δηλητήριο κόμπρας, όταν τους συνέλαβαν και οι δύο πέθαναν, και ο τρίτος έχασε τα λογικά του και δεν συνεννοείται."
  - {Ο νεοφανής Ιερομάρτυς της Ορθοδοξίας Ιωάννης της Σάντα Κρουζ (<http://www.impantokratoros.gr/84A7DC93.el.aspx>) . Ο ΟΣΙΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΟΥ. ΤΕΥΧΟΣ 17, Μάιος-Αύγουστος 2006, Θεσ/νίκη.}
11. ↑ "*The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.*" (John 10:11).

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  5. ↑ <sup>5.0</sup> <sup>5.1</sup> <sup>5.2</sup> Darrel W. Cole. Priest's killer set for parole hearing. *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. June 12, 2001.
  6. ↑ Jennifer Squires. Man who killed Santa Cruz priest denied parole for five years ([http://www.orthodoxnews.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=usnews.one&content\\_id=18416&CFID=72092943&CFTOKEN=53644936&tp\\_preview=true](http://www.orthodoxnews.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=usnews.one&content_id=18416&CFID=72092943&CFTOKEN=53644936&tp_preview=true)) . *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. February 8, 2010.
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