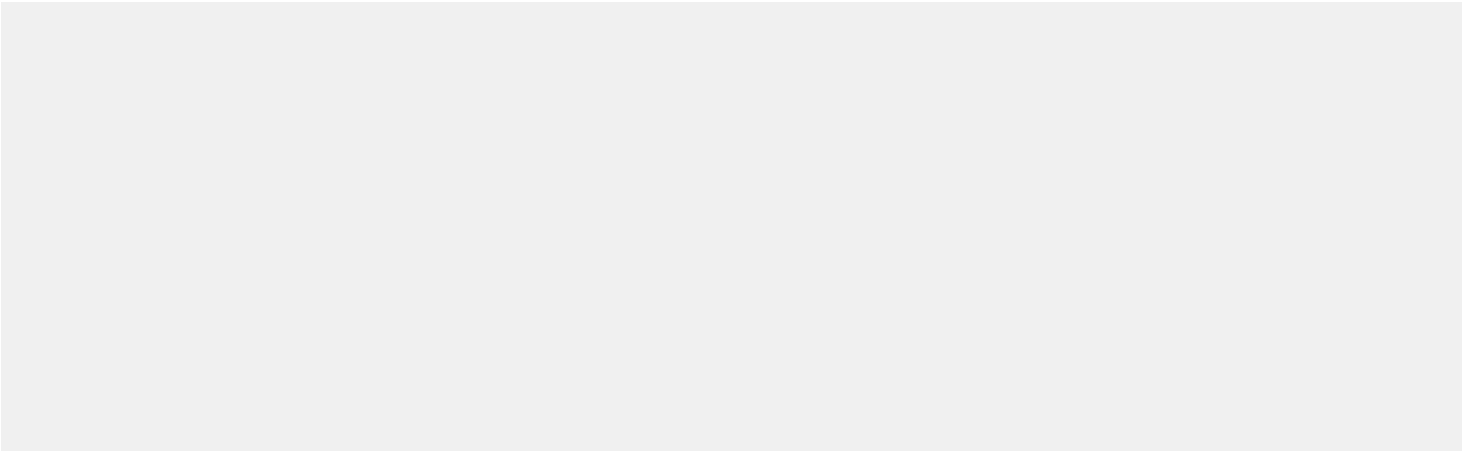


Police hunt gunmen for killing Anambra Catholic priest

28th December 2024

Daniel Ayantoye and Ikenna Obianeri



Tragedy has hit the Catholic Diocese of Nnewi in Anambra State over the killing of one of its priests, Rev Fr Tobias Okonkwo, by yet-to-be-identified gunmen.

It was gathered that Okonkwo was shot dead on Thursday, by the gunmen along Onitsha-Owerri Expressway at about 7pm.

The information of his death was contained in a letter dated December 27, 2024, by the Diocesan Secretariat in Nnewi and signed by the Police. Photo Credit: Elliot Ovadje Fr Raphael Ezeogu.

The letter, which had the deceased’s photograph was labelled, “Obituary” and captioned, “Rev. Fr. Tobias Chukwujekwu Okonkwo Born: August 11 1984; Ordained: July 11 2015, Died: December 26, 2024.”



It read, “Where sorrow increases, divine consolation increases all the more. The Catholic Diocese of Nnewi, with its stronger faith, that our dear Rev Fr Tobias Chukwujekwu Okonkwo died yesterday, 26th December 2024.”

“He was shot dead by unidentified assailants, at Ihiala, along Onitsha-Owerri Expressway around 7pm. He was a pharmacist, and native of Ekwulumili in Nnewi South Local Government Area, was Manager of Pharmacy and Medical Laboratory at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Ihiala.



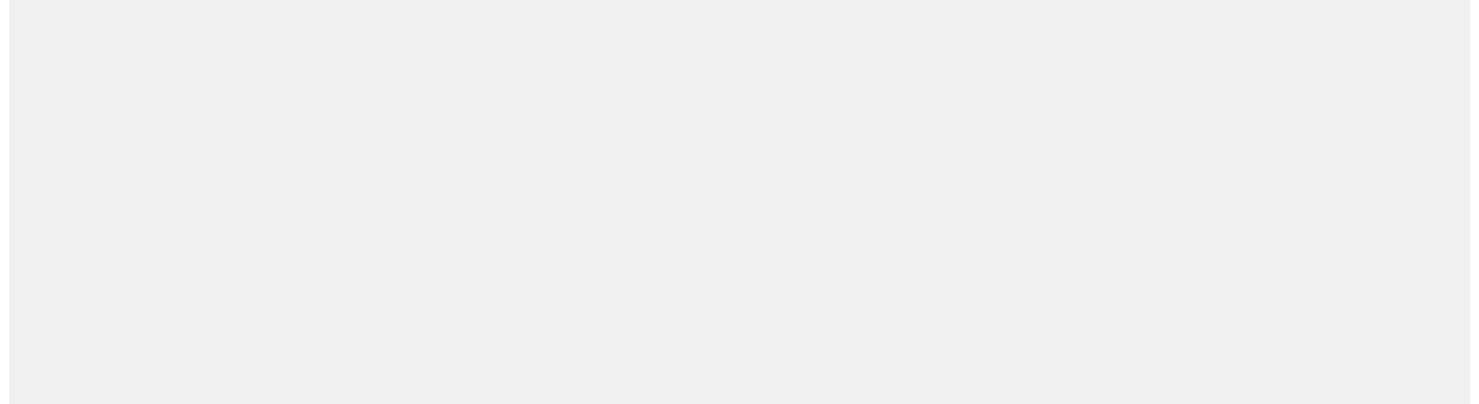
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“We solicit your prayers and Holy Masses for his eternal joy. May Fr. Tobias rejoice in paradise forever Amen. May God console the bereaved. Funeral arrangements will be communicated in due course. In Jesus and Mary.”



Efforts to speak to the Diocesan Secretariat through the Chancellor proved abortive as several calls to the telephone line indicated “switched off” as of the time of filing this report but a Reverend Father of the Catholic church, who craved anonymity, confirmed the development.

Also, calls and messages to the telephone line of the spokesman, Anambra State Police Command, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, were not responded to as of the time of filing this report.

The police spokesperson for the Southeast zone (Enugu and Anambra Command), Josephine Ihunwo, confirmed the incident.

She said, “The command is on top of the situation, and the men have been sent out on the issue. The residents should be calm as the police are working to ensure adequate security.”

