

Catholic priest dies four days after escaping kidnappers' den

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Very Rev. Fr. Dr Louis Odudu

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The Chaplain of the Seat of Wisdom Catholic Chaplaincy of the Petroleum Training Institute, Effurun, Delta State, Very Rev. Fr. Dr Louis Odudu, who recently escaped from a kidnappers' den, is dead.

Odudu died on Wednesday, four days after he escaped from his abductors' den.

Sources in the Catholic Diocese of Warri told *PUNCH Metro* that the priest was abducted last week Friday and he escaped on Saturday.

Although the immediate cause of death could not be ascertained by our correspondent, it was gathered that the incident was not unconnected with his abduction.

Family, friends and parishioners were still celebrating his freedom when the news of his death filtered into town on Wednesday.

He was said to have been pronounced dead at a private hospital in Warri, hours after he reportedly complained of pains and demanded to be taken to a hospital.

Odudu, who was ordained priest of the Catholic Diocese of Warri in 1987, had reportedly been in the United Kingdom for years.

He was said to have returned to the country about five months ago when he was abducted.

The deceased was a former Assistant Secretary-General at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

The news of the death reportedly threw the Catholic community in Delta into mourning, as worshippers discussed the incident in clusters after mass on Thursday.

A source said, “He was just assigned to the chaplaincy at PTI about two months before his kidnap and untimely death.

“It was a black Wednesday for the Diocese of Warri as Very Rev. Fr. Louis Odudu died on the day the diocese was holding a prayer vigil for one of the deceased priests, Very Rev. Fr. Stephen Ekakabor, who died early this month after battling with a brain injury he sustained when he was attacked by armed robbers. The robbers invaded the priest’s rectory in 2017 at his parish of St. Joseph, Okpare-Olomu, in the Ughelli South Local Government Area.”

The Director of Social Communications, Catholic Diocese of Warri, Rev. Fr. Dr Benedict Ukutegbe, confirmed the demise of the priest.

Ukutegbe, who declined to speak on the cause of death, also confirmed that he had just been released by kidnappers.

Catholic priests in the state have been under attack by some hoodlums in recent times, as no fewer than five priests had been abducted in 2018 alone.