

BOY, 18, PROSPECTIVE CATHOLIC PRIEST, ENDS IN TRAGEDY



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On Wednesday, January 22, 2014, the sun had set for Master Michael Onyebuchi Chukwuemeka Adibe, a Senior Secondary School (SSS) student of the Kings College, Chokoneze, Ezinihitte, Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State. His aspiration to become a reverend father in the Catholic Church ended in a ghastly motor accident on Eke-Nguru-Mbaise-Okpuala road, near the Group School, Ezuhu-Nguru in Aboh Mbaise area, also in the state. He was the last born in a family of seven children – four boys and three girls.

Michael's mother, a petty trader, Mrs. Scholastica Chukwuemeka Adibe, had sent him to buy some drinks at a depot in a neighbouring community, Ezuhu-Nguru, less than four kilometers from their own community, Umuozuzu.

Sadly, about 5.55pm, while riding back home on a green Qlink motor-cycle, marked IM 9078ST, with a crate of Limca on the passenger's seat, Michael got involved in a ghastly road mishap that claimed his life on the spot.

Narrating the incident to our reporter, a close relative to the deceased, Mr Ogechi Chimezie Nwaogwugwu, said they were informed that the driver of a Toyota Dyna lost focus, and in the process pushed Michael to an oncoming heavy-duty vehicle (tipper) on the opposite direction of the road.

"The tipper did not run over him and his motorcycle as speculated; I think he must have hit his head on the fender of the tipper" he explained.

Sunday Trust observed that the deceased's motorcycle had a sticker with the inscription, 'No weapon formed against me shall prosper' while a book inside a steel basket in front was entitled, 'Holy Ghost Power.' Michael was the last born in a family of seven children – four boys and three girls.

Expressing her disappointment amidst tears, Mrs. Adibe, a widow, said, "What pained me most is that my son died while suffering. At times, when there was no transport money for him to go to school, he would trek from our village here to Chokoneze and still trek back after school.

"He was very small when his father died, and since then we have been managing life. He would always come to assist me at the shop after school. He would sell any item I found difficult to sell; he had the skill of a good salesman. See how somebody's carelessness has taken away my son."

She recalled how her son consoled her during her time of crisis, took care of her when she was ill, how good and useful he was in domestic chores, his love for people and popularity among priests and even his fellow students at Kings College, Chokoneze, where he registered for the West African School Examination.

"There is no amount of consolation or money that will bring him back to life. Let the man who killed my son come quickly and bury him so that his soul will rest; for now his spirit is still hovering around. Please let someone tell him to come and bury my son. His dream had always been to become a Catholic priest," she added.

At the Queen of Peace Parish Catholic Church, Oboama, Ezinihitte Local Government Area, where the late Michael served as altar boy, the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Leonard Ugbor, who officially announced his demise said, "Life is precarious. A young life is snuffed off before it began. It is a very sad incident."

Ugbor instructed all altar boys in the parish to submit their passport photographs, attached with their brief profiles.

This, he said, would enable his office have a proper identity of all the altar boys.

"We will have an album of all the mass servers so that we can follow things up. When things like this happen, one

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Page:1 / 3

of you should come and let me know as soon as possible," he particularly told Michael's colleague, simply identified as Okwuchi.

Speaking to Sunday Trust, the principal of Kings College, Chokoneze, Bro. Ralph Ogarawo said amidst tears, "That boy was an embodiment of good manners. He never for one day committed any offence or crime that would lead to punishing him. Whatever errand he was sent, he would do it perfectly. That is why his death pained almost every student here, even the members of staff. He was a very quiet boy, loved by everybody. He was the brilliant type. It is just a pity that he died that way. He was aspiring to be a priest, but death didn't allow him." He advised parents and students to learn a lesson from Michael's death.

Also speaking, Chimezie Nwaogwugwu bemoaned the spate of recklessness on the part of drivers, especially tipper drivers. He said that tipper drivers must be cautioned and their vehicles regularly checked properly to ensure road worthiness.

"These tipper drivers, as a matter of fact, have taken so many lives because of recklessness and carelessness. Last year, there was an incident at Enyigugu Mbaise, where a tipper driver reportedly ran over about 15 persons; only four survived," the lawyer recalled. He called on the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) to rise up to the occasion of regular vehicle checks as well as improving the mental state of the drivers.

The police at Eke-Nguru confirmed the incident and said investigation into the incident had started.

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