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How ditch claimed twins in Kaduna

By Christiana T. Alabi, Kaduna | Publish Date: Dec 4 2016 2:00AM

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Late Peter and Paul

The joy that greeted the birth of the twins, Peter and Paul on June 11, 2003, last week Saturday turned to sorrow when the duo, accidentally fell into a ditch close to their house and all effort to rescue them failed.

On November 12, 2016, the people of Buruku Street in Trikania, an area in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State, where the twins resided, were thrown into confusion as they ran helter-skelter, making efforts to rescue the trapped boys.

The father of the twins, Mr. Vincent Anojor, upon hearing the sad news when he came back from Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN) company where he worked, rushed to the scene where he made several attempts to jump into the ditch to rescue his children but was held back by the people who kept trying to reassure him that his kids would be fine.

DailyTrust on Sunday gathered that it took the intervention of fishermen from Nasarawa, a nearby community, to remove the boys from the ditch. While one of them was brought out dead, the other was rescued alive. He however died shortly after he arrived the hospital.

Since the incident, sympathisers have continued to throng the residence of the bereaved to condole with the family.

Peter and Paul were the youngest of Mr. and Mrs Vincent's five children. They were 13-years-old and JSSII students of the Excel Universal College in Kakuri, before their death. The brothers, it was gathered, crossed the ditch daily since they moved into the area in September 2011, as it was the route they took to school, church and market. But on that fateful day, the ditch claimed their lives.

Although, it was earlier rumoured that the twins had gone in search of empty packs of noodles for an ongoing promo when they fell into the ditch,



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members of their family said their presence in that area had nothing to do with scavenging.

Our correspondent who visited the ditch that consumed the twins observed that it was created by erosion that has eaten up a number of streets in the community. The ditch, it was learnt, started like a small gutter many years ago but because it was left unattended to, it expanded. It was also gathered that the ditch has become a dump site for residents of the area.

The residents said water and waste from the ditch flow into the river in Gonin-gora during the rainy season and that scavengers converge on the site often to pick metals.

Our correspondent gathered that though the ditch looked dry, there was a section that was very deep and covered with solid waste, and could fool an unsuspecting person or stranger to easily fall to his death.

Narrating how the incident took place, the elder brother to the twins, Innocent Ebude, said "It happened last week Saturday at about 3pm after they have taken their lunch. I told them I was going to take my bath and that they were supposed to be in church.

"But before I came out of the bathroom, they had left home. No adult was around the area when the incident took place but a little boy who raised alarm by telling his mother immediately he saw them fall into the ditch.

"I didn't believe the news initially because I knew that they were supposed to be on their way to church. So I ran to the church to check on them but to my surprise, they weren't there and then I ran back to the ditch.

"When I got there people had already gathered. A ladder was dropped inside the ditch to help bring them out but to no avail. At last, fishermen from Nasarawa, a neighboring community were invited to help rescue my brothers. One of them was brought out dead while the other one was still struggling to breathe. He eventually died in the hospital. Their death is very painful; it has created a vacuum in the family. They were the only brothers I had and now they are gone. I just believe it is God's will for them to go that way, if not, they wouldn't have died. The only thing is to continue to pray that God grants their souls eternal rest".

He described his late brothers as good boys who did not toy with church activities. According to him, the same ditch that claimed the lives of his brothers had also claimed the life of a 28-year-old woman two years ago.

He said it was possible that other people might have fallen into the ditch and died without anybody knowing, adding that many stray animals had fallen into the ditch too. "In fact if that little boy had not seen my brothers fall into the ditch, nobody would have known of their whereabouts," he said.

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He appealed to the state government to come to the rescue of the community by doing something about the ditch.

The father of the late twins, Vincent Anojor said, "On that fateful day early in the morning we all went for morning devotion in the Catholic Church, Trikania, where we worship after which I went to work. While at work, nobody called me to inform me about what was happening in my house. When I came back around 3.30pm, I saw people running up and down my street and I started wondering what was happening.

When I asked, I was told that my twins had fallen into the ditch. I wondered how they could have fallen into a ditch that they crossed on a daily basis.

"I made several attempts to enter the ditch to try and rescue my children but the people around did not allow me, so I kept praying for them. Then some people brought a generator used for drilling water but that did not help the situation. So one man ran to Nasarawa and returned with two fishermen who are good swimmers.

"When they came, in five seconds, they were able to remove one of them. They entered again to remove the second twin. The first one was still moving when he was brought out but the second one was brought out dead. The one that was still breathing was taken to Oxford Hospital in Kakuri, but he died as the doctor was about to connect oxygen to him.

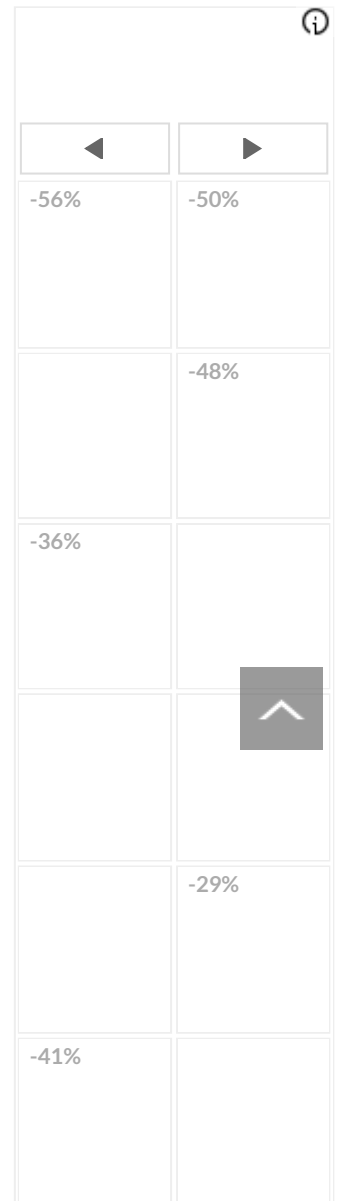
"After they were confirmed dead, they were brought back home and then my reverend father in the church came and prayed for them. He was so surprised because he saw them during the morning mass that day. He took them to St. Gerald hospital again to confirm if truly they were dead. When they confirmed them dead, they were taken to the cemetery at Ungwar Television for burial.

"It is very painful but I believe that is how God wants it, if not so, when one fell inside, the other would have gone back home to alert the people instead he jumped in to rescue his brother and they both died."

He said the development had created a big vacuum in his life and in the family. "They were my youngest children, but I am praying to God to take control. When my wife was carrying their pregnancy, we never knew she was carrying twins until she delivered. I was very happy on the day of their delivery; they were delivered safely without any form of complication and they were even discharged the same day they were born.

"My area was filled up with people who came to rejoice with us on that day; but then, however bitter it seems, I cannot question God and there is nothing I can do."

He called on government to do something about the ditch to save the lives of residents of the area, especially children and women who are the most



vulnerable.

“The ditch is so deep that if three people stand on each other’s head, you will not see them and it was created by erosion. During the rainy season, you will see water flowing in the area but once it is dry season, the water only stay in the deeper part of the ditch,” he said.

He said the bridge across the ditch was constructed by the community members as anyone going out of the street must either go through the expressway or cross the ditch.

The mother of the twins could not say much as she is yet to get over the shock. All she said was “government should come to our rescue so that more children do not fall into the ditch”.

Daily Trust on Sunday however gathered that the bereaved family did not report the incident to the police as the members decided to surrender the situation to God.

Efforts to get government officials to comment on the ditch failed as the spokesperson to Governor Nasir El-Rufai and the interim chairman, Chikun Local Government Area could not be reached.



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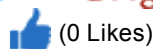
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